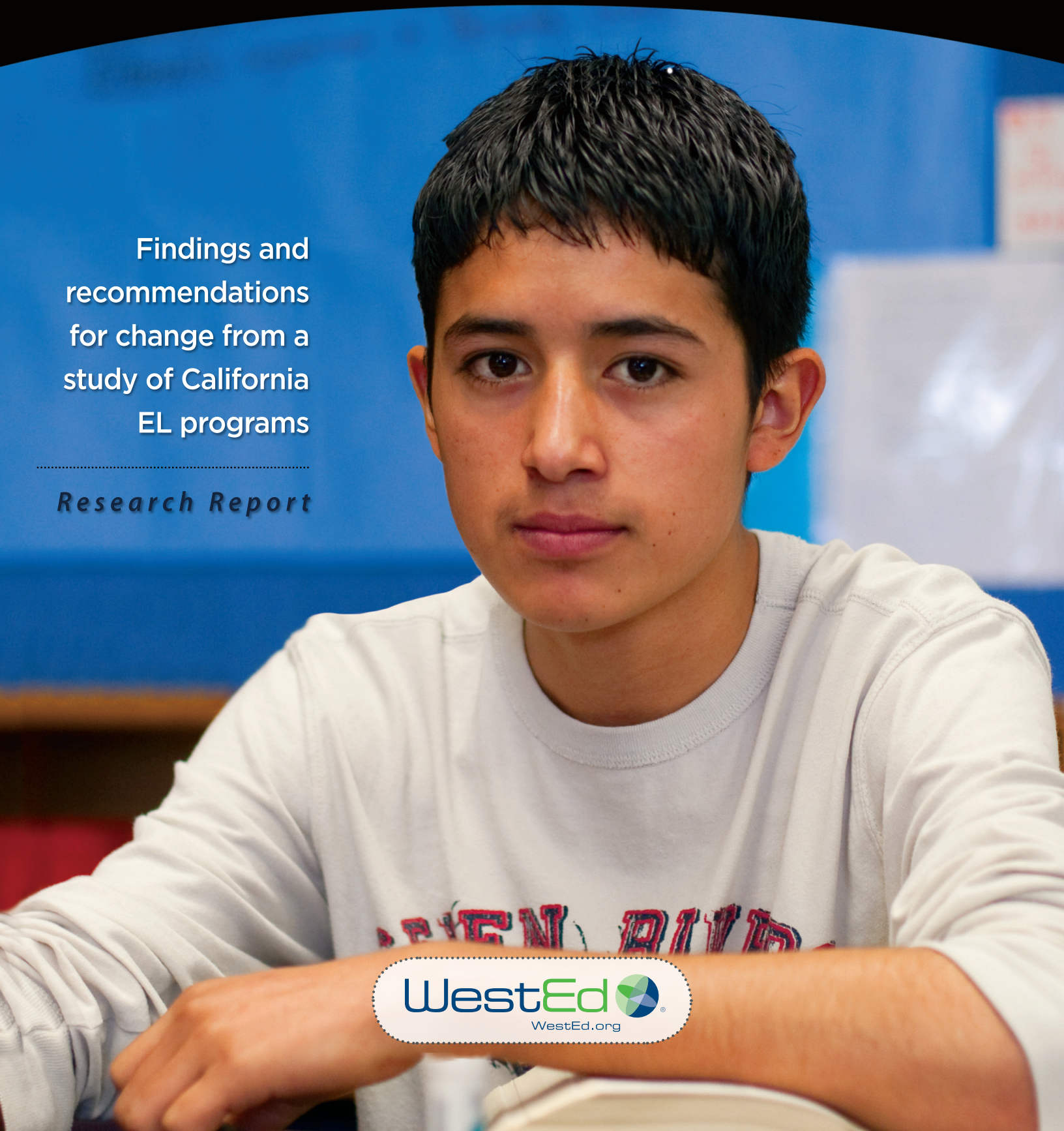
MAY 2010

WHAT ARE WE DOING TO

Middle School English Learners?



Findings and recommendations for change from a study of California EL programs

Research Report

WestEd
WestEd.org

Funding for this study was provided by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. This report is adapted and updated from an October 2009 report to the Foundation.

WestEd Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) Research Team

Aída Walqui, Director
Nanette Koelsch
Leslie Hamburger
Donna Gaarder
Alex Insaurralde
Mary Schmida
Steven Weiss

Additional Contributors

Peggy Estrada, Associate Research Scientist, Latin American and Latino Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz

Neal Finkelstein, Senior Research Scientist, WestEd

Melissa Eiler White, Senior Policy Associate, WestEd

Advisory Group

Claude Goldenberg, Professor of Education, Stanford University

Kenji Hakuta, Lee L. Jacks Professor of Education, Stanford University

Cindy Pease-Alvarez, Associate Professor, Department of Education, University of California, Santa Cruz

Shelley Spiegel-Coleman, Executive Director, Californians Together

Lydia Stack, Independent Consultant, San Francisco

Teresa Walter, Director, Office of English Language Acquisition, San Diego Unified School District

Copyright © 2010 WestEd. All rights reserved.

Requests for permission to reproduce any parts of this report should be directed to WestEd Publications Center, 730 Harrison Street, San Francisco, CA 94107-1242, 888-293-7833, fax 415-512-2024, permissions@wested.org, or http://www.WestEd.org/permissions.

Suggested citation:

Walqui, A., Koelsch, N., Hamburger, L., et al. (2010, May). *What are we doing to middle school English Learners? Findings and recommendations for change from a study of California EL programs* (Research Report). San Francisco: WestEd.

See also the Narrative Summary:

Walqui, A., Koelsch, N., Hamburger, L., et al. (2010, May). *What are we doing to middle school English Learners? Findings and recommendations for change from a study of California EL programs* (Narrative Summary). San Francisco: WestEd.

WestEd

What are we doing to middle school English Learners?

Findings and recommendations for change from a study of California EL programs

Research Report

Aída Walqui, Nanette Koelsch, Leslie Hamburger,

Donna Gaarder, Alex Insaurralde, Mary Schmida,

Steven Weiss, Peggy Estrada

Quality Teaching for English Learners, WestEd

CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Executive Summary 3

Section I. Study Rationale 7

Section II. Study Methodology 17

Section III. Phase 1 Findings 29

Section IV. Phase 2 Cross-Case Analysis 45

Section V. Enduring Challenges and Recommendations 59

References 77

Appendix A. Study Questionnaires and Interview Protocols 85

Appendix B. Individual Case Studies 125

Appendix C. Study Logic Model 167

INTRODUCTION

This two-phase research project, conducted by WestEd and funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, aims first to map the current landscape of programs and interventions for English Learners in districts in California with the highest percentage of ELs in their schools, and then to contextualize through case studies what happens at the middle school and classroom levels.

The first phase of the study presents a broad picture of the education of English Learners in California middle schools. In this phase, the study focused on how districts translate state mandates for the education of English Learners, and, in turn, how schools reinterpret district guidelines for site implementation.

In the second phase, study researchers investigated the specific instructional context of middle schools through case studies of five middle schools that were selected by triangulation of student data (substantially higher than average EL performance on standardized measures), survey responses, and district nominations. A key goal for this phase was to inspire school change by providing descriptions of promising approaches. What researchers found in the case study schools, however, was a need to identify as well elements of EL instructional programs that need to be changed or strengthened. The hope is to contribute to more informed decisions in the future for improving the education of English Learners.

This report is organized by into five sections. Section I describes salient issues in the field of educating adolescent English Learners, with a particular emphasis on the education of English Learners in California middle schools. Section II describes the study methodology, including the criteria and processes for selection of schools, data collection, and limitations of the research design for both phases of the study. Section III presents study findings for Phase 1. Phase 1 findings address coherence of middle school programs for English Learners within and across districts and schools and the degree to which school practices are consonant with district policies. Phase 2 findings are presented in Section IV. These findings cut across individual case studies, addressing key issues in school culture and leadership, academic pathways for ELs, and teaching and learning practices that are promising as well as those that reflect tensions in the literature on the education of adolescent English Learners. Enduring challenges in the education of English Learners and recommendations for practice and research comprise Section V. Appendices include the full individual case studies represented in the cross-case analyses and the research protocols for both phases of the study.

It is hoped that policy makers, other education decision makers, and practitioners will find recommendations from both phases of this study useful as they consider ways to strengthen and reform the education of middle school English Learners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Middle school students who are English Learners (ELs) quickly run out of time to develop the academic uses of English and the critical skills that will enable them to succeed in the 21st century. What are schools doing during these crucial years to promote ELs' accelerated access to academic language and grade-level, standards-based instruction? How will these students catch up and be able to compete in high school, in college, and on the job market?

This study concludes that middle school programs for English Learners in California are failing students and limiting their futures in profound ways. Conducted by researchers in the Quality Teaching for English Learners program at WestEd, the study was funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Interviews with 13 school districts with the highest concentration of English Learners in the state and 64 middle schools in those districts found incoherent EL programs across districts and from school to school within districts. The use of below-grade-level materials was found to be widespread in English Learner programs, remediation rather than acceleration was common, and some schools purposely *decelerated* students' progress through already below-grade-level materials.

On California's five-level assessment of English Learners, the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), most students (56 percent) do not progress a single level in a year's time and some even regress (California Department of Education, 2008).

School districts in the study identified inadequate teacher preparation for working with English Learners as the primary challenge to these students' academic success. Yet most districts did not provide professional development that would even begin to address teachers' needs.

The study also found that schools did not have mechanisms for addressing challenges that they identified. Schools identified teachers of ELs' and EL students' lack of motivation as primary challenges, yet, only six schools reported a focus on student engagement as a support they offered; none reported having a focus on teacher engagement and motivation. Similarly, lack of parental involvement was identified as a major challenge by school interviewees, but only two schools reported having a focus on involving parents.

Case studies were developed from classroom observations and interviews in five middle schools that were selected by triangulation of student data (substantially higher than average EL performance on standardized measures), survey responses, and district nominations. These case studies contextualize the study findings

— the major challenges schools still face and the promising practices that were found. Practices in one school especially were notable, a small, autonomous district school organized with a focus on targeted grade-level support for students, concerted outreach to parents, and ongoing collegial professional development for teachers. The study findings, in conjunction with research about best practices for English Learners, prompt the study recommendations summarized below.

Study Recommendations

Guiding Assumptions

- Accelerate the pace at which English Learners engage with grade-level content.
- Provide additional grade-level support (not below-grade-level remediation) to students who need it.

Structural Supports

- Create small schools, or schools within schools, where relationships count.
- Hire and nurture talented advocates for ELs, in leadership and teaching roles.
- Bring parents into the school in meaningful ways.
- Create Advisory periods that are academically and socially meaningful.

Placement Decisions

- Avoid EL placements that are isolating and stigmatizing. Do not deny any group of EL students the well-supported experience of challenging mainstream classes.
- Make EL placement more nimble. Know what students know, including in their L1.
- Curriculum Supports
- Support ELD teachers in supplementing below-grade materials with grade-level materials and in creating their own materials.
- Demand content area materials that support access for English Learners.

Pedagogical Supports

- Design lessons that are demanding but enticing. Scaffold students' access to important disciplinary content and processes.
- Design lessons that involve students in explaining, comparing, and hypothesizing — in collaboration with others.
- Make sure that all students talk — about key disciplinary concepts and processes.
- Develop students' awareness of language and learning so that they can support their own future learning.

Professional Development Supports

- Create a shared vision across the school of effective teaching — for English Learners and all students.
- Create a culture of adult learning that includes time for teachers to work collegially.
- Expand teachers' understanding of disciplinary teaching.
- Support teachers in problematizing disciplinary texts, — analyzing the difficulties EL students will encounter and reformulating content and pedagogy to increase students' access.
- Provide administrators with the professional development that allows them to be instructional leaders on behalf of English Learners.
- Make ELs everyone's responsibility.

English Learners are not going to go away. In fact, the segment of greatest growth in the EL population consists of students who were born in this country or educated exclusively in U.S. schools (Goldenberg, 2008; Batalova, Fix, and Murray, 2007). In this country, where we promise a first-rate education for all children, we cannot permit conditions that doom an entire population to something far less. Within the next decade, 25 percent of all students in the United States will be English Learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). It is far from hyperbole to insist that English Learners are everyone's responsibility.

SECTION I: STUDY RATIONALE

Middle school English Learners are at a crucial transition for acquiring the academic language and skills to move confidently into high school and beyond. A number of issues affect whether educators are able to serve this population with the quality instruction they need.

Why a Study of English Learners in Middle School?

Adolescent English Learners in California middle and high schools do not fare well in school, socially or academically, and they fall increasingly behind native English speakers year by year. It is not surprising that they struggle. In addition to the challenge of simultaneously learning the academic uses of English and subject matter content, they are more likely to have unqualified teachers and to lack access to quality curriculum (Gándara and Rumberger, 2003).

The decision to focus this study on middle schools reflects the understanding that the middle school years are a critical transition period for all adolescents, one that determines their academic and social futures; for adolescent second language learners, this period is especially complex. During this time, students begin to more consciously explore their identity and to find their individual role within the family and diverse social groups. It is a time when varied relationships become crucial. Early adolescence is also a time when the brain grows more than any time except infancy (Casey, Giedd, and Thomas, 2000). What adolescents do and learn during this period can establish their interests, strengths, and limitations for the rest of their lives (Wilson and Horch, 2002). Indeed, the academic and social experiences of middle school students have a potent effect on their intellectual confidence and interest and motivation in school (Eccles, 2008). Furthermore, students' middle school success or failure is a strong predictor of high school academic performance and completion (Rumberger and Lim, 2008).

An advisory group convened for this study strongly supported the focus on English Learners in California's middle schools, identifying the following reasons in particular: (1) the statewide lack of consistency in policies for the education of secondary English Learners, (2) the tension between existing knowledge about effective instruction for adolescent ELs and current state mandates that require double periods of English language arts and mathematics for students who are not doing well academically in these courses, (3) the importance that disciplinary language development assumes in middle school as subject matter knowledge and skills become central to the success of all students — and a major impediment to the success of students who have a limited

proficiency in English, and (4) the importance of a student's middle school years in setting a course toward accomplishing the A-G requirements for pursuing university options.

English Learners in California

States vary in how they define English Learners, but in California an English Learner is defined as "a K-12 student who, based on objective assessment, has not developed listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiencies in English sufficient for participation in the regular school program" (California Department of Education [CDE], 2006). Students who are classified as English Learners must receive EL support services at their schools and must take the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) once each year until they are reclassified as proficient (CDE, 2006). Reclassification is based on CELDT scores, grade-level performance on state assessments, and local achievement requirements such as district benchmark tests. Students who are reclassified are termed Reclassified-Fluent English Proficient (R-FEP). Students who speak a primary language other than English at home and who are identified as fluent English speakers based on their performance on the CELDT are termed Initially Fluent English Proficient (I-FEP). R-FEP and I-FEP students are placed in mainstream content classes with English Only (EO) students.

Because the designation of English Learner versus Redesignated-Fluent English Proficient is intended to measure not only language proficiency but also the inability or ability to do grade-level work in English in all core subjects, many complexities are introduced. Redesignation and its frequent corollary, access to grade-level content, have huge consequences for English Learners. Redesignation is associated with a ninth-grade passing rate twice that of students who do not redesignate by the end of middle school. Redesignation also predicts lower rates of dropping out of high school and higher rates of passing the state's high school exit exam (Flores, Painter, and Pachon, 2009). However, the determination in California of who exactly is an English Learner or not is variable: it is left up to each district to determine the precise cutoff point between EL and R-FEP.

Three main demographic groups comprise the EL and Fluent English Proficient populations in California. Some English Learners are immigrants, who were born outside the United States and moved to this country at some point in their young lives. These students are increasingly called "first generation English Learners." Accordingly, "second or third generation English Learners" were born in the United States and represent their families' second or third generation in this country. Nationally, 57 percent of adolescent English Learners are second or third generation. In California this figure is 49 percent (Batalova, Fix, and Murray, 2007). It stands to reason that there are differences between the attitudes different generations of immigrant students bring to school and encounter there on the part of teachers and administrators. Although this is a topic that has not yet been researched in this country, it can be hypothesized that these different attitudes have a significant effect

on the education students receive. After all, second and third generation English Learners have lived their whole lives in the United States, have attended American schools from kindergarten or first grade on, and have developed the conversational skills to feel "at home" in this country. But they have not developed the academic uses of English. Their reading performance is low and so are their math and other disciplinary skills. Besides their lack of academic success, second and third generation English Learners have a higher rate of behavior and health problems than do first generation students. The "tendency to stay out of trouble" and the "physical health of children of immigrants to the United States tend to decline significantly from the first to the third generation" (Zehr, 2009).[1]

English Learners also differ in their literacy development. Some first generation English Learners arrive in the U.S. with uninterrupted schooling and can read and write at grade level in their own languages. Other students have had interrupted schooling and consequently have low literacy levels in their own language (students who are three years behind are labeled SIFE, students with interrupted formal education). Many students have repeatedly changed instructional programs (back and forth from education in their family language to education in English) and, as a consequence, the development of their literacy skills has suffered. In California, second and third generation students tend not to have developed literacy skills in their family language and to have low literacy levels in English (Francis, 2008).

California's English Learners speak over 100 different languages (CDE, 2006). The vast majority, about 85 percent, are Spanish speakers. Nationally, Spanish speakers are the fastest growing group of students in the United States and, if trends continue, their growth is estimated to derive mainly from second and third generation groups (Fix and Passel, 2003).

While some English Learners come from comfortable socioeconomic backgrounds, most are poor, as defined by eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches (the primary way that government entities categorize low income within schools). About 85 percent of EL students in California are economically disadvantaged (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2007).

To succeed academically, all English Learners must overcome a "double gap," first to equal the (relatively low) achievement of their native speaking counterparts, and then to reach a level of achievement that is considered grade-level "proficient." Nationwide, although an alarming 70 percent of eighth grade English Learners read

[1] Contrary to this American pattern, in many European countries, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, although first generation language learners trail their native speaking counterparts academically, second and third generation second language learners outperform their native speaking counterparts in all academic measures (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2006).

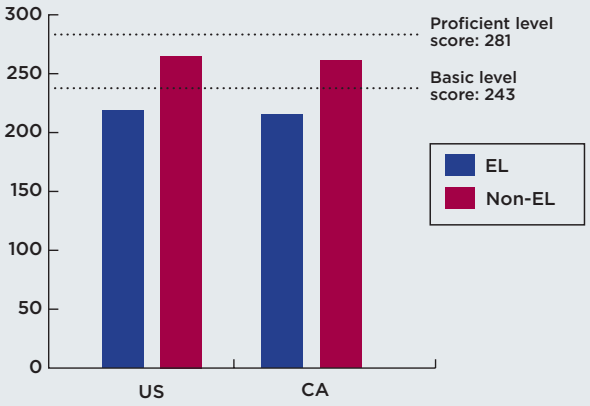
below the proficient level on the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress, many middle school students who are native speakers of English do not perform well on these measures, either. For example, figure 1 shows that, on average, eighth graders who are second language learners perform at a scale score of 219 in reading, while their native-speaking counterparts score 265. There is a gap in second language learners' performance relative to native speakers. However, all eighth graders should attain proficiency at the eighth grade level (281 on the scale). Figure 2 shows a similar double gap in the achievement of adolescent English language learners in mathematics. In California, the double gap parallels the national situation in both reading and mathematics.

As described above, the complexities of providing effective education for middle school English Learners are many and the challenges great; however, no single study addresses the broad picture of educating middle school students for whom English is a second language. This study seeks to contribute to an increased understanding of the issues involved and the directions that may be fruitful.

Issues in the Education of Middle School English Language Learners

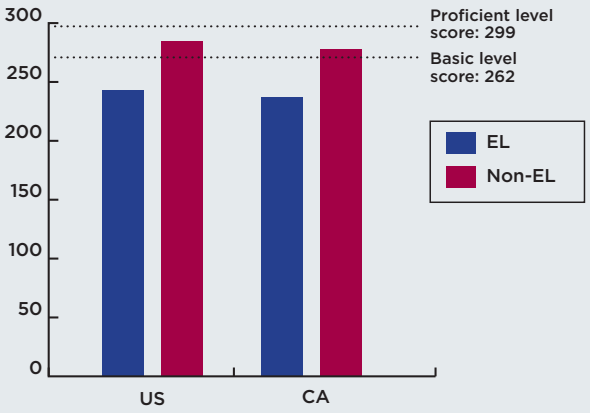
Three main areas of concern can be identified in the literature on the education of second language learners: teacher capacity, application of research

Figure 1. Grade 8 reading average scale score, by status as English Learner in the U.S. and California: 2009



Source: NCES, The Nation's Report Card, Reading 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress at Grades 4 and 8.

Figure 2. Grade 8 mathematics average scale score, by status as English Learner in the U.S. and California: 2009



Source: NCES, The Nation's Report Card, Mathematics 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress at Grades 4 and 8.

to practice, and program design. A fourth issue, which merits study, is that of educators' beliefs about the promise of English Learners. This introductory review of issues provides some background on what is known about each.

1. Inadequate Teacher Capacity to Educate English Learners

There is little debate that properly qualified teachers are pivotal to students' success or failure (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff, 2005; Hanushek, 1986, 1992; Sanders and Rivers, 1996). This situation is even more important in the education of English Learners. These students are more likely than any other group of students to be taught by a teacher who lacks appropriate teaching credentials. Rumberger (2003) found that 25 percent of teachers of English Learners in California lacked a full credential as compared to 14 percent in the state overall. California has made a concerted effort to have a qualified teacher in every classroom; however, ELs continue to be disproportionately taught by those who are underqualified (Esch, Chang-Ross, Guha, Humphrey, Shields, Tiffany-Morales, Wechsler, and Woodworth, 2005; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Rumberger, 2008).

Moreover, even credentialed teachers feel inadequately prepared to teach English Learners (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll, 2005). More than half of the teachers who participated in a comprehensive survey of teaching English Learners in California stated that they had had little relevant professional development (one session in five years) and that it was of low quality and limited utility (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll).

The landscape of California schools has changed dramatically in the last two decades. Many teachers received their teaching credentials at a time when the school population looked very different; it only makes sense that they should feel inadequate now. As Richard Elmore (2004) remarks, "improvement above all entails learning to do the right things in the setting where you work." In education, context always matters. Teaching and learning are always situated in the particular. It cannot be true simply that "good teaching is good teaching." Consequently, teachers need to respond with quality to the specific demands they encounter in their everyday professional lives, but to do that, they need to be supported in their growth.

Currently, pre-service education programs in California are required to meet Standard 13, which addresses how to teach second language learners. Although all novice teachers now graduate from teacher preparation programs in California with Crosscultural Language and Development (CLAD) certification, and all veteran teachers must pass the California Teachers of English Learners (CTEL) examination, both beginning and veteran teachers need to be supported to implement these approaches well — throughout their professional lives and to meet the changing demands of their contexts. There are no thorough studies of adequate professional development for teachers of English Learners, but we know from the literature about mainstream teaching that good professional development presents a coherent portfolio of opportunities to develop teacher expertise,

including on-the-job-support and targeted professional development. In addition, we know from the literature that powerful professional development must address how teachers learn (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos, 2009). This argues for two conditions: providing teachers with hands-on experiences of how to engage and instruct students in their specific subject matter content and time to reflect with peers about the scaffolding that needs to be provided so that all students gain from the process. Translated to the professional growth of teachers of English Learners, this means engaging teachers in learning tasks that might be carried out by their students, followed by the deliberate analysis of the language that was required to carry out those tasks. Teachers of English Learners must not only deepen their subject matter expertise, they must also know how best to make their disciplinary expertise available to support the development of English Learners' conceptual, academic, and linguistic knowledge.

2. Limited Use of Research-Based Instructional Practices

Before the 1998 passage of Proposition 227 in California, 29 percent of English Learners were enrolled in bilingual programs (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Rumberger, 2008). This low percentage was due to a shortage in the pool of teachers who could teach in two languages. After the passage of Proposition 227, which had as its purpose to dismantle bilingual education in the state, fewer than 6 percent of ELs receive instruction both in English and their native language.

However, the evidence from research points out that use of students' first language in instruction, especially in reading instruction, promotes higher levels of achievement in English reading. The National Literacy Panel (August and Shanahan, 2006) conducted a meta-analysis of 17 studies focused on this issue and concluded that whether English Learners were taught to read first in their mother tongue, and then in English, or taught to read in both languages simultaneously, use of the native language produced better results than exclusively teaching them literacy skills in English. Skills developed first in a language the students understand then transfer into their second language, especially if pedagogy promotes this transfer. August and Shanahan's comprehensive report is the latest of five meta-analyses conducted by five independent researchers or groups of researchers that have reached the same conclusion about the value of literacy development in students' family language (Goldenberg, 2008).

English Learners benefit, as do all other students, from an instructional environment where they are challenged and supported in equal measures. Rather than simplified content and language, students need amplified access to content and language (Walqui and van Lier, 2010). Furthermore, they need to be engaged and active in intellectually worthy activities that are deliberately scaffolded to promote apprenticeship into the concepts, language, and processes of the diverse disciplines they are studying (Walqui, 2007). In Australia, where English Learners succeed,

especially in the second generation, they are offered a high challenge/high support pedagogy guided by functional, systemic linguistics and by sociocultural theory (Gibbons, 2002, 2003, 2009; Hammond, 2001).

There are many misguided ideas currently informing pedagogical practice with English Learners in California as well as in the rest of the country. One is the "frontloading" of vocabulary, which offers lists of words that students practice in isolation and then reproduce in complete sentences that are disconnected from each other (Dutro and Moran, 2003; Feldman and Kinsella, 2005). This practice does not help students participate in the construction of arguments in the discipline and promotes atomistic recall of facts (see a critique of this practice in Gibbons, 2009; Schleppegrell, 2009). Instead, English Learners learn new words when these are embedded in meaningful contexts and students are provided with enticing opportunities to practice them in extended discourse (Goldenberg, 2008). A study reviewed by the National Literacy Panel, for example, showed that presenting new words in texts that are appropriate and interesting for students and providing opportunities for students to use the words in multiple meaningful contexts (such as reading and hearing stories, discussing, preparing projects, and using them in homework assignments) led to improvements in word learning and reading comprehension (Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively, and White, 2004).

Another misguided practice is for teachers to insist on students' step-by-step mastery of grammatical forms, supposedly sequenced from simpler to more complex, so that students are restricted from encountering complex linguistic structures in a natural, context-rich way. This emphasis on form is also mirrored in what is required by California tests of English proficiency. As experts of instructed second language learning propose, students best learn a language by focusing primarily on what they want to say — on meaning rather than on how the message is expressed (Ellis, 2005, 2008, 2009; Gibbons, 2009; Long, 1996; Schleppegrell, 2009). A study that followed middle school history teachers in California confirmed that when students are engaged in collaborative activities that require them to use new language in situations they find relevant, they appropriate the language and can then use it appropriately in the future (Bunch, Lotan, Valdés, and Cohen, 2005).

Despite research to the contrary, another practice that many teachers engage in with the best of intentions is to correct English Learners' every mistake, whether in their oral or written work. Believing that if only students notice what is erroneous in their output they will be able to correct and never commit the same error again, teachers are dismayed when this is not the case.

According to Skehan (1991) and other second language acquisition experts (Ellis, 2008, 2009; Harmer, 2007), three aspects of language production need to be differentiated: fluency, complexity, and accuracy. Fluency is the extent to which the language produced by a speaker in performing a task manifests pausing, hesitation, or reformulation. Complexity refers to the extent to which the language produced by learners when performing

a task is elaborate and varied. It is measured by lexical richness (for example, number of word families used, percentage of lexical per structural words, percentage of unique words) and the amount of subordination in sentences. Accuracy is defined by the extent to which the language produced in performing a task conforms to target language norms. Indicators of accuracy include the percentage of error-free clauses and target-like use of verb tenses, articles, and prepositions.

Second language learners have limited processing capability when they are engaged in activity. Since they cannot attend to all aspects simultaneously, they prioritize and derive differential results from their choices. In particular, tension arises between complexity and accuracy. Thus, for example, it is recommended that when teachers focus on fluency, they cannot at the same time request that students be accurate and complex. Accuracy requires deliberateness, and it will slow down the process of production. However, classroom exercises and, more consequentially, tests usually require the formation of complete and correct sentences. This is an issue that needs to be addressed in practice and testing.

3. Lack of Strong and Coherent Programs for Adolescent ELs

In California, the state-recommended program for English Learners in middle school includes an English Language Development (ELD) course for students with lower levels of proficiency in English concurrent with subject matter taught with methodology known as Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE). This division seems to be informed by a notion that first students learn the language and then they learn the subject matter content. However, each discipline makes differential uses of English, and all teaching of disciplinary content — even to native speakers of the language of instruction — entails new ways of using language. Because language is a tool that mediates all learning (see for example, Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 2000; van Lier, 2008), functional understanding of the discourse of the discipline needs to inform the development of academic knowledge. Students cannot learn disciplinary content absent disciplinary language.

Complicating the issue of weak programs for English Learners is the wide variety of approaches from school to school, across disciplinary areas in a school, and from teacher to teacher. The inconsistency English Learners face in instruction is compounded by these students' high mobility rate; both factors conspire against their educational success.

4. Educators' Beliefs About English Learners

A final issue, one that unfortunately has not been the subject of much research, concerns educators' attitudes toward English Learners. Many teachers and school administrators believe that it is impossible to educate ELs

with excellence. For example, the superintendent of schools in Palo Alto, California, expresses little hope for addressing the achievement gap in his district:

> It's just not possible for the average kid who comes to this country in seventh or eighth grade, or even third grade, without a word of English and parents with little formal education, to match the achievement levels of kids whose mom has a Ph.D. in English from Stanford and can afford to stay home and spend time supplementing the education of her kids.
>
> (February 2, 2009, *Mercury News*)

This study seeks to contribute to the work of others who have as their aim to change the context and practice of educating English Learners in middle schools. We believe it is possible to develop the immense potential ELs bring to school if all efforts — policy, instruction, professional development, testing, and accountability move in the same direction. This is an important goal to accomplish not only for the future of EL students, but also for the benefit of a society that will soon count them as its majority population.

SECTION II: STUDY METHODOLOGY

This section describes how districts and schools were recruited and selected for the Phase 1 collection of district- and school-level data about the education of English Learners, and how the data were analyzed. The description of the Phase 2 methodology focuses on recruitment and selection of the schools that became the case study sites. The logic model that guided the design and implementation of the study appears in Appendix C.

Phase 1 Methodology

To develop a broad picture of the education of English Learners in middle schools, researchers needed a representative sample of middle schools serving English Learners. In California, 52 percent of all ELs are enrolled in 50 of the state's 1,039 districts. Thirteen of these 50 districts educate 32 percent of all ELs (California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit, 2006/07).[2] All 13 of these districts were included in the sample, and 12 of the remaining 37 districts were selected at random, for a total sample of 25 districts.

Among these 25 districts, a random sample of middle schools was selected based on their concentrations of ELs. The research team, guided by the study advisory panel, hypothesized that instructional programs for ELs may differ in middle schools that have high versus low concentrations of ELs. Thus, the stratification to draw schools based on EL concentration helped ensure that the school sampling could support an investigation of any such differences. Out of the 319 middle schools in the 25 selected districts, the study drew a total sample of 150 middle schools (75 were randomly selected from the low EL concentration schools while another 75 were randomly selected from the high EL concentration schools). The cut point used for categorizing schools as high versus low EL concentration was 28 percent. This criterion is based on the median EL concentration (28 percent) of the 319 middle schools among the 25 districts in the sample (California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit, 2006/07), higher than the median concentration for all California middle schools, which is 19.6 percent. Since the study is not intended to generalize findings to all middle schools in California, the 28 percent cut point seemed appropriate.

[2] The 13 districts are Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Ana, Garden Grove, Fresno, Long Beach, San Bernardino, Compton, Fontana, San Francisco, Pomona, Sacramento, and Oakland. These districts are identified as 13 of the 29 districts with the highest enrollment of ELs nationally (NCELA, 2006).

Phase 1 Recruitment

In January 2008, research staff began the process of negotiating memoranda of understanding with each district to delineate research activities and responsibilities.[3]

Thirteen districts were successfully recruited into the study. This final count includes 9 of the 13 districts that have the greatest number of ELs in the state. Overall, the districts in the study sample account for 30 percent of the ELs in the state and are similar to the targeted districts in terms of average and median EL concentration (see table 1). The remaining 12 districts that were originally targeted for this study either declined or did not respond to repeated requests to participate.

Table 1. District sample comparison

	25 Districts in sample	13 Districts in study
Total number of ELs	599,736	462,325
Average EL concentration	36%	34%
Median EL concentration	34%	28%
Percent of ELs in California	39%	30%

Within the 13 districts that were recruited into the study, there are a total of 116 middle schools in the stratified random sample of schools. Of these schools, 52 declined to participate or were dropped from the study due to non-responsiveness, leaving the final number of schools in the study at 64. The final recruited schools are similar to the targeted schools in terms of median and average EL concentration (see table 2). In addition, the number of schools with low EL concentration is about the same as the number of schools with high EL concentration, which is consistent with what was targeted.

[3] Many large districts required completion of research applications, which then required a review period. Other district representatives were unresponsive to various contacts (phone calls, emails, and written letters). During this process of recruitment, it became clear that many school districts feel understaffed and overextended in their research activities and are thus hesitant to commit to participating in new research studies.

Table 2. School sample comparison

	Original targeted schools	Remaining targeted schools*	Schools in study*
Phase 1	150	116	64
Total middle schools	75	64	33
Number of low EL concentration	75	52	31
Number of high EL concentration	28%	27%	29%
Average EL concentration	28%	25%	27%
Median EL concentration			

* Schools in the 13 recruited districts

The number of participating schools in each district varied considerably. At the high end, 23 schools in one district and 14 in a second took part in the study. At the low end, two schools participated in five of the districts and one school in two of the districts. As mentioned earlier, non-responsiveness on the part of some schools limited the total number of schools interviewed in participating districts.

Phase 1 Data Collection

For Phase 1 data collection, researchers conducted one interview in each district and one interview in each school. In both cases, researchers worked with district/school staff to help identify the person considered "most knowledgeable about instructional practices for ELs." At the district level, interviewees were typically the directors of specialized departments or offices that focus on ELs. Examples of the titles of district interviewees are Director Office of Language Acquisition, EL Director, and Director of Bilingual Education/Special Programs. At the school level, those identified as most knowledgeable included principals, assistant principals, and EL coordinators. In some cases two or more such representatives participated in a given interview.

Instrument Development

Instrument development began with a review of recent studies of instructional practices for ELs, with a focus on California-based studies since the California policy environment plays a significant role in shaping instruction — largely because of Proposition 227 (EdSource, 2006; Gándara and Rumberger, 2003; Legislative Analyst's Office, 2004; Parrish, Merickel, Perez, and Linquanti, 2006; Williams, T., Hakuta, K., Haertel, E., et al. 2007). After a draft instrument was developed, researchers convened a focus group of school- and district-level practitioners knowledgeable about EL instruction to pilot the interview protocols. After revision and refinement based on that initial piloting, researchers then conducted several additional pilots with representatives of districts and schools

outside of the study sample. These pilot interviews were conducted one-on-one, in order to replicate the actual study conditions. After each successive pilot, further refinements were made to the protocols.

The final protocol has two parts: a pre-interview questionnaire and a phone interview. During the piloting of the interview protocol, the wide variation both within and across districts in terms of the programs and terminologies for various levels and types of instruction resulted in lengthy interviews in which the interviewer probed to assure accuracy of the data about ELD and sheltered instruction programs. The study team decided that the interviews would benefit from a pre-interview questionnaire. The questionnaires, comprising closed response items only, were sent to interviewees electronically in advance of the interviews. The purpose of the questionnaires was to reduce the amount of interview time and to potentially increase the accuracy and precision of responses. The interview protocol was then modified to remove those items that became part of the pre-interview questionnaire (see Appendix A). In the end, the questionnaire made it possible for interviewers to reflect on the written information given in advance of the interviews and to construct appropriate follow-up questions and probes.

To gain a perspective on how districts interpret state policies, and, in turn, how schools interpret district policies, the study district and school instruments (including the pre-interview questionnaires) generally covered many of the same topics, though the district-level instruments focused on district policies and guidelines, whereas the school instruments focused to a greater degree on actual instructional practices for ELs. Consistent with this general division between two levels of data collection, the school protocols included a more extensive section on actual classroom strategies. Box 1 summarizes the topics covered in the interviews.

Box 1. Summary of interview topics

Instructional Programs for Middle School ELs	Instructional Support and Practices for Middle School ELs	Capacity to Educate Middle School ELs
• Specific policies and plans for support • Placement • English Language Development programs • Academic content programs • Instructional support programs	• Curriculum and Assessment • Focus of efforts to support ELs' language and academic development and related challenges	• Personnel structure to support ELs • Staffing and professional development

Interviewer Training

Interviewers were trained both formally and informally. Formal training was provided in a day-long session prior to the first study interviews. All members of the interview team participated in this training, which covered important contextual and background information related to state guidelines and requirements for ELs. Recordings made of the training and pilot interviews facilitated reflection on challenges in conducting the interviews and potential solutions. Informal training began during the pilot phase and continued as the study began. Interviewers were paired during interviews so that one team member could listen and reflect, while the other conducted the interview. Post-interview feedback sessions between the two researchers helped to hone interviewing skills and improve implementation of the study protocols. Interviewer training continued throughout the Phase 1 data collection. Regular research meetings with all interviewers provided a venue for discussion of issues and challenges during the interviews. For example, in advance of many of the research meetings, all team members had read the same completed interview write-ups, and during the meetings they discussed issues and questions that had been identified. These discussions lead to refinements in the interview protocols.

Implementation

Phase 1 interviews began in May 2008 and ended in January 2009. The overall strategy in each district was to conduct the district-level interview before any school interviews. This sequencing ensured that interviewers developed an understanding of the district requirements and guidelines for ELs, which could then serve as a backdrop for the school-level interviews. It also allowed the research team an opportunity to solicit district interviewees' help in informing school-level interviewees about the study and, in some cases, in securing their consent to participate in the interviews. All interviews were digitally recorded. Thorough interview notes were taken by the interviewers during and immediately following the interviews. Interviewers consulted the digital recordings as needed.

Phase 1 Data Analysis

As a first step in the analysis, all interview notes were reviewed by researchers on the team who did not conduct the interviews being reviewed. Apparent inconsistencies and gaps were identified and investigated using the digital recordings as a reference. In some cases, follow-up calls or emails to the interviewees were made. Next, a coding tree was developed to help organize the interview data. Using N*Vivo analysis software, codes were designed to categorize information according to the topics and subtopics on the interview protocols. The team also developed thematic codes, designed to capture such issues as interviewees' articulated beliefs and values about the instruction of ELs, the disconnections between district and school accounts of district and

school practices, historical issues that current plans and practices aimed to address, and general problems or challenges articulated.[4]

In addition to the coding in N*Vivo, the data on English Language Development (ELD) and academic content for ELs, which was captured in a table on the interview protocol, was coded in Excel. The purpose of this coding was to summarize the programs for ELs by English proficiency level and by school.

After data cleaning and coding were complete, the research team developed matrices to summarize themes and patterns by district and school. A first step in this process involved identifying district/school themes emerging from the data. Data were first analyzed for themes at the district level and then at the school level. The goal in this analysis was to discuss key polices at the district level and the parallel practices at the school level. To achieve this end, within each school interview, it was necessary to recognize thematically similar responses to a single protocol question as one response. For example, if when asked for three primary challenges in supporting ELs' language acquisition and academic development, a school-level interviewee identified some aspect of parental involvement as two of the three challenges at the school, parental involvement was coded once, not twice, at that school. In this way, the unit of analysis remained at the district/school level rather than focusing on the number of responses to a theme. This unit of analysis also allowed for thematic comparison across districts and schools.

Phase 2 Methodology

Near the end of Phase 1, the research team began analyzing school and district-level interviews to identify a pool of sites from which eight schools would be selected for in-depth case studies. Based on the difficulties encountered in recruiting districts for the first phase of research, the research team decided to start with 12 to 14 schools, anticipating that some schools might not wish to participate while others would be eliminated after preliminary observations.

In the district level interviews during Phase 1, researchers had asked participants to nominate middle schools in the district that, in their view, served ELs well, and to provide "plausible evidence" for the nomination. This evidence could include standardized achievement data as well as program evaluations, formative assessment data, survey data, and so forth. Districts nominated a total of six schools, with one district nominating three

[4] The interview protocols contained several questions about problems or challenges related to specific issues; in contrast, this code was designed to capture more general problems or challenges that were articulated by interviewees.

schools and many others none. Reasons given for the recommendation varied considerably, from the presence of strong leadership for the education of ELs to effective uses of technology with English learners. The process of school selection for Phase 2 began with an analysis of school demographics and achievement for the six nominated schools, creating a profile for each with the following information:

- number and percent of ELs by grade and language group,
- number and percent of ELs at each overall CELDT proficiency level,
- number and percent of all students scoring at each level of proficiency on the English language arts CST as compared to ELs as a subgroup,
- school-level API and AYP data,[5]
- enrollment trends for ELs since 1995 (year the state began collecting data), and
- number of ELs enrolled by type of instructional setting or service.

After compiling profiles of the nominated schools, researchers analyzed school-level data from Phase 1 districts to select an additional six to eight schools. A first point of analysis was the number and percent of ELs, CELDT data, and CST data for all students and for the EL subgroup for schools in each of the districts. Based on analysis of Phase 1 data, it was known that districts struggled with implementation of their EL polices and plans at schools with small numbers of ELs and at schools with large numbers of ELs in mainstream classes. The hope was to identify possible schools for Phase 2 that exhibited one of the above dimensions and also showed promising achievement gains for ELs. Eight schools fit these criteria, which, included with the six schools nominated by districts, created a pool of 14 possible schools. School profiles were created for all schools in the initial pool.

Phase 2 Recruitment

In April 2009, the research team began the process of negotiating site visits. For schools that were part of the Phase 1 study, the original memorandum of understanding with the district included the possibility of follow-up visits at participating schools. For these schools it was a matter of contacting district and school staff to set up a visit. One district decided that it did not want to continue in the study, and with that decision two schools were eliminated. Those schools that were not in Phase 1 had to be informed about the study and convinced to participate in Phase 2, and their participation had to be approved by the district review boards. A total of 12 schools agreed to participate in the initial selection process and the in-depth case studies if requested.

[5] Schools' API and AYP scores are derived from the California standards tests (CSTs). The state sets annual API growth targets for a school and its subgroups based on the previous year's scores until a school reaches a score of 800 (in a range of 200–1000). Thereafter, a school must maintain a schoolwide score of 800 and continue to improve the scores of each subgroup. The state sets a school's annual AYP targets (schoolwide and for subgroups) with the goal of meeting the absolute NCLB target of 100 percent student proficiency by 2014.

Phase 2 Data Collection

First visits to schools lasted two days. Researchers asked to observe ELD classes at two levels, if available, and content classes with ELs and without, to provide a point of comparison. Observations lasted 45 minutes in the selected classrooms. As part of the first visit, researchers conducted brief interviews of teachers, the EL coordinator or person in charge of assessing and classifying ELs, and the principal. The purpose of these visits was two-fold: to determine if "promising practices" were evident and to decide which teachers would be visited if the school were selected. For schools selected to be Phase 2 sites, the team revisited the school for three days, observing selected teachers twice, and conducting more in-depth interviews with the principal and EL coordinator. Researchers again conducted brief interviews with a subset of teachers who were observed.

The schools identified for first visits and those selected for case studies included both high and low EL enrollment schools (see table 3). As mentioned in the discussion of Phase 1 methodology, the average number of ELs in California middle schools is 17 percent. The 12 schools selected for the first visits included one school with an extremely low EL concentration of 3.2 percent and several with high concentrations of 40 percent or more, and an average concentration of 24 percent. Phase 2 case study schools also have an average EL concentration of 24 percent, well over the state average number of ELs in middle schools but under the 28 percent average of the Phase 1 schools.

Table 3. EL concentrations in study schools

	Schools in study	Schools selected for initial site visits in Phase 2	Phase 2 case study schools
Total middle schools	64	12	7
Number of low EL concentration schools	33	5	4
Number of high EL concentration schools	31	7	3
Average EL concentration	29%	24%	24%
Median EL concentration	27%	21.5%	19%

Instrument development and training

Protocols for school visits were developed by key members of the research team. During this process, experienced and senior members of the research team — the principal investigator, project director, and a member of the research team who was highly involved in the Phase 1 development — reviewed the dimensions of practice that were probed in Phase 1 and extrapolated from these the domains that could be observed for evidence of promising practices in the education of middle school ELs. Four domains resulted: the school culture, types of support for ELs and their teachers, instructional practices, and access to grade-level content. Within each

domain, guiding questions were generated so that the research team visiting schools would have a specific and shared focus for observing within each domain.

The principal investigator and project director piloted the protocol in one of the 12 schools, and, based on that pilot, several refinements were made. The final protocol has three parts: guiding questions for the observers, a process for developing observation summaries from observation notes, and open-ended interview questions for teachers, EL coordinators, and administrators. The questions for administrators centered on ways that the school supported teachers of English Learners and any promising practices in place at the school. Teachers were interviewed about instructional decisions, materials used, and perceptions of student performance. EL coordinators were asked about instructional practices that were working well for English Learners, what needed work, and how teachers were supported in effective instructional practices for English Learners (see Appendix A).

The research team read, annotated, and discussed case study literature and participated in a one-day training prior to conducting first visits to the schools. At this training, information about Phase 1 objectives, methods, processes, and salient findings were discussed, along with Phase 2 objectives. The research team was provided with contextual information about each of the schools. Model observation notes and a model observation summary were provided, and the team practiced note taking using classroom videos. Team members were assigned to schools. Finally, procedures for sharing and safekeeping of files in a case study database were reviewed.

Implementation

Phase 2 school visits were conducted in May and June, 2009. First visits to the 12 initial sites were conducted over two weeks, with two or three team members, depending on the enrollment at the school, visiting each school. At the end of the first cycle of visits, the full research team convened for a half-day and each team presented a summary of observations and interviews for their assigned schools and promising practices that were observed in the four main domains. Researchers also presented a concise description of what was unique about the school's instruction of ELs and what underlying issues a case study might illustrate (Yin, 1994). Based on these presentations, the principal investigator and project director made an initial selection of eight middle schools for the Phase 2 case studies. The team then reviewed available data for each school, triangulating CELDT, reclassification, and STAR data with classroom observations and interviews. Seven schools demonstrated evidence of promising practices in the education of English Learners. These became the case study sites.

For the second, more in-depth visit, research team members spent three days at each school. Researchers observed in classes for several periods, collecting any relevant documents. Research staff conducted additional in-depth interviews with administrators and the EL coordinator. In these interviews, researchers probed more deeply into the content of the interview conducted during the earlier visit to the school. For example, if during

the first visit an administrator talked about professional development focused on accelerating the progress of English Learners, a follow-up probe might center on details of the professional development, including the content, the provider, and the time devoted to it. Or, if an administrator had mentioned promising instructional practices for English Learners in a first interview and these practices were not evident during observations, a follow-up probe might focus on the absence of the practices and possible next steps.

Phase 2 Data Analysis

At the end of the Phase 2 research visits, the research staff began analysis of case study data. Researchers first developed case descriptions using the four domains that guided observations and interviews at the sites. Two sets of data across sites did not fit into the original domains of school climate, support for ELs and their teachers, instructional practices, and access to content area courses. This first set included information on the schools' ELD program, including its programmatic sequence and identification and reclassification processes for ELs. The academic trajectories available to ELs at the middle school level was the second set of data not addressed by the original domains. This latter area encompassed school-level philosophies about remediation or acceleration of all students, including ELs. Recombing the collected data resulted in case descriptions with the following domains: School culture and resources to support English Learners; English Learner identification, classification, and reclassification; academic trajectories; and teaching and learning. Researchers began development of case studies of the seven schools, organizing findings from observations and interviews at a site into a coherent narrative of educational practices that supported or hindered any promising practices. A final category was added to the case studies for a summary of any concerns a school's practices might present. During this phase of analysis, the team recognized that two case studies presented no features distinct from other cases, and they were dropped. The team then focused on developing the five distinctive case studies, which appear in Appendix B.

A final step was to look across the cases to identify key policies and educational practices for English Learners in California middle schools. A cross-case analysis presents these findings, discussing those that improve education for English Learners and those that present challenges to students' success.

Limitations of the Study

The data for Phase 1 are limited to one pre-interview questionnaire and one interview at each district and each school in the study. Interviews in general have certain limitations as data sources since they reflect the interviewees' subjective interpretation of issues explored in the interview. In this study, interviews in the schools and districts in the study are not triangulated with other data sources — whether other interviews, documents, or observations. Therefore, it is not possible to know from the Phase 1 data whether the interview data would be supported or refuted by other such data sources.

The Phase 1 interviews were conducted between May 2008 and January 2009, with the bulk of the school interviews completed in October and November 2008. Because of this timing, in some cases the interviewees referred mostly to practices as of the 2007/08 school year, in other cases interviewees referred to arrangements in the 2008/09 school year.

The response rates among the sample schools within the recruited districts varied considerably. On the high end, researchers were able to conduct interviews with 100 percent of the sample schools in a given district; on the low end, this figure was 20 percent. The average percentage was 55 percent and the median was 33 percent.

Phase 2 observations and interviews were conducted at the end of the 2008/09 school year. In some instances, teachers were able to implement curriculum that moved beyond prescribed textbook materials. It may well be that these were unique events or that they represented common practice. Researchers attempted to triangulate information about instructional practices when interviewing teachers, administrators, and EL coordinators. A three-day visit, however, cannot provide the information available through an ethnographic study.

SECTION III: PHASE 1 FINDINGS

Three main findings emerge from analysis of Phase 1 interviews. The first has to do with a lack of coherence in how districts across California interpret and implement state policies for English Learners. A second finding describes the variation in how districts and schools understand each other, as well as the variation in how schools implement a district's EL policies. Finally, schools' policies for ELs do not always match the needs they identify.

Finding 1: Programs for English Learners at middle schools lack coherence.

California Education Policies for English Learners

California law specifies that EL students must have access to two types of English language classrooms: *Structured English Immersion* and *English Language Mainstream*. Within these two types of English language classrooms, students may be offered three types of English language development: *standalone, embedded, or intensive*.

According to California Education Code (2005), *Structured English Immersion* (SEI) programs are for EL students who are considered to have less than "reasonable fluency" in English, which aligns with a score on the CELDT of "intermediate," or level three of the test's five levels.[6] These SEI programs can take different forms. Newcomer students are often placed in "standalone" ELD, to promote language acquisition and to provide support for accessing academic content. Academic content is delivered with a particular methodology, known as Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE). SDAIE methodology is also used in courses typically referred to as "sheltered" core classes on secondary master schedules.

After students attain "reasonable fluency," they are to be placed in *English Language Mainstream* classrooms where they receive "embedded" ELD[7] instruction. Even when placed in *English Language Mainstream* classes, ELs must, by law, be provided with ELD in English language arts classes, support for accessing other core content, and/or primary language instruction until they are redesignated as fluent English proficient (R-FEP).

[6] California Education Code designates five levels of English Language Development: beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced. These are also referred to as levels 1–5, with 1 being the beginning level. Typically, ELs scoring at the beginning to intermediate levels on the CELDT are considered to have less than what the Education Code considers "reasonable fluency."

[7] As in SEI classes, the typical instructional approach for ELs in mainstream classes is SDAIE. A parent may request an alternative program such as a Dual Language or Two-way Immersion Program or may request that a child be transferred to an English Language Mainstream program regardless of English proficiency.

Districts have discretion to determine an appropriate amount of ELD instruction when an EL student is placed in mainstream classes, but once in mainstream classes, if students test at two years below grade level proficiency on the state standards tests, the California State Board of Education has stipulated that they must be offered an "intensive" ELD intervention. An intensive intervention is usually two periods, but can include ELD in place of ELA, ELD in addition to ELA, two periods of ELA, or a reading intervention program in addition to or in place of ELA. Two of the commonly used state-adopted ELA intervention programs are the Hampton Brown *High Point* program (developed for English Learners) and the Sopris West *Language!* program (developed as a reading intervention for native English speakers).

One part of the process for English Learners to be redesignated fluent English proficient is to perform well on a number of tests, beginning with the CELDT and the California Standards Tests (CST) in the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. At the middle school level, STAR tests measure students' achievement in English language arts and mathematics in grades 6-8, writing in grade 7, and history-social science and science in grade 8. For federal NCLB reporting, ELs in the first year of English instruction are not required to take state tests, and for NCLB purposes, English Learners who have been redesignated R-FEP remain in the EL subgroup for two years after redesignation. However, a state may have other requirements. California requires all ELs to take ELA, writing, and mathematics tests.[8] In addition to the role these achievement tests have as a component of English Learners' reclassification portfolio, students' performance on them is also a factor in the type of reading/English Language Arts (ELA) intervention required for them. For districts and schools, the performance of their English Learners is a high-stakes accountability measure.

Programs for ELs in the Study Districts and Schools

Statewide, district programs for English Learners are not particularly successful at preparing students. In 2009, only 38 percent of LEAs statewide made AYP (compared to 41 percent in 2008). While the number of elementary schools in districts making AYP increased in both years, the number of middle and high schools making AYP declined (Ed-Data, 2009). The same trend was true for the districts in this study. In 2007/08, nine of the 13 had not met the state achievement goals that are part of NCLB reporting, and they had failed to meet growth targets established for English Learners for two or more consecutive years. These districts were in Title III Program Improvement (PI) and were required to submit comprehensive plans for improving the linguistic and academic performance of English Learners. As of 2008/09, none of the 13 districts in the study had met the federal growth targets. Additionally, as of 2008/09, 24 of the 64 schools in the study did not meet the state achievement goals

[8] Schools may provide assistance to ELs. Spanish-speaking ELs who have been in the U.S. for less than 12 months or receive instruction in Spanish are required to take additional tests (CDE, 2006).

that are part of NCLB reporting. These schools reported that they had developed and submitted a Single Plan for Student Achievement that details improvement plans for the achievement of all students and contains specific information about how the school will improve the educational outcomes of ELs.

To step back from these results and understand districts' policies about ELD and academic content instruction, and how middle schools then interpret these policies at the site level, researchers asked interviewees at districts and schools a number of questions about their ELD programs and their academic content programs. In each district and school interviews were conducted with the person nominated as "most knowledgeable about instructional programs for ELs."

District guidelines and formats for ELD instruction

At the district level, interviewees were asked to describe their district's policies/guidelines for English Language Development in middle school and to describe district formats for ELD instruction (standalone, embedded in ELA, and ELA intensive intervention), by CELDT level.

Two districts in the study with large concentrations of ELs reported placing their "long-term" middle school ELs in a two-period intensive intervention with the ELA *Language!* program. Both districts characterized "long-term" as those middle school ELs who have been receiving EL services in the district for five years or more and have not been reclassified as English proficient.

In many programs, EL students at CELDT levels 1 and 2, and sometimes 3, are placed in standalone ELD classes. Students who have reached "reasonable fluency" are often placed in ELA classes, where the teacher is supposed to provide them with ELD instruction. If an English Learner is placed in both an ELD class and an intensive ELA intervention, the student may have three or four periods a day of ELD and ELA. Table 4 reports district responses to the question about their policies and guidelines related to ELD delivery.

Table 4. District ELD instruction by CELDT level

CELDT Levels	1	2	3	4	5
Standalone ELD	12	12	10	4	3
ELD embedded in mainstream ELA	2	3	5	9	10
ELD embedded in intensive ELA interventions	2	1	3	2	3
Total districts reporting on ELD services	13	13	13	13	12

Note: In some cases, ELs testing at a given CELDT level may be placed in different settings depending on other criteria than the CELDT. In those cases, a given district may be represented more than once in a given column in table 4. Therefore, the sum of the first three rows is greater than the totals reported in the last row.

As expected, most districts (12) report that EL students at CELDT levels 1 and 2 are in standalone ELD classes, and that placement in standalone ELD classes falls as CELDT levels rise. Some districts suggest to their school sites that ELs at certain CELDT proficiency levels be placed in different settings according to criteria beyond the identified CELDT levels. For example, some districts suggest placement of their CELDT students at level 3 either in standalone ELD or mainstream ELA where ELD is embedded, depending on whether those students are considered long-term ELs or not. Other districts differentiate such placement based upon whether a student is considered at a "low" CELDT level 3 or "high" CELDT level 3.

School formats for ELD instruction

To gain an overview of how ELD instruction occurs in middle schools, researchers asked school interviewees parallel questions about school formats for ELD instruction by CELDT level. Table 5 summarizes this data.

Table 5. School ELD instruction by CELDT level

CELDT Levels	1	2	3	4	5
Standalone ELD	56	52	45	28	24
ELD embedded in mainstream ELA	9	15	26	39	53
ELD embedded in intensive ELA interventions	7	7	11	9	14
Total schools reporting on ELD services	62	64	63	63	62

At the school level, as at the district level, most EL students at CELDT levels 1 and 2 are in standalone classes. As mentioned earlier, some districts suggest placement of their CELDT level 3 students in either standalone ELD classes or mainstream ELA classes where ELD is embedded, depending on whether those students are considered at a "low" or "high" CELDT level 3 or long-term ELs or not. While most schools (45) report that CELDT level 3 students receive ELD instruction in standalone classes, a significant number (26) also report that in their schools CELDT level 3 students receive ELD embedded in ELA classes. Clearly, some schools are differentiating ELD formats for CELDT level 3 students. A similar situation exists with ELs at CELDT levels 4 and 5.

Questions about district guidelines for the placement of ELs in academic content classes uncovered variation in how districts define "sheltered" instruction versus "mainstream with SDAIE" instruction and whether these classes are for ELs only or for ELs *and* English Only (EO) students. Nine districts reported that ELs with beginning levels of proficiency are in sheltered, EL-only content classes. One district reported that some students are in standalone sheltered classes and others are in sheltered instruction in mainstream classes with EO students. In another district, all ELs are in mainstream classes with EO students. The two remaining districts referred to criteria other than CELDT proficiency, with one reporting the use of CST scores and another a retention and intervention matrix to determine EL students' academic content placement.

EL placement in academic content programs varied tremendously across schools by CELDT level and by heterogeneous grouping with EO students. Table 6 provides an overview of the diversity of placements.

Table 6: School level data on sheltered instruction by CELDT levels and by the presence of EO students

CELDT Levels	1	2	3	4	5
Sheltered with no EO students	31	28	20	10	9
Sheltered with EO students	14	14	12	7	6
Sheltered with no EO/EL listed	1	1	0	0	0
Total reporting sheltered	46	43	32	17	15
Total schools reporting data on either sheltered or mainstream	63	63	63	62	61

Note: These counts reflect the number of schools that report a sheltered class in any subject area (i.e., at least one subject area). Therefore, a given district may be represented more than once in a given column in table 6.

An unexpected amount of variation in sheltered content instruction for ELs across schools is evident from the number of schools who report that ELs receive sheltered instruction with English Only students. Sheltered classes are generally academic content classes for EL students, not for EO students. Yet, half as many schools (14) reported that early intermediate, CELDT level 2, students are enrolled in sheltered classes with EO students as those (28) that reported level 2 students are in sheltered classes with no EO students.

Schools also provided a subject area breakdown by mainstream instruction by CELDT level (see table 7).

Table 7: School level mainstream area breakdown by CELDT level

CELDT Levels	1	2	3	4	5
ELA	18	22	34	41	46
Math	28	32	45	49	54
Science	29	33	47	50	56
Social Studies	26	30	44	49	54
Total schools reporting mainstreaming with SDAIE	29	33	48	51	57

An unexpected finding here was the number of ELs at CELDT levels 1 and 2 who are placed in mainstream academic content classes. As shown in table 6, the number of schools reporting that CELDT level 1 students are in sheltered content classes is 31. The number of schools reporting that level 1 students are in mainstream content classes (table 7) is 29.

The lack of coherence in how academic content instructional programs for middle school ELs are structured, even within a district, points to a larger problem: English Learners' access to academic content depends on the school they attend.

Finding 2: An "implementation gap" between district policies and supports for English Learners and school practices for ELs reduces districts' effectiveness.

To understand how districts' policies and programs to support middle school English Learners and their teachers were implemented at the school level, it was necessary to understand how districts organized support. Researchers first asked districts whether they had written plans that provide specific guidance on the support or instruction of English Learners. Twelve of the 13 districts indicated that they had such written plans. District representatives in those 12 districts were then asked to identify the three most important components of their plans for supporting middle school ELs and the three primary challenges to supporting middle school ELs. Findings about the scope and nature of support provided to middle schools, and the challenges districts face in providing these supports, would provide a backdrop to the examination of instruction at the middle school sites in Phase 2.

Components of district plans for ELs

Responses from the 12 districts about the three most important components of the district plan for EL instruction clustered in three areas. Districts most often identified their role in having a clearly defined program, monitoring school compliance, and providing instructional techniques/professional development (see box 2).

Nine of the 12 districts stated their plans focused on a clearly defined programmatic component such as specific program services (e.g., newcomer programs at the district level), course sequences, curriculum and/or lessons, and placement of students. (Placement of students was also categorized by some districts in the compliance cluster, below.) Eight districts cited compliance as an important component of the district's plan for ELs. District representatives named reclassification guidelines and/or monitoring, evaluation of program effectiveness, and placement of students. Monitoring of schools for compliance varied in scope across districts. One district's new plan, for example, details the legal consequences schools face if they do not provide mandated services. The district's prior plan had provided guidelines only, having, in the words of the district interviewee, "no teeth." In contrast to this district's use of legal consequences, another district's new plan included no compliance monitoring.

Six districts identified specific instructional techniques for use in content area classes or professional development in SDAIE techniques, with three district representatives naming the former and three the latter.

Box 2. Districts' most-identified components of their EL plans	
A clearly defined program	specific program services course sequences curriculum and/or lessons placement of students in courses
Monitoring school compliance	providing and monitoring reclassification guidelines evaluating program effectiveness placement of students by CELDT level
Instructional supports	identification of instructional techniques in content area classes professional development in SDAIE techniques

District-identified supports for and challenges to instruction of ELs

To further investigate district support for middle school ELs, districts were asked about the important supports for and challenges to instruction of ELs. Of the 13 districts in the study, two had only one school participating. To allow for similarities and differences between district-level policy and school-level practices to emerge, only the 11 districts with two or more schools are included in the following discussion of district level support for and challenges to EL instruction.

District interviewees were asked to prioritize the most important three ways their districts *support* middle school sites in the instruction of ELs (see box 3). District-identified support to schools overlapped in some ways with what districts considered the important provisions in the district plans for ELs, but with a focus on instruction support, professional development and coaching rose without question to the top of districts' responses. Ten of the 12 districts reported that providing professional development was one of the three most important components of their support for the instruction of English Learners. In addition to mentioning professional development of a general nature, individual districts specified training on ELD standards, optional training in SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol), and other training that, while not focused on EL issues, had applicability for their teachers of English Learners, such as development of academic vocabulary or implementation of the *Language!* intervention program.

In eight districts, coaching and modeling are considered an important support that the district provides to schools. (Five districts named professional development and coaching and modeling as their top two support priorities.) The amount of coaching and modeling varied widely, however. Two districts fund site-based ELD specialists; more typical is support from district content specialists a few days a year.

Eight districts also mentioned the importance of the support they provide by way of data management related to compliance and student placement.

Box 3. Districts' high-priority supports for instruction of ELs	
Professional development	EL-focused training EL-applicable training (relevant but more general)
Onsite support/coaching	site-based English Learner support specialists modeling and coaching provided by visiting district EL and content specialists
Compliance	EL identification, classification, and reclassification

Districts' rating of teacher professional development and coaching as important components of support for middle school teachers of ELs is consistent with research linking teacher quality and increased achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; EdSource, 2006; Rivkin , Hanushek, and Kain, 2005). What defines a quality teacher is, however, much debated. The NCLB requirement that teachers be certified in the area they teach is a proxy measure of teacher quality, one consonant with California's requirement that all teachers have a Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) authorization or its equivalent. It is doubtful, however, whether these criteria meet the challenges to be faced.

To understand where districts have problems or concerns in supporting instruction of ELs at the middle school level, district interviewees were asked to identify three primary *challenges* in supporting ELs' language acquisition and academic development. These focused on ineffective teaching practices, the dearth of appropriate professional development, and concerns about inconsistent implementation of the district EL program across middle schools (see box 4).

Eight districts expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of instruction provided to ELs. As one interviewee said, "Too many teachers have authorization to teach ELs but lack pedagogical expertise." Similarly, other interviewees noted, for example, that "Middle school content area teachers are not knowledgeable about teaching literacy and language," or, more succinctly, content area teachers are simply "teaching to the masses."

Concern with teacher practice was matched with concern about finding well-targeted, effective teacher professional development. Eight districts reported the need for building instructional support for teaching content to English Learners. As one district respondent said, "Everyone is looking at the data, but this is not translating into classroom practice."

Five district representatives named inconsistencies in the quality and provision of program services across district middle schools as a major challenge. As one district representative pointed out, in schools with low numbers of English Learners, "they ignore them."

Other challenges named by at least three districts include how better to support long-term English learners, how to find and keep highly qualified teachers of English Learners, and how to improve site administrators' abilities to lead implementation of the district programs.

Box 4. Districts' most-identified challenges in the instruction of ELs	
Ineffective teaching practices	limited knowledge of pedagogy to support second language acquisition limited knowledge of pedagogy to scaffold access to subject area content
Ineffective/insufficient teacher professional development	professional development does not focus on sound pedagogy to support middle school English Learners professional development does not address the needs of long-term English Learners
Inconsistent program implementation across district schools	inconsistent expectations for EL instruction and outcomes inconsistent quality of teaching and materials inconsistent allocation of resources for EL services

Implementation of district EL plan: Rating by district

Districts were asked to rate the degree of implementation of EL plans and supports on a scale of 1 through 10, with 10 indicating complete implementation. Of the nine district interviewees who answered the question (the other three districts with plans indicated that their plans were too recently adopted to rate), six rated their implementation at "7." One district rated its implementation higher, at 7.5, and two rated implementation lower, at 6 and 5. Reasons most frequently cited for lack of complete implementation were uneven implementation of a district plan across schools in a district and lack of program implementation in schools with low EL enrollment. Several interviewees commented that school sites implement district policies to different degrees. One interviewee called this the "implementation gap."

Implementation of district EL plan: Rating by school

School personnel were given a parallel task, to rate district influence on practice. Study researchers calculated central tendency of the 64 schools' responses to this question in three ways: the mean, the percent of responses below the mean, and the median (see table 8).

Table 8: Schools' perceptions of district influence

Degree of influence district has on school practice, on a scale of 1-10	Middle Schools N=64
Mean score	7.4
Percent of responses below the mean	34%
Median score	8

To determine if district/participating school responses were consistent with each other, researchers matched school and district implementation data. Of the twelve districts that had plans, four were eliminated — the three districts whose interviewees indicated that district plans were too new to rate (eight participating schools), as well as the one school response from a district with only one participating school. This reduced the number of districts to eight and the number of schools to 55. One of the remaining schools rated district influence but also indicated that its status was that of a small, autonomous school — independent of its district; it too was eliminated. The mean response was then determined for the remaining eight districts and 54 schools, shown in table 9.

Matched comparisons of school/district responses suggest that schools, with the exception of District #3, rate district influence higher than do districts.

Table 9. Matched district and school comparison of district influence

Degree of influence district has on school practice, on a scale of 1-10	Middle School mean rating	District rating
Districts with 2 participating schools		
District # 1	8.0	7.0
District # 2	7.5	7.0
District # 3	5.0*	7.0
Districts with 3 participating schools		
District # 4	7.3	6.0
Districts with 4 participating schools		
District # 5	8.3	7.5
District #6	8.0	5.0
Districts with 14 or more participating schools		
District # 7	6.0	5.5
District # 8	8.3	7.0
Total reporting	**54 Schools**	**8 Districts**

Note: In District #3, the two school's responses were widely divergent, with one school rating district influence at 10 and the other at 2; a mean rating is this case is misleading.

School-identified most influential components of district programs for ELs

School interviewees were asked to explain their rating of the district's influence on the school's instruction for English Learners. Overwhelmingly, schools cited district-mandated EL curriculum (texts, pacing guides) as the way that districts influence instruction. Professional development (in instructional practices and textbook materials) was a distant second, followed by the support of EL/ELD coordinators at the site (see box 5).

Schools appear to be influenced most by the EL textbooks chosen by the district and the pacing guides developed at the district level rather than by efforts to improve instructional approaches. Additionally, it is noteworthy that interviewees focused on EL materials and did not mention content area materials. According to school respondents, EL students simply are not being supported to access subject matter content that the state requires, either through instructional materials or, by and large, through professional development.

Box 5. Schools' identification of district influences on the instruction of ELs	
District-mandated EL curriculum	textbook programs pacing guides
Professional development*	instructional practices for ELs implementation of textbook programs
Site-based EL coaches/coordinators*	

* Professional development and site-based EL coaches/coordinators were far less important to respondents than mandated curriculum.

Finding 3: School-level instructional supports for English Learners' linguistic and academic development fail to address perceived challenges.

To uncover patterns of support for ELs' linguistic and academic development at the school level, study researchers asked school interviewees to describe the three most important ways they support ELs' academic development and language acquisition. (School supports differed, not surprisingly, from the more macro-level support provided by districts.)

How schools say they support ELs' academic development and language acquisition

Sixty-two schools provided a total of 164 specifics about the most important ways they support English learners (see box 6). The most mentions by far (62) cited the attention schools give language generally or the language domains. Eleven respondents mentioned language in terms of proficiency, fluency, or acquisition. In the

domains, reading (including vocabulary and reading comprehension) was named by 25 respondents, writing was named by 21 respondents, and five respondents specified oral language. Of interest here is the failure of a single respondent to name disciplinary literacy as a focus of support. Literacy appears to be viewed as an independent area of study, not as a subject-specific skill that must be developed within each discipline.

When school respondents mentioned the disciplines, which they did in 23 instances, it was mostly in terms of instructional supports provided by teachers. Nineteen respondents identified strategies and supports for teaching the disciplines, naming particularly the use of SDAIE.

Appropriate student placement was named by 21 schools as a specific support they provide ELs, with three of those mentions related to long-term ELs. Another 15 schools focused on the transition out of EL placement, namely, on reclassification. Specific placement and reclassification supports included, for example, "grouping kids by CELDT," "moving ELs up a band on the CST," or assuring that ELs gain "one CELDT level each year."

A focus on equity, access, and opportunity was mentioned by 15 respondents. School support for ELs in this area took the form of providing a "college-bound environment," supporting students to access a "rigorous" academic program, teaching to the standards, and "appreciation for students' L1 and culture."

The only other supports named by at least five schools were those of fostering student interaction and engagement and a focus on "complete sentences," a directive from principals according to the respondents.

Box 6. Schools' identification of the most important academic and linguistic supports they provide ELs	
Literacy focus (62 total mentions)	reading (25) writing (21) oral language (5) language acquisition (11)
Placement and reclassification support (36 total mentions)	appropriate placement (21) focus on CELDT progress (15)
Support for content area instruction (23 total mentions)	consistent use of SDAIE or other strategies (19) content areas (2) math (2)
Focus on equity and access (14 total mentions)	standards-based, college-bound environment (9) appreciation/support for L1 and students' cultures (5)

Challenges schools perceive to supporting ELs' academic development and language acquisition

When asked to identify primary challenges to the support of middle school ELs' academic development and language acquisition, challenges emerged in four broad areas: institutional (site/district) support, student development, teachers/classroom support, and parent involvement and support. Sixty-two schools offered 174 responses (see box 7). It can be seen below that the challenges schools identify do not match well to the supports schools offer.

Box 7. Schools' perceived challenges to supporting ELs' linguistic and academic development	
Ineffective institutional (district/site) support (72 total mentions)	lack of appropriate support at different CELDT levels (18) low funding/large classes (14) poor scheduling and incorrect student placement (11) lack of services in schools with low concentration of ELs (10) ineffective district systems (5) inadequate support for professional development (4) inappropriate instructional materials (4) other (6)
"Deficits" in student development (48 total mentions)	lack of motivation and absenteeism (26) low literacy and academic skills (16) other (6)
Ineffective teaching and classroom support (34 total mentions)	inadequate preparation and training of teachers (22) teachers' lack of motivation to teach ELs (12)
Lack of parent involvement (20 total mentions)	low or no involvement in student's schooling (17) no ability to support students' schooling (3)

Most challenges to the education of ELs appear to originate at the institutional level. Thirty-two respondents name concerns that students cannot get the kind of focused attention they need. Eighteen respondents report that ELs suffer from instruction that insufficiently focuses on their different CELDT levels, while 14 schools state that classes for ELs have too many students for teachers to serve them effectively.

Schools cited challenges that reside in students themselves as next most serious area of concern. ELs were found to be unmotivated by 26 respondents and to be *in need of education* by another 16 respondents.

The disconcerting parallel to the needs most presented by English Learners is the apparent inadequacy of the teaching staff to meet them. The unmotivated and undereducated students described by 42 respondents are met with teachers who are unmotivated and underprepared to teach them, according to 34 school respondents.

Respondents at 20 of the 62 schools named lack of parent involvement as a challenge for ELs' success, even while recognizing that it is hard for parents (as well as students) to negotiate a new language or alien culture.

Schools in this study report that the primary challenges to increasing middle school ELs' linguistic and academic development involve increasing institutional capacity to deliver instruction that is better focused to student needs (and necessarily more motivating) and increasing teachers' expertise and motivation to teach ELs. Given these challenges, districts' and schools' primary focus on discrete literacy skills and student placement represents a lack of consonance between supports and challenges, one that must be addressed systemically.

Phase 1 Conclusions

Several issues emerge from these findings on districts' and schools' plans, supports, challenges, and programs. One issue is the need for high quality professional development in the instruction of ELs in middle school. This professional development is needed across the board — for educational leadership, teachers, and community liaisons. Districts identified the provision of professional development in the instruction of ELs as an important support that they provide. However, they also identified as challenges the inconsistent use of pedagogical supports in ELD and content area classes and the short supply of teacher expertise to work with English Learners; schools echoed the need to increase teacher effectiveness. These district and school findings underscore the need for unpacking what constitutes effective, high-quality professional development for ELD and content area teachers of middle school ELs.

Both the lack of coherence in programs for ELs at the middle school level and the "implementation gap" between districts and schools point out the need for systemic reform. Currently EL departments at the district level lack the ability to implement needed reform. Building the capacity of administrators to support EL instruction in middle schools may help. District interviewees included building the capacity of administrators among the challenges to supporting EL instruction, but they failed to provide for it in important components of plans or supports.

At the school level, interviewees' most-cited challenges were in the area of institutional support, at the site as well as the district level. The pivotal role that administrative leadership plays in school improvement is well documented (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson, 2005; EdSource, 2006; Elmore, 2000; Waters, Marzano, and McNulty, 2003). Walqui (2000) examined the important role that leadership plays in the successful education of ELs at International High School in New York City, the prime example of a school organized for excellence for ELs. What is less well understood, however, is what leadership in the instruction of ELs looks like at the middle school level.

The scope of Phase 1 did not allow for thorough investigation of the reasons districts identified inconsistency in quality and provision of services at the school level as a major challenge to supporting EL instruction. However, lack of intended implementation within and across sites may well be an unintended consequence of compliance with "no teeth." Attaching consequences when schools fail to provide high-quality services to ELs is a policy decision.

An important issue that emerges from school findings is the lack of consonance between schools' primary supports for and challenges to their ELs' academic development and linguistic acquisition. Teachers' and students' lack of motivation were identified as primary challenges, yet, only six of 62 school interviewees identified a focus on student engagement as a support. None identified a focus on teacher engagement and motivation. Similarly, parental involvement was identified as a major challenge by school interviewees, but only two of 62 schools identified a focus on involving parents as an important support.

The analysis presented here begins to reveal the complexities not only in programs, services, and supports for ELs but also in definitions and relationships between the various levels of authority (federal, state, district, and school) that influence the instruction of ELs. Phase 1 data begin to shed light on these complexities. The Phase 2 research at the classroom level offers an opportunity to untangle how and why schools characterize their instruction for ELs so differently, and how schools negotiate supports and challenges.

The next section of this report describes the theoretical approaches that inform schools' programs, the characteristics of these programs, and their implementation in classrooms. Section IV unpacks the choices that schools make in the placement of EL students and in the teaching and learning practices that are promoted in their academic programs.

SECTION IV: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

After interviewing district leaders, site administrators, and English learner coordinators in 12 districts and 67 schools, 14 schools were selected as potential case study sites. The research team visited these sites over several days, interviewed staff, observed classes, and reviewed records and documents to eventually arrive at five distinct case studies (see Appendix B). The case study sites[9] represent a variety of schools in terms of overall size, size of the English learner population, languages spoken, and socioeconomic and ethnic distribution of students. The case study schools range from a small, autonomous school with an overall population of 287 students, almost half of whom are English learners, to a large campus where over half of the 2,278 students are in a GATE program and the overall percentage of English learners is very low. Table 10 below indicates selected demographics of the case study schools.

Table 10. Selected Demographics of Case Study Schools

	INLAND CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL (gr. 7, 8)	VALLEY CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL (gr. 6, 7, 8)	OCEAN CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL (gr. 6, 7, 8)	FOOTHILL CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL (gr. 6, 7, 8)	BAY CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL (gr. 6, 7, 8)	STATE (gr. 6 ,7, 8)
Total School Population	641	2278	991	287	871	1,456,070
Number of English Learners	99	73	392	132	335	285,201
Student Groups (%)						
English Learners	15.4	3.2	39.6	46	38.5	19.6
Free and Reduced Lunch	67.7	37.1	96.0	90.2	84.2	53.0
African-American	23.9	6.8	17.6	8	2.1	6.5
Asian	15.9	17.7	2.6	5.9	4.8	8.2
Latino	34.6	33.2	67.7	80.5	81.7	49.0
White	22.5	34.5	1.8	2.4	6.9	28.7
Other	3.1	7.8	7.8	3.1	4.4	7.6
Major Languages Spoken (15% or higher)						
Spanish	58.6	65.8	89.5	95.5	91.9	87
Hmong	18.2					
Other Languages	Mien Cantonese Lao	Armenian Arabic Farsi Korean Russian	Khmer Hmong	Vietnamese	Vietnamese Portuguese Filipino	Over 100 languages

[9] School names are pseudonyms throughout the report.

The cross-case analysis describes how the five case study sites address the education of English Learners. The findings are organized by category: School Culture and Resources to Support English Learners; English Learner Identification, Classification, and Reclassification; Academic Trajectories; Teaching and Learning; and Concerns.

School Culture and Resources to Support English Learners

Support for English Learners at the school level includes where EL site leadership resides, how schools make use of data in tracking students' progress, and the schoolwide approach to professional development, including a focus on the instruction of English Learners.

Leadership for and Commitment to English Learners

Across the cases, the leadership for instructional and programmatic decisions about English Learners resides with the school principal or an English Learner coordinator. Two of the case study schools, Inland City and Ocean City middle schools, have very involved principals who are strong advocates for this student population and are knowledgeable and committed to implementing programs and structures to improve educational outcomes for all students. These principals set the priorities for the schools, design and supervise the implementation of structures and practices to support English Learners, and serve as conduits for and buffers against district mandates that could adversely affect English Learners' success at their schools.

At the other three case study schools, a strong EL coordinator provides the leadership for English Learner services and programs. At these sites, Bay City, Valley City, and Foothill City middle schools, the EL coordinators usually have a reduced teaching role and devote from two to four periods a day to EL issues. These coordinators have long-standing tenure at their schools and are regarded as most knowledgeable about their site's EL program and committed to the success of their students. Other teachers perceive them as assets in the support offered students and teachers. They test students, place them in appropriate classes and services; they monitor student progress; and they support teachers as they implement programs and instructional practices to benefit ELs. Coordinators may also support their peers by developing materials, providing additional supports in classrooms, and keeping staff informed about student progress and placement.

Regardless of where the leadership for English Learners resides, it seems that in order for schools to implement programs and structures that support these students, there must be site champions who make it their mission to promote EL student success and services. Seldom is knowledge of English Learner instruction and commitment to serve English Learners a generalized practice among all administrators and teachers in a school. With the exception of Foothill City Middle School — where, because of its small size and high percentage of English

Learners, all teachers and administrators are actively engaged and fully committed to serving the needs of ELs — the education of English Learners rests in the hands of a small cadre of committed teachers who seem to have taken this on as a mission. Some of the best instructional practices were observed among this committed core of teachers, but when observations moved beyond to classes where English Learners were not the majority, the attention, commitment, and support waned.

This lack of a generalized practice and commitment in a school to excellence for English Learners is one of the key findings of this study. Even among schools that are implementing some innovative approaches, the responsibility for ELs rests among a small group of staff members. Attempts of the school leadership to generalize practices, attention, and supports for ELs do not spread with equal success to all teachers at a school. In most schools, the view persists that "those students" are someone else's responsibility.

Use of Data

A practice that seems generalized across the five case study sites is the use of student data to inform programmatic and instructional decisions. All schools use data in some way and at various levels. All districts have a strong and tightly aligned system of curriculum and assessments composed of benchmark assessments administered to all students in the four core disciplinary areas to monitor progress towards meeting standards and improving instruction. Bay City Middle School also has a benchmark assessment in English language development that is specifically designed for English Learners.

There were differences in where the test data resided and who was leading efforts to use data for instructional decisions. At Inland City and Ocean City middle schools, district benchmarks are scored centrally and results are available to teachers instantly on district networks. With data at their fingertips, Inland City staff members use them to inform instruction and to group students. All teachers interviewed at Inland City were able to identify who their English Learners were, at what level of English proficiency they were scoring, how they were performing on district benchmarks, and how they were progressing on the core standards for the disciplines. Student results were displayed in classes and used to group students for specific assignments or for participation in particular programs and supports. In some classes, students set targets for improvement individually and as a class, so this knowledge and attention to progress flowed in a continuous stream from the district to the site administration, to the teacher, and to the student. At Ocean City and Foothill City middle schools, staff members work to involve students in the review of assessment results (state and district benchmarks tied to standards) and to foster a culture of self-accountability.

At Bay City and Valley City middle schools, the district plays a significant role in helping teachers review data from benchmark assessments by convening regular meetings with site and district staff to analyze results and

develop plans of action to improve instruction. District personnel provide data to teachers and regularly conduct professional development and support sessions to help teachers differentiate instruction and meet student needs.

Approach to Professional Development

Across the case study schools, administrators indicate the importance of professional development to improve instruction for English Learners, but the amount and type of professional development varies. At one end of the spectrum, Ocean City and Foothill City middle schools have sustained, coherent professional development that provides opportunities for growth to all teachers. At the other end of the spectrum, schools offer limited or disconnected professional development, targeted only to the teachers who serve the highest concentrations of ELs; in these schools, many teachers receive no support for working with the English Learners who turn up in their classrooms.

Ocean City Middle School has developed a comprehensive plan for all teachers' professional development to focus on English Learners and their needs. At Ocean City, all new teachers attend a five-day induction program in which four days are dedicated to EL issues, and where new teachers have the opportunity to practice instructional strategies and develop units of instruction that incorporate best practices for ELs. All teachers in the school are required to attend SDAIE training, which is complemented with "Thinking Maps" professional development for implementation of a series of graphic organizers across all disciplines. Additional support is available from on-site math and literacy coaches, who have a reduced teaching schedule in order to conduct professional development, give demonstration lessons, and observe and coach in the classrooms of their peers.

At Foothill City Middle School, a very strong culture of professional growth and adult learning permeates the whole school. A full-time instructional facilitator coordinates adult learning activities at the school and provides professional development about the implementation of quality talk, cooperative learning, and the use of graphic organizers. She also facilitates a strong program of peer planning and peer coaching and observation. In order to make this collegial support work, the school also engages in training focused on how to create and maintain a team culture and vision at the school. All teachers engage in a process of action research that the school calls "Teacher Growth." In this process, teachers identify an area for improvement in their practice; they form focus groups for study of the issue, implement practices, gather evidence, and provide a report to their colleagues of the actions taken and results obtained. These projects are posted around the school so the students are aware of their teachers' ongoing commitment to excellence and learning.

The three other case study schools offer much more limited professional development focused on English Learners. At Valley City Middle School, EL teachers share a common planning period and these teachers have received SDAIE and "Thinking Maps" training, but they are a small subset of the faculty. ELD teachers at Bay City Middle

School participate in district professional development offered every six weeks, when they review data on student benchmarks and discuss best practices. Inland City has no specific plan for professional development for teachers of ELs, although all teachers do participate in school efforts to increase student engagement in their classrooms.

Schools that have developed a culture of support and challenge for their English Learners have a focus on learning and continuous growth. These schools have made a commitment to their EL students' potential and see teachers as the catalysts for maximizing this potential. The relative size of the EL population plays a role in how widespread this commitment is and how resources are allocated to support teachers and students, but it is not the only factor. Ocean City and Bay City middle schools are very similar in size and percentage of English Learners, yet they have approached their programs and distributed their resources for professional development in very different ways.

English Learner Identification, Classification, and Reclassification

All case study schools have well-defined structures and processes for identification, classification, and curricular placement of EL students, as well as specific criteria for reclassification and follow-up. Scores on a variety of language and achievement tests drive these decisions: the CELDT, the English language arts CST, and the Developmental Placement Inventory (DPI) of the *High Point* curriculum.

Identification and Classification

In most schools, the majority of EL students have been in the district the prior year, so they arrive with these assessment results, including up to three years of CST scores. EL coordinators place students in the appropriate set of courses, usually according to district guidelines — although schools adapt these guidelines to their own local circumstances and curricular programs.

Two schools used additional assessments: Foothill City Middle School, the small, autonomous school in the sample, assesses students prior to the beginning of school with the Stanford English Language Proficiency test. Administrators and teachers reported preferring this test because CELDT scores are typically dated. Ocean City Middle School considers grades and behavior reports, in addition to CELDT and CST scores. Overall, schools appear to rely primarily on test scores for identification, classification, and placement.

For newcomers to the U.S. with another language in the home, EL coordinators typically administer the CELDT to determine ELD levels and the DPI for placement in the *High Point* ELD/ELA curriculum. In one school, Inland City Middle School, newcomer assessment occurs at the district's matriculation center, where primary

language staff administer CELDT tests and introduce families to U.S. schools. Bay City Middle School reported also assessing students' Spanish reading and writing performance. For students who arrive without prior CELDT and CST scores, Ocean City assesses students with the DPI as well as the *Momentum Math* placement test. Again, EL coordinators place students in the appropriate set of courses, usually according to district guidelines.

Reclassification

Across schools, reclassification criteria are clear, usually involving threshold level scores on the CELDT and English language arts CSTs, teacher recommendations, and additional district-specified performances. Usually, schools within a district apply the same criteria. Criteria vary considerably across districts, however, making direct comparisons of reclassification rates among schools inexact. Perhaps the easiest way to appreciate the wide variation is to compare the least and most stringent reclassification criteria among the case study schools, Valley City Middle School and Inland City Middle School. As shown in table 11 below, Inland City criteria are both higher and more specific in all categories.

An important finding is that stringency of criteria does not necessarily co-occur with dramatically lower rates of reclassification. Although, Valley City, with the least rigorous criteria, reclassified 31.1 percent of its EL students in 2008-09, Inland City, with the most rigorous criteria, reclassified 21.2 percent, virtually double the state average of 10.8 percent.

Table 11. Low and High Reclassification Criteria for Study Schools

	Valley City Middle School	Inland City Middle School	
CELDT			
Overall	4-5	4-5	4-5
Subscores	3	4	4
CST			
ELA	300	350	324
Math	300	350	324
Course Grade			
ELD or Sheltered ELA	C	NA	NA
Core Content Assessments			
Holt Literature	NA	NA	75%
Pre-algebra			70%
Teacher Recommendations	Yes	Yes; confirm student capable of independent grade-level work (no need for ELD or sheltered instruction)	

After reclassification, EL coordinators usually monitor students for two to three years, using a district form that tracks recent CELDT scores, CST scores, and grades. Most EL coordinators did not convey that the monitoring recruited much attention or activity. Only Valley City's EL coordinator elaborated the achievement and test performance criteria students are supposed to meet after reclassification, or reported meeting with reclassified students individually (which she does once a year to discuss performance and progress). One EL coordinator seemed frustrated with the monitoring process and candidly reported that in reality it amounted to meaningless paperwork. She described distributing the monitoring form (which has EL strategies such as use of modeling, graphic organizers, and visuals) and teachers checking off the boxes regardless of implementation. "They don't want to hear me talk about it. The attitude is, 'I've done what I can. How dare you imply that I'm not doing my best. Why isn't the student responsible?'"

Academic Trajectories

Within the parameters set by the state and their districts, schools take varied approaches to EL education, resulting in varied curricular programs, even within districts. Across cases, however, students' academic trajectories are based on their school's emphasis on access to grade-level curricula and standards versus a focus on reclassification, and, concomitantly, content-based versus ELD instruction. Curricular programs can be described in broad terms that appear to reflect differing philosophies along a continuum.

Emphasis on Access to Grade-Level Content

At one end of the academic-trajectory continuum are schools whose curricular programs indicate a philosophy of equal access to grade-level curricula and content standards, high expectations, and integration of students into the mainstream. Moreover, brisk movement through ELD/ELA — with simultaneous access to ELA grade-level standards and enrollment in grade-level content courses — characterizes this philosophy. In such programs, ELD appears to be a means to success in grade-level content courses, rather than an end in itself. Finally, curricular programs characterized by this philosophy tend to eschew remedial interventions. Rather than remediate students, these programs often provide acceleration and/or additional instructional support to ensure student success with grade-level curricula.

Inland City Middle School's curricular program reflects this philosophy of access to grade-level curricula and standards for EL students, within its ELD/ELA program and through placement in mainstream content area classes. Within the ELD/ELA program, the focus is one of providing students grade-level curricula and standards; the ELD *High Point* program is used primarily as a supplement, and students move through it at an accelerated pace. All EL students are enrolled in at least some mainstream classes, even students at the beginning CELDT level.

Beginning through intermediate EL students at Inland City receive grade-level ELD/ELA instruction regardless of their number of years in U.S. schools. Therefore, the majority (54 percent) of the school's EL students enroll in ELD/ELA. Students at beginning levels of English are placed in ELD/ELA, grade-level mathematics, physical education, and an elective. Students scoring at early intermediate CEDLT levels add grade-level social studies to their schedule, in place of an elective. Intermediate ELs add grade-level science; they are enrolled at this point in grade-level core content for all but English language arts.

Emphasis on Reclassification and Remediation

At the other end of the continuum are schools whose curricular programs emphasize ELD over access to core grade-level curricula and standards until such time as students reach at least an early advanced level of ELD. Slow movement through ELD/ELA, separate multi-grade ELD content courses, limited access to grade-level curricula and content standards, and separation from the mainstream characterize these curricular programs. In such programs, ELD appears to be an end in itself — students must achieve a certain benchmark before they can partake in and profit from grade-level content. Additionally, curricular programs characterized by this philosophy tend to embrace multiple remedial interventions. Rather than accelerate students, these programs often remediate with below-grade-level curricula.

In Bay City Middle School, for example, ELs' academic trajectories are limited in several ways. First, Bay City uses *High Point* as the core curriculum for a two-period ELD/ELA block and *decelerates* the publisher's recommended pace. Students who enter ELD at CELDT level 1 spend an entire year with a *High Point* pre-introductory level supplement (Lakeside) and the supplementary *Access English* program. They do not even begin the normal *High Point* sequence until their second year in the school's ELD program. After three years in ELD, students exit the publisher's intended scope and sequence a full year behind, with fifth-grade content.

Second, in addition to the decelerated ELD/ELA sequence, students in this track are placed only in multi-grade ELD classes for core content; they experience no mainstream classes except for physical education and, for some, an elective. Thus, Bay City's ELD program isolates its students for most of their time at the school.

Furthermore, the ELD content courses that students at CELDT levels beginning through intermediate experience, *Access Math* and *Access Science,* are designed to *complement* math and science core curricula for special education and ESL students. These are not core curricula nor are they aligned with grade-level content standards. For struggling EL students, Bay City's curricular program emphasizes remediation rather than acceleration at all levels of ELD. The school offers two reading interventions, a two-period *Language!* block, which is a two-year sequence of texts that range from second- to fifth-grade level, or a one-period *Reading Lab,* a reading intervention offered at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels and designed specifically

to support reclassification for ELs. Nearly 40 percent of all Bay City EL students enroll in one of these reading intervention programs.

In all of the case study schools, a deciding factor in whether students languish in remediation courses is whether, when they exit ELD/ELA, they still perform below basic or far below basic on language arts CSTs. For those who do, *Language!* is often the middle school intervention of choice. A student who enters *Language!* in sixth grade would be expected to complete the curriculum by the end of seventh grade, and enter eighth grade at the fifth-grade reading level — still far below basic. Thus, the most vulnerable English Learners can spend three years in ELD/ELA, two years in *Language!,* and still remain far below grade level in English language arts CSTs.

In more than one school, the response to the inherent limitations of their curricula was to add remediation interventions, often in reading and mathematics, leaving room for little else. When students enroll in one or more interventions, they often enroll in other courses as a cohort, leading to stigmatization and isolation. For a significant proportion of EL students, a remedial education track becomes increasing difficult to escape.

Teaching and Learning

Promising practices in the teaching and learning of English Learners were largely related to individual choices ELD departments or teachers make about mandated curriculum, department or schoolwide instructional practices, school-level structures and practices that creatively address achievement for ELs and for all students, and practices that target achievement beyond the middle school level. Unfortunately, with the exception of Foothill City Middle School, implementation of these promising practices was limited to a very few teachers.

Mandated Curriculum in ELD Programs

Many teachers expressed frustration with the *High Point* textbook program, saying that it limited access to grade-level standards and curriculum. Teachers addressed this concern by accelerating movement through the program, by supplementing the textbook curriculum, or by using the textbook itself as a supplement.

In the newcomer program at Ocean City Middle School, the teacher bases the content of her lessons on *High Point,* but provides other grade-level texts and uses the *High Point* text as a supplement. The use of grade-level materials with newcomers is, she says, not without difficulty. "While *High Point* teaches at the students' level of English, many come with prior knowledge in terms of subject matter [developed in the students' first language]. This also varies," she adds, "from student to student." Her approach is to make connections to students' prior knowledge, use excerpts from the mainstream textbook and *High Point,* and create centers that deepen and

extend students' content knowledge and use of English. The success of this approach is acknowledged by the principal, "This teacher gets kids thriving."

Students in the ELD program at Inland City Middle School move through High Point in two years, instead of the usual three. Teachers of beginning ELs use *High Point* level A. Teachers of early intermediate and intermediate ELs use Holt Plus Literature, a grade-level curriculum adapted for struggling readers and writers as the primary text; they use *High Point* levels B and C as supplements.

An ELD/ELA teacher at Bay City picks up the pace of the mandated *High Point* curriculum and skips some of it in order to fit in a week or so of core literature and teach to grade-level standards after each *High Point* instructional unit. She also has students regularly make technology-enhanced presentations that meet grade-level speaking standards.

The ELD/ELA department at Valley City makes grade-level content and learning tasks the center of their instruction. To keep pace with grade-level content, teachers tailor instruction for EL student success rather than slowing it down or "remediating." A teacher of beginning ELs engages students in producing "parallel products," that is, products similar to those she requires of her mainstream class.

Creative Approaches to Improving Teaching and Learning

Two middle schools have addressed the need to improve instructional practices in unique ways. Inland City instituted an unusual grouping, curricular, and scheduling strategy for teaching mathematics. It targets students who are at the basic and below-basic levels in mathematics — ELs and non-ELs — separates them by gender, and places them in two-hour pre-algebra blocks with some of its best teachers. These teachers adapted the district's pacing calendar, emphasizing depth rather than breadth by covering less material but instead focusing on the essentials that prepare students to achieve at proficiency levels on the CST and prepare them for algebra the following year. This approach has, so far, yielded promising results. In 2009, eighth grade EL students performed unusually well, with 34 percent scoring proficient or above, far above the state average of 14 percent.

Foothill City Middle School has three particular grouping and curriculum strategies for improving English Learners' academic success. The first is a schoolwide Advisory program that is tailored to each grade level. All students participate in a first-period Advisory class. The purpose of the Advisory is two-fold. It is in this class that assignment books are checked and academic goals are set, but it is also a place for community building, character building, and for what the school calls "challenge activities," activities that engage students in solving novel problems, addressing social issues, or planning for the future.

A second structure at Foothill City directly targets English Learners: AM Boost. This program arose out of recognition of the unaddressed language needs of students at CELDT levels 3 and 4. A major goal of AM Boost is language skill-building and a focus on developing students' ability to communicate orally with academic language in their content area classes. While AM Boost targets English support, mainly for humanities courses, the need for extra support in math is also recognized. This is handled in two different ways. First, there is also an AM Boost for students who are below grade level in math. For students who are below grade level in both areas, the priority is English, so those students attend the English AM Boost, and then attend an after-school math intervention at the school staffed by tutors from a local non-profit organization.

Additionally, students at CELDT levels 1 and 2 have their own, self-contained English and social studies class (the newcomer ELD class), but they are mainstreamed for math and science. For these classes, a tutor accompanies the students and helps with translation and clarification on the spot.

Support for Shared Practices

Though shared instructional practices do not in and of themselves necessarily improve teaching and learning, they do provide a beginning point for department reflection about instruction and an opportunity to consider which practices do or do not support students' academic and linguistic growth.

At Valley City, the largest school in the study, with three separate programs on its campus but only 3 percent English Learners, the master schedule builds in common planning time when the ELD and sheltered teachers can meet and discuss EL instructional practices and the needs of their EL students. Because of this planning time, the school's English Learners benefit from their teachers' shared instructional practices and a focus on grouping students in pairs and small groups to promote productive student-student talk and work.

Another support for shared practices is department or schoolwide professional development. At Bay City, the intermediate and advanced level ELD teachers use a number of instructional strategies that they learned together during professional development, including using common linguistic expressions for the academic skills of reporting information, predicting, acknowledging ideas, soliciting a response, or disagreeing with another's ideas. Classroom posters providing formulaic expressions such as "I predict that…" or "I don't agree with you because…" were evident in classes outside of the ELD department as well.

At Foothill City Middle School, teachers' use of language routines is kept consistent across disciplines and grade levels. On the board in every classroom is a chart that lists the homework for the day, the learning target, and the agenda. Every class at Foothill City Middle School begins in the same way, with a student reading aloud the concrete, student-focused learning goal for the day. For example, in the sixth grade English class, the learning target one day was "I can identify and explain the parts of a paragraph, including topic sentence, supporting

sentences, and concluding sentences." At the end of class each day, a portion of the period is devoted to reflection on the learning goal, through class discussion or partner sharing and an "exit ticket" that students write and turn in to the teacher before leaving class.

Foothill City also supports teachers' shared practice through weekly grade-level meetings with teachers and the grade-level advisory coordinators. Every Friday, each advisory coordinator meets with her grade-level teachers to share the upcoming week's advisory focus and lesson plans and to receive feedback regarding the success of recently implemented lessons and suggestions for future areas of focus.

High Support for High Challenge

The most promising practices occurring across the study sites are those that provide English Learners with "high-support and high-challenge" teaching and learning.

At Inland City Middle School, pre-algebra teachers in the newly restructured mathematics program provide support for learning complex academic language and content by organizing students in pairs and small groups to promote their production of academic language about mathematical concepts. Additionally, teachers model for students and support the presentation of key ideas with ample visual representations. One teacher in this program articulated in particular the importance of teacher subject matter knowledge and the pedagogical expertise to know how to teach it to specific students.

Teachers at Valley City Middle School work deliberately to support a high level of academic content and language for English Learners, using a variety of scaffolding strategies, including questioning, modeling, and contextualizing academic concepts within students' prior knowledge and experiences.

At Foothill City Middle School, the extra support that intermediate ELs receive through AM Boost classes prepares them to succeed in their ELA and history classes. For example, to prepare for a Socratic seminar in which they would be arguing for and against animal testing, students began the observed AM Boost that day with the learning target "I can prepare to be an active participant in a Socratic seminar about the pros and cons of animal testing." During the course of this particular Boost class, students sorted sentence strips into categories of "arguments for" and "arguments against" animal testing, discussing various arguments in pairs, brainstorming phrases to use when agreeing or disagreeing with someone, and, finally, reviewing and then practicing their arguments, referring as needed to a set formulaic expressions available on "discussion cards." The principal explains the extra support for the school's intermediate-level ELs in terms of refusing to quit on students: "We need to use high-challenge, academic language with all students, but especially with our long-term 3's, who traditionally linger in ELD for years."

Teachers who demonstrated high expectations and high support of their students articulated clear reasons for their choices. According to a teacher at Ocean City, "ELs need rigor. And they need to have the same expectations put upon them that they will face when they transition into an ELA class." A social studies teacher at Foothill City Middle School explains, "I use materials that support and push students. I want my EL students to understand themes and to learn excellent research skills." Asked to describe what English Learners need to be successful in school, this teacher's answer echoes that of several others: "They need lots of opportunities to interact, build vocabulary, and lots of practice using language in context. What they all need is what they are getting here, at this school. To be in a classroom culture that supports them and recognizes the brilliant students they are."

High Expectations for All

At Foothill City Middle School, every teacher and administrator in the school has an Advisory class, including the principal, assistant principal, and ELD coordinator. Not only does this make each section of Advisory a manageable and productive size, but it also allows administrators to stay connected and responsive to students in ways they could not otherwise. This is the only school among the case study sites where the entire staff is engaged in teaching students.

The principal of Foothill City believes that the school's high expectations for students set high standards for teachers as well. The school's behavior program, for example, called "Seven Community Agreements," sets forth clear guidelines for class participation, including respect for learning, for one's self, and for others. These agreements appear to shape teacher behavior. During visits to the school, all teachers were respectful of students, thoughtful, and always acknowledged students' positive behavior. Although all of the classes follow the same community agreements, each grade level team sets up their own steps in terms of discipline and decide together the chain of consequences. The job of the administration, then, is holding teams accountable for the steps they have created. "Good kids sometimes make bad choices," the principal explains. "What we need to do is empower students to make better choices."

At Inland City Middle School, the principal is concerned that not all teachers place the education of ELs front and center, and that high-quality, grade-level instruction for ELs does not occur in all classrooms. The principal was planning to begin the 2009-10 year by asking teachers to reflect and answer this question: "You can tell who the EL students are in my class because…." She also plans to focus departments on the needs of ELs by requiring them to address a related question every time they meet: "What are you doing for the EL students?" The principal feels that as language arts, math, science, and social studies departments meet throughout the year to discuss district benchmark results — by class, individual, strand, and standard — the emphasis on ELs will facilitate continued improvement for those students' academic experiences and success.

Moving Beyond Middle School

Only one school — Foothill City Middle School — explicitly focuses instruction on ripening the potential of English Learners. The AM Boost classes are designed with that goal in mind. Though the immediate focus is academic and linguistic development for success in content classes, it is pursued with the belief that academic success at middle school will prepare students for grade-level work in high school. As the EL coordinator explains, "Our goal is to arm our ELD kids with the academic language they need to be successful in high school. Our goals should be to send these kids to high school in mainstream classes and not ELD classes." The school also believes that all students can and should attain a college degree. In Advisory, students engage in games that focus on academic choices, such as "College for All."

SECTION V. ENDURING CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study began with the hope of illuminating systemic promising practices in the education of adolescent English Learners in California middle schools. The goal was to describe and turn these practices into actionable recommendations that other schools could learn from and adapt to their own contexts. As discussed in the cross-case analysis, however, apart from Foothill City Middle School, a small, autonomous school, study researchers found examples of good practices, but they were not general throughout a school.

Enduring challenges in the education of English Learners impede even those schools that are making concerted efforts to address the needs of their English Learners. In order to turn around the lack of academic success among these students, who, as any others, are full of potential, we need to understand the key challenges that schools and districts must address.

Building on Phases 1 and 2 of the study, and on the literature review of successful programs in this country and abroad, the discussion below unpacks the challenges and presents recommendations for policy makers and educators for designing and enacting quality programs for English Learners in middle schools.

Guiding Assumptions

A coherent program of instruction for English Learners will be guided by a coherent set of assumptions about who the learners are, what they are capable of, and the practices that will support them. In two of the case study schools, coherent but different sets of guiding assumptions highlight the importance of those assumptions.

At Bay City Middle School, English Learners in the school's ELD program are vigorously "sheltered" from grade-level content, while English Learners no longer eligible for ELD sink or swim in mainstream classes (the district limits the number of years students can stay in ELD). See a description of Bay City's approach to ELD on page 60.

At Inland City Middle School, the focus is on getting English Learners out of ELD and into grade-level courses. A related emphasis is acceleration rather than remediation. See a description of the Inland City ELD program on page 61.

Bay City Middle School

Bay City Middle School is a neighborhood school in a neighborhood of newly arrived immigrants and other Latino families who have settled in the inner city. As has been true for the past 15 years at Bay City, about 4 of every 10 students enter the school as English Learners. Over the years, a highly structured, multi-level ELD program has been constructed to serve a minority of these students.

Twenty-two percent of Bay City's English Learners are enrolled in the ELD program. Typically, they spend three years with ELD *High Point* curriculum, which the school *decelerates,* so that students exit eighth grade having completed fifth grade content. In other content areas as well, these students are "sheltered" from core grade-level content and curriculum. Instead, the school offers many levels of ELD or sheltered content instruction. Even students at CELDT level 5 can find themselves placed in sheltered math and science classes. Teachers report that the ELD program does not prepare students to enter the core curriculum classes.

On the other hand, the 78 percent of English Learners who are not eligible for ELD (English Learners who have already exited ELD in earlier grades) are placed in mainstream content area classes, where teachers are not prepared to support them. Many of these students are two or more years below grade level on the state's standardized language arts test, and so must enroll in one of the school's two reading interventions. Forty percent of the school's EL students populate these courses.

In 2009, English Learners at Bay City redesignated fluent English proficient at the rate of 12.2 percent, compared with the state average of 10.8 percent.

Inland City Middle School

Inland City Middle School is located in a solidly middle-class neighborhood, but neighborhood students tend to enroll elsewhere. The school is in its fifth year of Program Improvement. Yet in the past two years, the school's API index has risen impressively, a total of 71 points.

The bedrock of the school's focus on improvement has been universal access to grade-level content. For example, all students who are not ready for algebra are placed in intensive double-period, gender-segregated prep classes with some of the school's best teachers. In 2009, eighth grade ELs performed unusually well, with 34 percent scoring proficient or above, far above the state average of 14 percent. Forty percent of ELs enroll in mainstream courses; their classmates are native English speakers, their teachers all have CLAD credentials, and the content is at grade level or above. Even English Learners at the lowest CELDT levels participate in the school's improvement culture, finishing the three-year *High Point* sequence in two years, for example, in classes where teachers use it only as a supplement to the grade-level content they otherwise provide. Any student in the school, EO or EL, who is struggling in language arts enrolls in a two- or three-period block that uses a grade-level curriculum aligned with grade-level content standards rather than a below-grade-level reading intervention. Even so, only 6 percent of ELs are in these courses.

Reclassification rates for the school's English Learners are double the state rate, even though the school's criteria are the most stringent among the case study schools. A concern is that these criteria may be unnecessarily stringent, delaying reclassification for many of the 49 percent of Inland City ELs who are early advanced or advanced by CELDT standards.

Accelerate the Pace at Which ELs Engage with Grade-Level Content

The education of middle school ELs ranges from remediation and sheltered instruction to acceleration. A path of remediation and sheltered courses condemns students to a low-track sequence from which they seldom recover. As we saw in the case study schools, remediation restricts ELs from the opportunity to take important curricular options, and they fall increasingly behind in needed credits.

On the other hand, when students are enrolled in an accelerated English language development class and then mainstreamed with support into academic subject matter courses, as in Inland City Middle School, they end up doing well academically and personally.

A related concern is prematurely "remediating" or restricting options available to English learners who have been in U.S. schools for as little as three years. Hakuta, Butler, and Witt (2000) report that second language learners need seven years to acquire the communicative competence required to perform as native speakers of English in academic contexts. Programs that allow for less are neither fair nor sound.

Provide Additional Grade-Level Support (Not Remediation) for Students Who Need It

When students test at two years below grade-level proficiency on the state standards tests, according to stipulations by the California State Board of Education, they must be offered an "intensive" ELD intervention. Translated into practice, intensive means two periods with little regard to the content of those two periods or to the curriculum being used. One of the most dramatic findings from the study is that English Learners are many times scheduled into double periods that do not meet their needs.

Whenever double periods are offered, they should be deepening and strengthening English Learners' conceptual, academic, and linguistic development. Sometimes students get two periods of English language development. Or they get English language arts stretched to occupy two periods instead of one, without significant adaptations. Or they get a reading intervention regardless of its appropriateness, for example the widely used *Language!* program, which was designed with the needs of native speakers of English in mind, not second language learners. Double periods of double the same ineffective materials and teaching are hardly helpful. In addition, when the wrong remedy does not work, it is the students who are blamed for the failure.

When English Learners need extra help, targeted support sessions can be very useful since such sessions contingently focus on students' needs at a particular time. The content and duration of these "seminars" is dictated by the students' progress and specific areas of need. The AM Boost classes and after-school mathematics tutoring at Foothill City Middle School are examples of sessions that result from analyzing students' most urgent needs and providing ways to support and accelerate development in those areas. Similar examples take place in

the European Union, where most second language learners attend regular classes in the new language, or L2, to learn all standard academic programs, but they also receive focused instruction to develop their academic skills in the L1 or L2 as needed (OECD, 2005).

Reconsider Current Redesignation Practices

California reclassification decisions are based primarily on test scores, which are themselves derived in large part from mastery of isolated linguistic forms or concepts: CELDT scores to measure English proficiency and CST scores to measure academic achievement in English language arts (and mathematics in many districts).

The CELDT tests, for example, emphasize accuracy at the phrase or sentence level over building coherent arguments and reasoning. While some linguists think this is good practice (Scarcella, 2003), many others argue that people do not perform in life by uttering isolated phrases but rather by appropriately responding in situated ways to what interlocutors or texts intend for the speaker/reader/listener to do. If, as Scarcella proposes, we equate the production of error-free language with understanding and engagement in valuable interactions, we will punish students who may not be ready to produce the correct forms of language at the specific time of testing, but who nevertheless may understand key and complex ideas and may be able to interact with them and others in meaningful ways, even though displaying some grammatical or lexical errors (Ellis, 2005).

As anthropologist and sociolinguist Dell Hymes famously put it more than four decades ago, language is a tool that enables human beings to get things done with words; if communicative objectives are accomplished with imperfect constructions, but points are made, ideas understood, and communication felicitously accomplished, the most important job has been carried out. Once students understand that we value their ideas, they will be willing to polish their expression so that they can be shared with others in more public ways.

Focusing on grammatical accuracy first is not the right way to go. Ellis (2005) points out in his review of the literature on second language acquisition that "learners can benefit from instruction on specific grammatical features if their goal is to perform well on discrete-point tests like the TOEFL [the CELDT would fall in the same category]," but there is little or no evidence that grammar instruction results in the development of learners' ability to use these features meaningfully and spontaneously in communication.

It follows that reclassification of students to fluent English proficient should be decided by this basic sociolinguistic concern: Can students do things with words in appropriate ways (that fit the purpose and context of communication)? After that, then is the time to ask about accuracy: Can they do things with words appropriately and correctly (in accordance to grammatical patterns)? Many times students are retained in ELD courses although they basically understand most ideas and processes and can make themselves understood in spite of some linguistic errors.

Structural Recommendations

How can schools be organized to best support English Learners? What structures need to be in place? Foothill City Middle School, a small, autonomous school, is an example of a school that is built to support learners (see description below). The school flourishes to a large degree because of its strong outreach to parents and a staff that is committed to everyone's growth — students', parents', and their own. It is a true learning community.

Foothill City Middle School

Foothill City Middle School is a small, autonomous school of about 300 students. Anyone in the district may attend, but the school demographics reflect the school's low-income Latino and Asian neighborhood. About half of students are English Learners.

Adults and students know each other at Foothill. First period every day is "Advisory," and every teacher and administrator in the building is involved. Advisory groups are small and have two purposes, academic and personal. As a matter of course, advisory leaders keep track, with students, of students' progress on assignments and learning goals. Advisory is also a place for community building, character building, and what the school calls "challenge activities." Challenge activities are developed by three grade-level Advisory coordinators, who plan together and with their grade-level teachers each Friday for the following week's Advisory classes. For example, one Advisory period students were involved in a teacher-designed game about academic choices, "College for All." Explicit in the game's design is the message that every student in the school will attend college.

The school's Family Resource Center offers English classes to parents three days a week and other parent education classes once a month. It also serves as a catalyst for parent engagement and support of students. Sign-in sheets from recent meetings reflect that an average of 75 parents attend monthly School Site Council meetings and another 25 attend meetings of the English Learner Advisory Council. The director of the family center is a paid position, funded through the after-school program, but all other personnel are volunteers, and there is no shortage of them.

Teachers at Foothill City invest in their own learning. A fulltime "instructional facilitator" leads two series of ongoing professional development each year, one of

which focuses on ELs. Teachers also select personal target areas to work on. Focus groups of teachers support one another's action research, and the culmination for each teacher is a formal presentation to peers. Teachers post their presentation materials in the school hallways, publicly demonstrating their commitment to students and to their own professional growth.

For English Learners specifically, the school structures a before-school period known as "AM Boost," designed to prepare ELs stalled at CELDT levels 3 and 4 to enroll in mainstream, not ELD, classes by the time they get to high school. In AM Boost classes, students practice using the academic language they will need later that day in their English/humanities courses. ELD teachers use the district's ELD course of study instead of *High Point* curriculum, and are also supported by the instructional facilitator to develop their own standards-based materials. (AM Boost is also available for students who are below grade level in math, as is an after-school math program.)

Support for English Learners extends into the mainstream classes, where instructional practices mirror those of the ELD and AM Boost classes: interactive, language-rich tasks that structure high levels of collaboration and student talk about grade-level academic content and processes. ELD level 1 and 2 students have their own self-contained English and social studies class, but they are mainstreamed for math and science. For these classes, a tutor accompanies the students and helps with translation and clarification on the spot.

While Foothill English Learners redesignate at a relatively high rate of 19.2 percent, faculty and administrators remain dissatisfied with students' progress. "We need to do everything we are doing, but do it better," says the instructional facilitator.

Middle schools must be organized deliberately to support the development of adolescent English Learners so they can succeed in high school and college and become critical and contributing members of society. The school experience for ELs also needs to help them feel at home in American society. Acculturation does not come easily for English Learners; too often they face misunderstanding and discrimination (Bartlett, 2007; Gutiérrez, Morales, and Martinez, 2009; Suárez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, and Todorova, 2008). Schools need to be places where majority and minority populations learn to live together on the basis of mutual appreciation and respect for their similarities and differences.

Reconsideration of a number of specific structural components in the education of English Learners can help to address persistent academic, linguistic, and acculturation challenges.

Make "Small Schools" the Norm

If a school is not small to start with, organize it into "houses" or groups of teachers and students who together work as if they were a small school. In such houses, three or four cohorts of students are taught by the same core teachers. Because these teachers share the same students, they can easily discuss students' progress and needs, compare work, and plan together for the benefit of the particular students they have in common. The premier secondary school program for English Learners in the country, the Internationals Network for Public Schools (a network of nine New York City high schools for recently arrived immigrant youth) exemplifies the power of the small school concept, with a record of successfully graduating and sending to college the great majority of their students.

Hire and Nurture Talented Advocates for ELs, in Leadership and Teaching Roles

Although the practice of assigning underprepared teachers to teach English Learners is improving in California, it was still the case during academic year 2007-08 that only 70 percent of teachers teaching ELs were fully credentialed (up from 65 percent the previous year and 54 percent the year before that) (Guha, Shields, Tiffany-Morales, Bland, & Campbell, 2008). Even when teachers are credentialed, the teaching of ELs is typically reserved for novice teachers, making even more complex their task of adapting the theoretical and abstract understandings learned in teacher preparation programs to the reality of their teaching context.

District and school level interviews in this study indicated that finding school staff with expertise in the education of English Learners is extremely difficult. At the same time, schools can nurture and grow their own expertise. Experienced and successful teachers should be the teachers of ELs, and their classrooms should become sites for the apprenticeship of new colleagues. As at Foothill City Middle School, ongoing collegial professional development can create expert teachers and strong advocates for English Learners.

Common planning time is another structural support that schools can provide on behalf of English Learners. All teachers, and especially teachers of English Learners, need common planning time. At the International High School at La Guardia Community College in New York City, for example, every Wednesday morning students engage in extra-curricular activities led by community college students in coordination with teachers at the school. This arrangement opens up a time when teachers can work together for four hours weekly, to discuss the progress of cohort students across subject matter areas and to decide jointly how to support them, whether in curricular or personal ways (Walqui, 2000). Similar arrangements need to be considered for our middle schools.

In countries that the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development found to have the most success with immigrant students, teachers on average taught half of their time in school and worked in collaboration with peers the other half (OECD 2005). To provide that much teacher collaboration time within the school day would entail a dramatic change in U.S. schools. However, designing school schedules so that teachers who teach the same courses, or the same students, can meet, visit each others' classes, and compare notes is not so difficult to accomplish. And the more public that teaching becomes, the more a culture of sharing and learning will become the norm, and the more students will benefit.

Bring Parents into the School in Meaningful Ways

Early adolescence is a time when schools can still expect to involve parents in their children's day-to-day education and to engage parents in planning for their children's academic futures. In the case of English Learners, schools have the opportunity to increase parents' comfort with their children's school and academic needs through a Family Resource Center, as at Foothill City Middle School. By making a concerted effort to bring parents into the school community and by offering academic and social programs designed to serve adult needs, such resource centers also increase parents' understanding of how to support their children's needs.

Make Advisory Periods Count

Advisory periods, in which a low ratio of students per adult promotes the opportunity for students to get to know and trust an adult and a small group of peers, is a structure that works well for English Learners (Walqui, 2000; Walqui and Schmida, 2004). In Advisory, ELs can discuss tensions and successes related to navigating multiple worlds, languages, and registers of those languages; they can learn about the U.S. educational system and what is required for post-secondary education; and they can further develop their critical abilities to interact about important personal and academic topics. Foothill City Middle School, for example, has Advisory classes that are led by every adult in the building, including the principal. This lowers the adult-student ratio, and it also signals the importance the school places on these classes. From the literature on the education of English Learners, we know that small Advisories are considered by students and teachers alike as one of the pillars of their success. For example, students attending the Internationals Network of high schools say that at times, were it not for Advisory, they may have left school (Fine, Stoudt, and Futch, 2005).

Placement Decisions

English Learners' encounter with school begins with placement decisions. At Valley City Middle School, isolating and stigmatizing placements tend to be self-fulfilling sentences for many students, while affirmative placements seem to create their own rewards (see description on page 68).

Valley City Middle School

Valley City Middle School enjoys a school culture steeped in success. About 1,200 of the school's 2,300 students are enrolled in the campus GATE program. Another 850 or so have won lottery places in the magnet science, math, and technology program. A third program serves about 350 neighborhood students.

The small percentage of students who are English Learners are placed in one of two dramatically different academic trajectories. The highest scoring 20 percent are mainstreamed into all content area classes except ELA. The other 80 percent spend their days in sheltered classes, grouped with special education students and any students identified with serious behavior problems. Thirty-one percent of Valley City ELs redesignate as fluent English proficient, but not many of them come from the isolated, demotivating sheltered classes. The school's EL coordinator observes, "The students with good models have moved quickly. Those without good models don't move forward, they get stuck."

Avoid Isolating and Stigmatizing EL Placements

The outcome of EL placement decisions at Valley City Middle School is a reminder of the importance of accelerating all English Learners' access to grade-level content and mainstream classrooms. In addition to mainstream instruction that helps ELs meet grade-level standards, peers in mainstream classrooms can serve as positive academic models. The reverse also holds, when students get stuck in stigmatizing and isolating below-grade courses with peers who are poor academic models.

Make EL Placement More Nimble

Identification and placement processes must be more nimble if they are to meet students where they are and accelerate their development. Identification should measure what students know, including in their native language, in order to determine what the best course options for them will be.

In terms of literacy, for example, placement for teenagers who know how to read and write well in their first language, their L1, should take into consideration these academic strengths and focus on facilitating the transfer of these skills into their new language, through robust and accelerated development of oral English. On the other hand, placement for teenagers who do not know how to read or write in their own language, or who have

low literacy skills, should focus first on developing rich literacy skills in their L1. It is too much to ask that a student who cannot read or cannot read with understanding should have to learn these skills in an unknown language. At the same time, developing these students' accelerated oral English can then facilitate transfer of their increasing L1 literacy to English.

Other placement considerations relate to ELs' knowledge in core content areas — in any language. For mathematics and science placements, for example, students' existing knowledge should determine their appropriate courses and the extra supports that may be needed to accelerate their development and mainstream them into regular classes as soon as they are ready.

Know Enough About Students' Skills to Make Appropriate Placements in the Absence of CELDT Results.

As discussed, the heavy reliance on tests to place or redesignate students is problematic, but when assessments are used, they should be scheduled so as to inform important decisions. Currently, CELDT testing takes place from July through October, but scoring is done by the state and results are typically not available until January or February, when the school year is well under way and students have been already assigned to courses.

In the absence of these test results, it is especially important for schools to know what their English Learners know and can do, so that ELs do not languish in below-grade-level courses that were assigned on the basis of out-of-date test scores.

Curricular Recommendations

In the study survey of ELD programs, schools overwhelmingly cited the curricula and pacing guides provided by the districts as the most influential component of districts' programs for English Learners. With such a weighty role, these materials should be of excellent, not dubious, quality.

Support ELD Teachers in Supplementing Prescribed Below-Grade-Level Materials

In four out of five case study schools, districts prescribed the *High Point* ELD program, and many teachers and administrators bemoaned the limitations of this protracted below-grade-level approach. Researchers analyzed a randomly selected unit from the *High Point Level B* (2007) materials and found numerous questionable editorial decisions in adapting the literature selection from the original. Much more disturbing, however, the pedagogical treatment was found to focus students on tangential rather than substantial ideas, and some grammatical explanations were actually incorrect.

Many ELD teachers in the study either supplemented *High Point* with a grade-level curriculum or they made *High Point* the supplement in classes driven by a grade-level curriculum. (At the small, autonomous Foothill City Middle School, where ELD teachers were free not to choose *High Point,* they didn't. And they were supported by the school's ELD coordinator and instructional facilitator to create their own materials.)

Demand Content Area Materials That Support Access by English Learners

Study respondents reported that subject matter texts do not support access by English Learners, and that, by and large, professional development does not fill the gap. Yet, given the necessary emphasis on accelerating English Learners' access to grade-level subject matter, it is increasingly important that grade-level subject matter materials be designed specifically to help do the job.

Provide Enticing Extracurricular and Summer School Options

English Learners have a lot to learn. Extra classes that meet before or after school and in the summer should target students' areas of need through enticing offerings that do not have a remediation perspective. For example, classes that focus on comparative social structure, key controversies in the history of the United States, the short story in the Americas, or project-based mathematics can at the same time build students' competence in reading with understanding, writing, oral expression, debating, and using math to solve problems.

Similarly, summer classes that repeat the same coursework that did not work for ELs or other students during the year, with the same materials and in a shorter period of time, should be abandoned in favor of courses that help English Learners develop the required competencies but signal to students that they are perceived as competent, legitimate members of school. Treating students as capable, valued members of school society is an important prerequisite for their success (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Gibbons, 2009).

Pedagogical Recommendations

Pedagogically it is recommended that ELs be taught to their potential and not their perceived level of development, with deliberate teacher scaffolding designed and enacted to support the ripening of that potential (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006; Walqui and van Lier, 2010).

Design Lessons That Are Demanding but Enticing, and Scaffold Students' Access

Proleptic teaching (anticipating students' development) presupposes that teachers know how to provide students with lessons in which high challenge is balanced with high support — notably, with a wide variety of scaffolding techniques. To design and teach well-scaffolded lessons, teachers must have robust subject matter knowledge, understand the linguistic demands of their discipline, and have the pedagogical expertise to put these together for English Learners. The lessons must be demanding but enticing, with practices that help students see themselves as members of academic communities. In accelerated classes, students are expected to perform at high levels but are apprenticed into the performances that characterize central members of the discipline (Walqui and van Lier, 2010). This kind of acceleration is what we want for all ELs and other students who are in need of developing the academic uses of English.

Design Lessons That Involve Students in Explaining, Comparing, and Hypothesizing — in Collaboration with Others

Turn all classes into those where students are actively engaged and discussing important ideas. Nothing will be as important as providing English Learners with interactive processes that foster their autonomy.

Typically, teachers of ELs linger over units of study because they expect students to master the language before moving ahead. As with other learners, ELs should be exposed to spirally designed curricula (Bruner, 1966) that introduce key concepts and processes but do not expect students to "master" them after a first encounter. The curricula subsequently revisit and expand these same concepts and processes. Gradually students increase their understanding and ability to apply their evolving literacies in collaboration, discussion, writing, and other presentations.

Nor is it the case that ELs first need to learn English and then subject matter content. Guadalupe Valdés and colleagues (2009) have proposed that a serious problem in the teaching of English Learners has to do with the curricularization of language, that is, breaking down and segmenting language so that it can be "taught," "learned," and "tested" in gradual increments. Likewise, as Rod Ellis has pointed out (2005), the atomistic teaching of language structures may render good results in atomistic testing, but it does not produce competent users of the language. Instead, students need to be invited to engage in activity that has them explain, compare and contrast, and hypothesize — in collaboration with others. Data gathered in this study and from other explorations (Walqui, 2000, for example) suggest that when students are asked to engage in key disciplinary acts, they rise to the occasion. Whenever they are "remedied" and subjected to a simplified and lock-step curriculum, they fall behind beyond repair.

Emphasize Oral Interaction

English language development and academic content classes need to reestablish the priority of oral language development in everyday activity and use oral interaction about subject matter content as a bridge to increasingly more accomplished use of academic language. The role of oracy in the development of academic uses of English is still largely unexplored in the United States. In Australia, however, the impact of Michael Halliday's systemic linguistics has permeated educational practice, and a number of advances in practice have rendered comparable advances in English Learners' achievement.

The importance of practicing English orally in sustained discourse about academic ideas and processes cannot be overstated. Even in the case study middle schools, where ELs perform better than in other schools, students did not get nearly as much practice in talking through ideas with others as current research suggests is needed (Schleppegrell, 2009; Gibbons, 2009).

Oral production should extend beyond the question/answer exchange and promote dialogue in which ideas are shared, reaffirmed, or critiqued, and counterarguments are made to build better understandings. Nor should this emphasis come at the expense of clear, pointed, language explanations (Walqui, 2006). Gibbons (2009) points out that ELs need opportunities to go deeper into the content they are learning, engage in many kinds of interactions as they learn, *and* become metalinguistic about the ways language is used to talk and write about the new concepts they are learning.

In consistent ways, the development of disciplinary language should be tracked over a unit of work. Teachers should compare what students could do with language initially and after substantive practice — and share these observations with their students.

Use Systemic Linguistics and a Genre Approach

Systemic linguistics and its application to educational practice are anchored in the premise that learning the language of a new discipline is part of learning the new discipline. There is no learning that is independent of language learning.

In addition, academic uses of English are characterized by a cluster of features that vary from context to context (genre to genre and register to register) and are therefore difficult to contain in a package of learning prescriptions. Instead, teachers can help students work with academic themes, processes, and language in conversational registers, and increasingly invite them to move into more abstract and condensed written registers (Gibbons, 2009).

The practice of using systemic linguistics and a genre approach in the teaching of subject matter courses to English Learners has proven successful in Australia, where first generation ELs do almost as well as their native speaking peers, and second generation ELs outperform their native English speaking counterparts (Derewianka, 1991, 2003; Gibbons, 2002, 2003, 2009; OECD, 2006).

Create Learners Who Can Support Their Own Future Learning

Help students take a metalinguistic and metacognitive approach to learning. The development of students' language awareness and metacognitive processes is pivotal in fostering their autonomy. If students understand disciplinary processes at work in English, and how to learn, they will own the tools for becoming competent learners as the exigencies of language and content increase during their academic lives and beyond.

Professional Development Recommendations

Finally, what has been gleaned from this study about what English Learners need has profound implications for the professional development of educators. All teachers need to know how to develop their students' conceptual, academic, and linguistic knowledge. Subject matter teachers as well as ELD teachers need to be provided with opportunities to develop their metalinguistic awareness and pedagogical content knowledge to work with the wide variety of students in their classes.

Create a Shared Vision Across the School of Effective Teaching

The goals of professional development should be to create in all educators at a school a shared vision of effective teaching — for all students and in particular for English Learners — and supported practice enacting this vision. As school reformers have attempted to support teachers and schools in adopting new, high-demand subject matter learning, the major challenge has been to help them envision what this means when the students they are serving are students in the process of developing English as a second language. Common misunderstandings include the advice to teachers to simplify the linguistic and conceptual input.

Research and development at WestEd and in the Internationals Network of high schools has focused on the design and implementation of tools that demonstrate — contrary to common belief — that linguistic and conceptual amplifications, surrounding students with the natural discourse of the discipline, and engaging them in challenging, well-designed, and well-supported tasks, are all indispensable for linguistic and academic development. Principals, assistant principals, heads of department, coaches, and all teachers need to learn how to conceptualize and enact this work.

Create a Culture of Adult Learning That Includes Time for Teachers to Work Collegially

Teacher learning opportunities must include professional collaboration, such as co-teaching, joint opportunities to reflect on teaching, collaborative analysis of student work, and shared reflection on teaching mediated by video and other artifacts. In the earlier description of Foothill City Middle School, a very strong culture of professional growth and adult learning was shown to permeate the school. Time, resources, and staff commitment were all necessary ingredients.

In California, and in the rest of the United States, teachers seldom engage in collegial conversations or in joint work focused on their students' development. In fact, American teachers teach five of six, or six of seven class periods daily. More time should be given — within the work schedule — for all to develop their knowledge and ability to enact and continuously revise learning and teaching for the benefit of English Learners and all other students.

In most European and Asian countries, instruction takes up less than half of a teacher's working time. In Singapore, the government pays for 100 hours of professional development in addition to the 20 hours a week teachers have for working with peers to study teaching. In Sweden and the Netherlands, teachers are required to take at least 120 hours of professional development per year beyond the many hours built into their schedules for collegial planning and inquiry. (Wei, et al., 2009; OECD, 2006).

Expand Teachers' Understanding of Disciplinary Teaching

In middle school and high school, teacher professional development must expand teachers' understanding of what it means to teach in a discipline. All secondary teachers need to consider themselves teachers of their subject matter, of reading in their content area, and of the disciplinary uses of English required to engage in valuable discipline-specific activities (Carnegie Council for Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2009).

Support Teachers in Problematizing Disciplinary Texts

Teachers' lack of expertise to work with ELs in robust and accelerated ways leads them to follow scripted lesson plans presented by publishers, even when these materials were not designed with the needs of ELs in mind (as is the case with the *Language!* program), or to depend on materials that are pedagogically and conceptually weak (as is the case with the *High Point* program), or to follow pacing guides that do not include the supports required by students to develop subject matter understandings and the entailed academic uses of English. Professional development must help teachers learn how to problematize textbook materials — to analyze the difficulties EL students will encounter and reformulate content and pedagogy to increase students' access.

With up-to-date and deeper and more generative knowledge, teachers will be able to select concepts, relationships, and skills in the areas they teach, to sequence them adequately, to present them to students in compelling ways, and to provide students with the right kinds of invitations and scaffolding so they can appropriate and use them in their daily lives (Walqui and van Lier, 2010; Gibbons, 2009).

Provide Administrators with Professional Development That Allows Them to Be Instructional Leaders on Behalf of English Learners

School leaders — principals, assistant principals, heads of departments — also need to attend professional development, with the goal of becoming knowledgeable to be the pedagogical leaders of practices for English Learners in their schools. In the case study schools, only one principal was intimately knowledgeable about learning and teaching with English Learners. Educational leaders need to deeply understand the nature of the work if they are to promote, support, and monitor it. As Richard Elmore has stated, "The necessary condition for the success of school leaders in the future will be their capacity to improve the quality of instructional practice" (2006, p. 6). Knowledgeable leaders become the champions of their students and can support teachers to do an increasingly better job.

Make ELs Everyone's Responsibility

Our schools, through the everyday work of their teachers and administrators, are charged with developing the knowledge and skills of the future citizens of the United States. To do this job well, education must keep adapting to meet the changing needs of society (The Great Schools Partnership, 2007). For example, in the twenty-first century, most jobs have evolved to require sophisticated literacy and expressive skills, critical and creative thinking, and postsecondary education. The demographics of the students who will become the future citizens of our country are also changing.

Decades ago it was assumed that ELs were the responsibility of teachers who were part of the bilingual or English as a second language program. Given the projected growth of the EL population in California and nationwide (Fix and Passel, 2003; Papademetriou and Terrazas, 2009), it is safe to assume that all teachers will have ELs in their classes, and thus should have the expertise to address ELs' needs with quality. Helping all teachers and administrators at a middle school refine their skills continuously has the added advantages of multiplying the number of advocates for the quality education of ELs and other students and replenishing the pool of knowledgeable and committed educators who can keep the vision clear and the work vital and progressing.

*****

In California and nationally, the current environment of high expectations and high stakes must not fail to recognize the urgency of supporting the achievement of English Learners. An ambitious effort is needed. State

education establishments as well as local districts and all middle schools need to redirect their efforts and promise their stakeholders to improve teaching and learning for the explicit purpose of increasing "all" students' achievement through standards-based education and professional development.

This work must first recognize that in prior education reform movements, "all" students has not meant *all* students. Typically, students who need to learn English as a second language have been left out — overlooked and underserved (Ruiz de Velasco, Fix, and Chu, 2000). The misconception that students need to fully understand English in order to engage in rigorous disciplinary activities, and a general lack of knowledge by practitioners and educational leaders of how to combine conceptual, academic, and linguistic development, have led to a situation in which EL status is a proxy for academic underachievement.

English Learners are not going to go away. In fact, students who were born in this country or educated exclusively in U.S. schools represent the area of greatest growth in the EL population (Goldenberg, 20008; Batalova, Fix, and Murray, 2007). Students, labeled "long-term" ELs (those identified for seven or more years as having limited English proficiency), have been the most severely punished by inadequate academic support. Most schools and districts do not keep separate statistics on their long-term English Learners, but everyone in schools knows who they are: "lifers" as some study respondents dismissively referred to them.

In this country, where we promise a first-rate education for all children, we cannot permit conditions that doom an entire population to far less. This study is only a tiny part of the work that needs to be done to honor the promise of all students who enter our schools. Within the next decade, 25 percent of all students in the United States will be English Learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). It is hardly hyperbole to insist that English Learners are everyone's responsibility.

REFERENCES

August, D., & Shanahan, T. (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on language-minority children and youth.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Bartlett, L. (2007). Bilingual literacies, social identification, and educational trajectories. *Linguistics and Education,* 18, 215–231.

Batalova, J., Fix, M., & Murray, J. (2007). *Measures of change: The demography and literacy of adolescent English learners* (Rep. to Carnegie Corporation of New York). Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

Boyd, D., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wycloff, J. (2005). The draw of home: How teachers' preferences for proximity disadvantage urban schools. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Mangagement,* 24(1), 113-132.

Bruner, J. (1966). *The culture of education.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bunch, G., Lotan, R., Valdés, G., & Cohen, E. (2005). Keeping content at the heart of content-based instruction: Access and support for transitional English Learners. In J. Crandall & D. Kaufman (Eds.), *Content-based instruction in primary and secondary settings* (pp. 11-25). Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

California Department of Education. (2006, August). *English learners in California frequently asked questions.* Retrieved October 2009 from http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/elfaq.doc California Department of Education. (2008, June). *CELDT program update.* Presentation to the Bilingual Coordinators Network, Long Beach, CA.

California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit. (2006/07). *DataQuest.* Retrieved March 2009 from http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest

California Education Code. (2005). *California Code of Regulation, Title 5, Education, Division 1. California Department of Education, Chapter 11, Special Programs, Subchapter 7.5, California English Language Development Test, Article 1. General.* Retrieved April 2010 from http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ed/documents/celdtregs.doc

Carlo, M., August, D., McLaughlin, B., Snow, C., Dressler, C., Lippman, D., Lively, T., & White, C. (2004). Closing the gap: Addressing the vocabulary needs of English language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly 39*(2), 188-215.

Carnegie Council for Advancing Adolescent Literacy. (2009). *Time to act: An agenda for advancing adolescent literacy for college and career success.* New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Casey, B., Giedd, J., & Thomas, K. (2000). Structural and functional brain development and its relation to cognitive development. *Biological Psychology,* 54(1-3), 241-257.

Conchas, G. (2006). *The color of success: Race and high-achieving urban youth.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Davis, S., Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., & Meyerson, D. (2005). *School leadership study: Developing successful principals (Review of Research).* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, Vol. 8 No.1.* Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University. Retrieved October 2009 from http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n1

Derewianka, B. (1991). *Exploring how texts work.* Newtown NSW: Primary English Teaching Association.

Derewianka, B. (2003). Grammatical metaphor in the transition to adolescence. In A.-M. Simon-Vandenbergen, M. Taverniers, & L. Ravelli (Eds.), *Grammatical metaphor: Views from systemic functional linguistics* (pp. 185–220). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Dutro, S., & Moran, C. (2003). Rethinking English language instruction: An architectural approach. Elbert Garcia (Ed.) *In English learners: Reaching the highest level of achievement.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Eccles, J. (2008). Can middle school reform increase high school graduation rates? *Research Report #12.* Santa Barbara, CA: California Dropout Research Project.

Ed-Data. (2009, September). Adequate yearly progress under NCLB. Retrieved October 2009 from www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/articles/Article.asp?title=Understanding+the+AYP

EdSource. (2006). *Similar students, different results: Why do some schools do better?* Mountain View, CA: EdSource Inc. Report.

Ellis, R. (2005). *Instructed second language acquisition. A literature review.* Prepared for the New Zealand Ministry of Education.

Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition.* Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (2009). *Principles of instructed second language acquisition.* CAL Digest. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Elmore, R. (2000, Winter). *Building a new structure for school leadership.* Washington, DC: The Albert Shanker Institute.

Elmore, R. (2004). *School reform from the inside out.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Esch, C. E., Chang-Ross, C. M., Guha, R., Humphrey, D. C., Shields, P. M., Tiffany-Morales, J.D., Wechsler, M. E., & Woodworth, K. R. (2005). *The status of the teaching profession 2005.* Santa Cruz, CA: The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning.

Feldman, K., & Kinsella, K. (2005). *Narrowing the language gap: The case for explicit vocabulary instruction.* Monograph. New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

Fine, M., Stoudt, B., & Futch, V. (2005). *The Internationals Network for Public Schools: A quantitative and qualitative cohort analysis of graduation and dropout rates: Teaching and learning in a transcultural academic environment.* New York: CUNY, The Graduate Center.

Fix, M., & Passel, J. (2003). *U.S. immigration trends and implications for schools.* Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

Flores, E., Painter, G., & Pachon, H. (2009, November). *¿Qué pasa? Are ELL students remaining in English?* (A Tomás Rivera Policy Institute Full Report). Los Angeles: University of Southern California School of Policy, Planning and Development.

Francis, D. (2008). *Second generation accountability for ELLS: Connecting Title I and Title III assessment and accountability systems.* Presentation at the 2008 English-Language Learners Symposium, Princeton, NJ.

Gándara, P., Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll. (2005). *Listening to teachers of English Learners.* Santa Cruz, CA: Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning.

Gándara, P., Maxwell-Jolly, J., & Rumberger, R. (2008). *Resource needs for English learners: Getting down to policy recommendations.* Santa Barbara, CA: University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute.

Gándara, P., & Rumberger, R. (2003). *The inequitable education of English learners in California's public schools.* Santa Barbara, CA: University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute.

Gibbons, P. (2002). *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Gibbons, P. (2003, March). *Scaffolding academic language across the curriculum.* Presentation at the meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics, Arlington, VA.

Gibbons, P. (2009). *English learners, academic literacy, and thinking: Learning in the challenge zone.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Goldenberg, C. (2008, Summer). Teaching English language learners. What the research does and does not say. *American Educator.*

The Great Schools Partnership. (2007). *Redesigning schools for the 21st century.* Knoxville, TN: Author.

Guha, R., Shields, P., Tiffany-Morales, J., Bland, J., & Campbell, A. (2008). *California's teaching force 2008: Key issues and trends.* Santa Cruz, CA: The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning.

Gutiérrez, K., Morales, Z., & Martinez, D. (2009). Re-mediating literacy: Culture, difference, and learning for students from nondominant communities. *Review of Research in Education,* 33(1), 212–245.

Hakuta, K., Butler, G., & Witt, D. (2000). *How long does it take English learners to attain proficiency?* (Rep. 2000-1). Santa Barbara, CA: University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute.

Hammond, J. (Ed.). (2001) *Scaffolding: Teaching and learning in language and literacy education.* Sydney: Primary English Teaching Association.

Hanushek, E. (1986). School context, principal leadership, and student reading achievement. *The Elementary School Journal, 96*(5), 527-549.

Hanushek, E. (1992). The economics of schooling: Production and efficiency in public schools. *Journal of Economic Literature, XXIV,* 1141-1177.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching.* Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman.

High Point (2007). The keeping quilt. *High Point Level B*. (pp. 77–83). Carmel, CA: Hampton-Brown.

Lantolf, J. (Ed.). (2000). *Sociocultural theory and second language learning.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lantolf, J., & Thorne, S. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Legislative Analyst's Office. (2004, February). *A look at the progress of English learner students.* Sacramento, CA: Author. Retrieved October 2009 from http://www.lao.ca.gov/2004/english_learners/021204_english_learners.pdf

Legislative Analyst's Office. (2007, February). *Analysis of the 2007-08 budget bill: Education.* Sacramento, CA: Author. Retrieved October 2009 from http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis_2007/education/ed_11_anl07.aspx#English%20Learners

Long, M. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. W. Ritchie & T. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 413-468). San Diego: Academic Press.

Mercury News. (2009, February 2). Palo Alto superintendent: Achievement gap can't be eliminated. Retrieved June 2009 from http://www.mercurynews.com/ci_11613034?IADID=Search-www.mercurynews.com-www.mercurynews.com

NCELA. (2006). *Frequently asked questions, No. 2.* Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs.

NCES. (2009). *The Nation's Report Card (NAEP): State profiles.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved April 2010 from http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2006). *Where immigrant students succeed. A comparative review of performance and engagement in PISA 2003.* Paris: Author.

Papademetriou, D., & Terrazas, A. (2009). *Immigrants and the current economic crisis: Research evidence, policy challenges, and implications.* Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

Parrish, T., Merickel, A., Perez, M., & Linquanti, R. (2006). *Evaluating the effects of the implementation of Proposition 227 on the education of English learners, K-12: Findings from a five-year evaluation: Final Report.* Palo Alto: CA: American Institutes for Research in collaboration with WestEd.

Rivkin, S., Hanushek, E., & Kain, J. (2005). Teachers, schools, and academic achievement. *Econometria, 73*(2)), 417–458.

Ruiz de Velasco, J., Fix, M., & Chu Clewell, B. (2000). *Overlooked and underserved: Immigrant students in U.S. secondary schools.* Washington DC: The Urban Institute.

Rumberger, R. (2003). *One quarter of California's teachers of English learners not fully certified. EL Facts, Number 3.* Santa Barbara, CA: University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute. Retrieved March 2009 from http://lmri.ucsb.edu/publications/elfacts.php

Rumberger, R., & Lim, S. (2008). Why students drop out of school: A review of 25 years of research. *Research Report, Number 15*. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute, California Dropout Research Project.

Sanders, W. L., & Rivers, J. C. (1996). *Cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future students' academic achievement*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center. Retrieved October 2009 from http://www.mccsc.edu/~curriculum/cumulative%20and%20residual%20effects%20of%20teachers.pdf

Scarcella, R. (2003). *Academic English: A conceptual framework.* Santa Barbara, CA: University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute.

Schleppegrell, M. (2009). *Language in academic subject areas and classroom instruction: What is academic language and how can we teach it?* Retrieved April 2010 from http://www7.nationalacademies.org/cfe/Paper_Mary_Schleppegrell.pdf

Skehan, P. (1991). Individual differences in second language learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 13*, 275-98.

Suárez-Orozco, C., Suárez-Orozco, M., & Todorova, I. (2008). *Learning in a new land: Immigrant students in American society.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Valdés, G., Alvarez, L., & MacSwan, J. (2009, October). *Deficits and differences: Perspectives on language and education.* Paper presented at the National Academy of Sciences meeting, The Role of Language in School Learning: Implications for Closing the Achievement Gap, Palo Alto, CA.

van Lier, L. (2008). Ecological-semiotic perspectives on educational linguistics. B. Spolsky & F. Hult (Eds.), *The Handbook of Educational Linguistics.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

U.S. Department of Education. (2006, July). *Building partnerships to help English language learners.* Retrieved April 2010 from http://www2.ed.gov/print/nclb/methods/english/lepfactsheet.html

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walqui, A. (2000). *Access and engagement: Program design and instructional approaches for immigrant students in secondary schools.* McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Walqui, A. (2006). Scaffolding instruction for English language learners: A conceptual framework. *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, (9)*2.

Walqui, A. (2007, June). *Literacy for adolescent English learners: Building capacity for quality programs.* Paper presented at the National High School Center Summer Institute, Washington, DC.

Walqui, A., & Schmida, M. (2004). Review of the literature on small high schools and English learners. In A. Walqui (Ed.), *Small high schools for English learners.* San Francisco: WestEd.

Walqui, A., & van Lier, L. (2010). *Scaffolding the academic success of adolescent English language learners: A pedagogy of promise.* San Francisco: WestEd.

Waters, J. T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. A. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement.* Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

Wei, R.C., Darling-Hammond, L., Andree, A., Richardson, N., & Orphanos, S. (2009). *Professional learning in the learning profession: A status report on teacher development in the U.S. and abroad* (Technical Report). Dallas, TX: National Staff Development Council.

Williams, T., Hakuta, K., Haertel, E., et al. (2007). *Similar English learner students, different results: Why do some schools do better? A follow-up analysis, based on a large-scale survey of California elementary schools serving low-income and EL students.* Mountain View, CA: EdSource.

Wilson, L., & Horch, H. (2002). Implications of brain research for teaching young adolescents. *Middle School Journal, 34* (1), 57–61.

Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing.

Zehr, M. (2009, March 18). Scholars mull the "paradox" of immigrants. *Education Week, 28* (25).

APPENDIX A.
STUDY QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

District Pre-Interview Questionnaire 86

District Interview Protocol 92

School Pre-Interview Questionnaire 105

School Interview Protocol 111

District Pre-Interview Questionnaire
Hewlett Promising Practices for Middle School English Learners Study

A. Introductory Questions

1. We would like to know a little about your background—especially as it relates to EL programs at this district.

   a) How long have you been the ____ *[name position]* in this district? ____ *[# of years]*.

   b) How long have you been in the district in total? ____ *[# of years]*.

2. Does the district have an EL or multilingual department or another specific group of district staff that works on EL issues?

   a) If yes, approximately how many people work in this department or group? ____ *[# of people]*.

   b) What is the main focus of this department's work? *Please mark all that apply.*

   OTHER

3. *If there is not a separate EL department or group,* briefly describe the basic organizational structure in the district for supporting instruction of ELs. (For example, a Director of Multilingual education who works in the Curriculum and Instruction department.)

4. At **middle school** sites, is there a district-wide personnel structure for supporting EL instruction? For example, do all schools have an EL coordinator position? Only schools with certain concentration of ELs or level of overall enrollment? Please describe the guiding principles for the personnel structure.

5. Does the district have any written plan/s that provides *specific* guidance on support and/or instruction for ELs?

   If yes, please write the name of the plan/s

   a) What year was the plan/s adopted?

   b) On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is "completely implemented," to what extent has the plan/s been implemented? *Select # from the pull down menu.*

B. Instructional Considerations

6. What descriptors do you use to distinguish between ELs at different English language proficiency levels? For example, does your district use CELDT levels (Beginner, Early Intermediate, etc.) or different descriptors?

7. Does your district distinguish "newcomers" from other ELs with low levels of English proficiency? (For example, are ELs who have been in the country for 2 years or less distinguished from other ELs in CELDT levels 1 and 2?). If so, please describe your district's definition for "newcomers".

8. Please complete the table below to describe your district's policies/guidelines for **English Language Development (ELD) in middle school.**

English Language Development			
Format for ELD instruction	ELs of what CELDT levels receive ELD in this format?	The number of minutes per day for ELD is at least: a. 15 b. 30 c. 45 d. 60 e. Other f. No policy guideline	Who teaches your EL students ELD? a. Resource or specialist teachers b. Credentialed teachers with EL credentials (e.g., CLAD, BCLAD) c. Credentialed teachers without EL credentials d. Instructional aides e. Other f. No policy/guideline
Standalone classes			
Embedded in ELA			
Embedded in ELA intervention			
Other (please describe)			

9. If ELD is delivered in standalone classes, please mark all that apply to how the district recommends that students should be grouped for these courses:

10. The district recommends that primary language be used by ELD instructors:

11. Are specific instructional strategies for ELD recommended by the district?

12. Does the district provide specific guidelines to middle schools about how EL students should be placed or exited from ELD?

    a) Placement

13. Please complete the table below to describe your district's policies/guidelines about how ELs should receive **academic content in middle school.**

Academic Content				
Type of content courses	ELs of what CELDT levels should receive academic content in this format?	Which content areas are delivered in this format? a. ELA b. Math c. Science d. Social Studies e. Other (please name) f. No policy/ guideline	Who should teach your EL students their academic content? a. Resource or specialist teachers b. Credentialed teachers with EL credentials (e.g., CLAD, BCLAD) c. Credentialed teachers without EL credentials d. Instructional aides e. Other f. No policy/ guideline	Should English Only students also be in these classes? a. Yes b. No c. No policy/ guideline
Sheltered content courses				
Mainstream content courses (with SDAIE)				
Primary language				
Other (please describe _____)				

14. The district recommends that primary language be used by instructors of sheltered or mainstream content courses in which ELs are enrolled:

15. Does the district recommend other supports for sheltered or mainstream academic content courses in which ELs are enrolled (e.g., the use of teachers' aides or shadow/companion classes)?

16. Does the district recommend specific instructional strategies for sheltered or mainstream academic content for ELs?

17. Does the district provide **specific guidelines** to **middle schools** about how EL students should be placed or exited from sheltered **academic content classes**?

    a) Placement

18. Does the district provide academic support that is **specifically and only targeted to ELs at the *middle school* level**? If so, please indicate which of the following services are provided:

    a) **During the school day:** Please mark all that apply.

    b) **Outside the regular school day:** Please mark all that apply.

19. Does the district provide specific guidelines to school sites regarding how to adapt the master schedule for **ELs in middle school**?

20. Please name any curriculum or materials that are **provided specifically for EL students in middle school.** *We are interested in state-adopted and any other materials offered by the district.*

English Language Development			
Courses	Textbooks and/ or supplementary materials **specifically targeted to ELs.**	Is this a core text or supplementary material?	Is this in the **primary language**?
Newcomer			
ELD			
Math core			
Math intervention			
ELA core			
ELA intervention			
Sheltered content courses (*Please indicate course names*)			

21. Other than the STAR, CELDT, and Aprenda tests, are there any other assessments that are implemented **district-wide** that are **specifically for middle school ELs**?

	Name of test/ assessment	Purpose of the assessment	How frequently is each assessment administered?
Formative assessments			
Benchmark assessments			
Writing tests			
Practice tests			
Other assessments			

22. For the **2007/08 school year**, please describe the primary professional development offerings that were focused on a) the instruction of ELs in **middle school** and b) helping **middle school** teachers to interpret and use the data from assessments given to EL students:

Name of professional development	Purpose	How many sessions? Over what period of time?	About how many and what type of staff attended?

INTERVIEWER: HIGHLIGHT ANY QUESTIONS ANSWERED AND TRANSFERRED FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE PROTOCOL.

- For multiple-choice and other closed response items, **DELETE** the answers that do not apply.
- For responses: Written/Pre-Interview = RED; and Verbal = GREEN

District Interview Protocol
Hewlett Promising Practices for Middle School English Learners Study

A. Introductory Questions

1. (1) We would like to know a little about your background—especially as it relates to EL programs at this district.

   a) How long have you been the ____ *[name position]* in this district? ____ *[# of years]*.

   b) How long have you been in the district in total? ____ *[# of years]*.

2. (2) Does the district have an EL or multilingual department or another specific group of district staff that works on EL issues? YES NO OTHER ____

   a) If yes, approximately how many people work in this department or group? ____ *[# of people]*.

   b) What is the main focus of this department's work? *Please mark all that apply.*

   INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT COMPLIANCE/ACCOUNTABILITY

   BUDGET OTHER ____

3. (3) *If there is not a separate EL department or group,* briefly describe the basic organizational structure in the district for supporting instruction of ELs. (For example, a Director of Multilingual education who works in the Curriculum and Instruction department.)

   ____

4. We are trying to get a sense of the big picture in your district. What would you say are the **three most important** ways in which your district supports **middle school sites** in the instruction of ELs?

   1. ____

   2. ____

   3. ____

   [Clarify as needed, but make sure to stay "big picture" with this question]

5. (4) At **middle school** sites, is there a district-wide personnel structure for supporting EL instruction? For example, do all schools have an EL coordinator position? Only schools with certain concentration of ELs or level of overall enrollment? Please describe the guiding principles for the personnel structure.

   ____

   [Probe: Are these full-time positions? What is the primary function that these personnel perform? How are these positions funded?] ____

6. We know that there are many challenges in supporting ELs' language acquisition and academic development, but what would you say are your district's **three primary challenges** in supporting **middle school** ELs?

   1. ____

   2. ____

   3. ____

7. (5) Does the district have any written plan/s that provides *specific* guidance on support and/or instruction for ELs? YES NO OTHER ____

   If yes, please write the name of the plan/s ____

   a) (5a) What year was the plan/s adopted? ____

   [Probe: If it has been more than 2 years: Has the plan/s been updated since then? Is it a specific plan just for ELs?] ____

b) In your opinion, what are the **three most important** components of the plan/s?

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

c) (5b) On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is "completely implemented," to what extent has the plan/s been implemented? *Select # from the pull down menu.* ____

i. Why did you say [name their response]? Please explain.

____

[Probe: What specific evidence is there that the plan has been implemented? Please give 1 or 2 specific examples of evidence] ____

d) *[If applicable given the stage of implementation]* What evidence or data do you have that shows your plan is working for ELs? Please indicate any specific indicators (e.g. % of ELs who attain a 4 or a 5 on the CELDT).

____

B. Instructional Considerations

We are interested in learning about the programs and/or courses you offer for the instruction of middle school ELs in your district.

8. (6) What descriptors do you use to distinguish between ELs at different English language proficiency levels? For example, does your district use CELDT levels (Beginner, Early Intermediate, etc.) or different descriptors?

____

9. (7) Does your district distinguish "newcomers" from other ELs with low levels of English proficiency? (For example, are ELs who have been in the country for 2 years or less distinguished from other ELs in CELDT levels 1 and 2?). If so, please describe your district's definition for "newcomers".

    1) Do your district offer have a newcomer program or newcomer classes for middle school ELs?

English Language Development

10. (8) Please complete the table below to describe your district's policies/guidelines for **English Language Development (ELD) in middle school.**

English Language Development			
Format for ELD instruction	ELs of what CELDT levels receive ELD in this format?	The number of minutes per day for ELD is at least: a. 15 b. 30 c. 45 d. 60 e. Other f. No policy/guideline	Who teaches your EL students ELD? a. Resource or specialist teachers b. Credentialed teachers with EL credentials (e.g., CLAD, BCLAD) c. Credentialed teachers without EL credentials d. Instructional aides e. Other f. No policy/guideline
Standalone classes			
Embedded in ELA			
Embedded in ELA intervention			
Other (please describe)			

11. (9) If ELD is delivered in standalone classes, please mark all that apply to how the district recommends that students should be grouped for these courses:

    WITHIN 2 CELDT LEVELS (e.g., CELDT levels 1-2 are grouped together for ELD)

    MORE THAN 2 CELDT LEVELS (e.g., CELDT levels 1-3 are grouped together for ELD)

    N/A NO POLICY OTHER ____

    Please describe the grouping strategy. ____

    [If multiple boxes for one question are checked, clarify what the variation depends on.] ____

12. If the ELD is embedded in ELA or ELA interventions, please describe any recommendations that the district has about how the ELD content should be delivered in ELA courses. (e.g. in small groups? In "strategic" intervention support classes?) Please explain.

13. (10) The district recommends that primary language be used by ELD instructors:

    AS NEEDED NOT AT ALL N/A NO POLICY OTHER ____

14. (11) Are specific instructional strategies for ELD recommended by the district?

    YES NO If yes, please describe. ____

15. (12) Does the district provide **specific guidelines** to **middle schools** about how EL students should be placed or exited from **ELD**?

    a) Placement YES NO Exit YES NO

    b) Please explain the **primary criteria** that guide these policies regarding placement/exit. ____

    [Probe: Do you use any criteria beyond the CELDT?]

16. Please describe any other important practices recommended by your district that are related to ELD. ____

[Probe: For all ELD questions, are these formal written policies or informal guidelines for ELD? To what extent do school sites follow these guidelines or policies?] ____

[Clarify all ELD questions as needed. We want to walk away with a clear sense of the ELD program including, the format and grouping strategy.]

[Interviewers: Please make sure that "none" is written/marked if there is no district policy or guideline.]

Academic Content

17. Does your district offer **sheltered** academic content classes? If so, please describe the main ways in which these classes differ from mainstream content classes.

18. (13) Please complete the table below to describe your district's policies/guidelines about how ELs should receive **academic content in middle school.**

Academic Content				
Type of content courses	ELs of what CELDT levels should receive academic content in this format?	Which content areas are delivered in this format? a. ELA b. Math c. Science d. Social Studies e. Other (please name) f. No policy/ guideline	Who should teach your EL students their academic content? a. Resource or specialist teachers b. Credentialed teachers with EL credentials (e.g., CLAD, BCLAD) c. Credentialed teachers without EL credentials d. Instructional aides e. Other f. No policy/ guideline	Should English Only students also be in these classes? a. Yes b. No c. No policy/ guideline
Sheltered content courses	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mainstream content courses (with SDAIE)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Primary language	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (please describe _____)	_____	_____	_____	_____

19. (14) The district recommends that primary language be used by instructors of sheltered or mainstream content courses in which ELs are enrolled:

AS NEEDED NOT AT ALL N/A NO POLICY OTHER ____

20. (15) Does the district recommend other supports for sheltered or mainstream academic content courses in which ELs are enrolled (e.g., the use of teachers' aides or shadow/companion classes)?

YES NO If yes, please describe. ____

21. (16) Does the district recommend specific instructional strategies for sheltered or mainstream academic content for ELs?

    YES NO If yes, please describe. ____

22. (17) Does the district provide **specific guidelines to middle schools** about how EL students should be placed or exited from sheltered **academic content classes**?

    a) Placement YES NO Exit YES NO

    b) Please explain the **primary criteria** that guide these policies regarding placement/exit from sheltered academic content classes. ____

    [Probe: What is the guidance regarding placement in mainstream versus sheltered classes?] ____

23. Please describe any other important practices recommended by your district that are related to sheltered or mainstream academic content courses for ELs. ____

    [Probe: For all academic content questions, are these formal written policies or informal guidelines? To what extent do school sites follow these guidelines or policies?] ____

    [Interviewers: Please make sure that "none" is written/marked if there is no district policy or guideline.]

Instructional support programs for ELs

24. (18) Does the district provide academic support that is **specifically and only targeted to ELs at the middle school level**? If so, please indicate which of the following services are provided:

    a) (18a) **During the school day**: *Please mark all that apply.*

    PRIMARY LANGUAGE SUPPORT
    PUSH-IN SUPPORT FROM TEACHERS
    PUSH-IN SUPPORT FROM AIDES
    PULL-OUT SUPPORT FROM TEACHERS
    PULL-OUT SUPPORT FROM AIDES
    LABS (Please describe.) ____
    OTHER ____

    b) What is the purpose of these supports?

    [Probe: At what level ELs are they targeted (e.g., CELDT 3 and below)? Are they offered at most middle schools?] ____

c) (18b) **Outside the regular school day**: *Please mark all that apply.*

EXTENDED DAY INTERSESSION
SATURDAY SCHOOL OR SUMMER SCHOOL OTHER ____

d) What is the purpose of these supports?

[Probe: At what level ELs are they targeted (e.g., CELDT 3 and below)? Are they offered at most middle schools?] ____

[Interviewer note: Interviewees may be inclined to list every support that ELs might possibly have access to. We only want to know about supports that are specifically for ELs and that are specifically provided by the district]

Other Instructional Issues

25. (19) Does the district provide specific guidelines to school sites regarding how to adapt the master schedule for **ELs in middle school**? YES NO OTHER ____

a) If so, please explain the **primary** principles of this guidance. ____

26. Are there certain classes that ELs might not be able to take, whether they are subject matter courses or electives, as a result of the programs for ELD and academic content described above? Why? ____

a) What are the classes they are not able to take? ____

[Interviewers: we are trying to learn about how hard the school is working to ensure that ELs are not tracked/segregated during the day]

Curriculum and Materials

27. (20) Please name any curriculum or materials that are **provided specifically for EL students in middle school.** *We are interested in state-adopted and any other materials offered by the district.*

Courses	Textbooks and/ or supplementary materials **specifically targeted to ELs.**	Is this a core text or supplementary material?	Is this in the **primary language**?
Newcomer	____	____	____
ELD	____	____	____
Math core	____	____	____
Math intervention	____	____	____
ELA core	____	____	____
ELA intervention	____	____	____
Sheltered content courses *(Please indicate course names)*	____	____	____

[*Interviewer note: Make sure to clarify that we are only interested in knowing about materials that are specifically for ELs and that are implemented district-wide in middle schools]*

Assessment

28. (21) Other than the STAR, CELDT, and Aprenda tests, are there any other assessments that are implemented **district-wide** that are **specifically for middle school ELs**?

	Name of test/ assessment	Purpose of the assessment	How frequently is each assessment administered?
Formative assessments	____	____	____
Benchmark assessments	____	____	____
Writing tests	____	____	____
Practice tests	____	____	____
Other assessments	____	____	____

[Probe: If necessary, clarify the purpose of these assessments. Also, what level ELs take each of these assessments?] ____

[Interviewer note: Make sure to clarify that we are only interested in knowing about assessments that are specifically for ELs and that are implemented district-wide in middle schools]

29. Does the district provide to school sites any regular summary reports, or anything similar, to schools to assist them in monitoring EL progress? If so, please describe the assessment results that are part of these reports. ____

[Probe: Are these reports disaggregated to the student level?] ____

C. Staffing Considerations

Professional Development Program(s)

30. Does the district have a professional development plan for its **middle school** that is focused on instruction of ELs? Please describe it briefly.

____

[Probe: Is the plan focused on EL specialists only, or subject matter teachers as well?]

31. (22) For the **2007/08 school year**, please describe the primary professional development offerings that were focused on a) the instruction of ELs in **middle school** and b) helping **middle school** teachers to interpret and use the data from assessments given to EL students:

Name of professional development	Purpose	How many sessions? Over what period of time?	About how many and what type of staff attended?
____	____	____	____
____	____	____	____
____	____	____	____
____	____	____	____
____	____	____	____

[Probe: Make sure all information on the table is complete] ____

[Interviewers: For the last column, we want to know whether EL specialists, subject matter teachers, principals, support staff or other staff attended.]

Policies for Recruiting and Staffing

32. Does your district have a specific procedure or policies in place for the recruitment and/or placement of teachers to work with ELs? If so, please describe.

[Probe: Is the policy focused on EL specialists only, or subject matter teachers as well?

a) What are the challenges in implementing the policy?

D. Next Steps

33. Is there anything else that your district is doing to serve the needs of ELs in **middle school** that we have not yet talked about?

34. Can you recommend a **middle school/s** in your district that, in your view, is serving ELs well? We are asking districts to nominate schools for the second phase of our study that will look in depth at schools with promising practices for ELs. ***If so, please explain why you would nominate this school/s.***

Final note:

Thank you very much for your time today, etc. I'd like to mention just two more things:

a. If I find that there are issues that I am confused about after this interview, is it OK if I follow-up with you either by phone or email? ____

b. If you have written documents that explain any issues we talked about today, we would be delighted if you would send them to us. (For example, the plan for ELs, documents that specify guidelines or policies for placement/exit from supports for ELs, instruction in ELD or academic content courses for ELs, etc.) Also, could you send a copy of the district's re-designation policy? ____

E. Interviewer Reflection

Wow:

Puzzle:

Context:

School Pre-Interview Questionnaire
Hewlett Promising Practices for Middle School English Learners Study

A. Introductory Questions

1. We would like to know a little about your background—especially as it relates to EL programs at this school:

a) How long have you been the ____ [*name position*] in this school? ____ [*# of years*].

b) How long have you been at this school, in total? ____ [*# of years*].

2. What is the main focus of your work? *Please mark all that apply.*

☐ INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT ☐ COMPLIANCE/ACCOUNTABILITY
☐ BUDGET ☐ OTHER ____

3. In addition to yourself, who at your site has *primary* responsibility for the following:

   a. Overseeing instruction for ELs. ____

   b. Overseeing EL-related compliance/accountability. ____

   c. Monitoring EL-related budgets. ____

4. Does your school have a written plan/policy that provides *specific* guidance on the instruction of ELs that is different from the district's plan? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ OTHER ____

   If yes, please write the name of the plan/s ____

   a. What year was the plan/s adopted? ____

   b. On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is "completely implemented," to what extent has the plan been implemented? *Select # from the pull down menu.* ____

5. On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is a "great deal," to what degree does the district shape your school's approach to the support and instruction of ELs? *Select # from the pull down menu*. ____

B. Instructional Considerations

6. What **descriptors** do you use to distinguish between ELs at different English language proficiency levels? For example, does your school use CELDT levels (Beginner, Early intermediate, etc.) or different descriptors?

____

7. Does your school distinguish newcomers from other ELs with low levels of English proficiency? (For example, are ELs who have been in the country for 2 years or less distinguished from other ELs in CELDT levels 1 and 2?). If so, please describe your school's definition for "newcomers."

____

8. Please fill in the table below to describe key aspects of the **English Language Development (ELD)** services your middle school ELs are receiving:

English Language Development			
Format for ELD instruction	ELs of what CELDT levels receive ELD in this format?	The number of minutes per day for ELD is: a. 15 b. 30 c. 45 d. 60 e. Other (please name) f. None	Who teaches your EL students their ELD? a. Resource or specialist teachers b. Credentialed teachers with EL credentials (e.g., CLAD, BCLAD) c. Credentialed teachers without EL credentials d. Instructional aides e. Other
Standalone classes	____	____	____
Embedded in ELA	____	____	____
Embedded in ELA intervention	____	____	____
Other (please describe) ____	____	____	____

9. If ELD is delivered in standalone classes, please mark all that apply to indicate how students are grouped for these courses:

   ☐ WITHIN 2 CELDT LEVELS (e.g., CELDT levels 1-2 are grouped together for ELD)
   ☐ MORE THAN 2 CELDT LEVELS (e.g., CELDT levels 1-3 are grouped together for ELD)
   ☐ N/A ☐ NONE ☐ OTHER ____

10. Primary language is used by ELD instructors: 0 AS NEEDED 0NOT AT ALL

    ☐ N/A ☐ OTHER ____

11. Please mark the appropriate boxes below if your school has specific guidelines about how EL students should be placed or exited from **ELD**:

    a. Placement: ☐ YES ☐ NO Exit: ☐ YES ☐ NO
    b. Are these the same as the district criteria? ☐ YES ☐ NO

12. Please fill in the table below to describe key aspects of services for academic content your middle school ELs are receiving:

Academic Content				
Type of content courses	ELs of what CELDT levels receive academic content in this format?	Which content areas are delivered in this format? a. ELA b. Math c. Science d. Social Studies e. Other (please name)	Who teaches your EL students their academic content? a. Resource or specialist teachers b. Credentialed teachers with EL credentials (e.g., CLAD, BCLAD) c. Credentialed teachers without EL credentials d. Instructional aides e. Other	Are English Only students also in these classes? a. Yes b. No
Sheltered content courses	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mainstream content courses (with SDAIE)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Primary language	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (please describe _____)	_____	_____	_____	_____

13. Primary language is used by instructors of sheltered or mainstream academic content courses in which ELs are enrolled: ☐ AS NEEDED ☐ NOT AT ALL ☐ N/A ☐ OTHER ____

14. Other supports for sheltered or mainstream academic content courses in which ELs are enrolled (e.g., the use of teachers' aides or shadow/companion classes):

☐ YES ☐ NO If yes, please describe. ____

15. Please mark the appropriate boxes below if your school has specific guidelines about how EL students should be placed or exited from sheltered **academic content classes**:

a. Placement: ☐ YES ☐ NO Exit: ☐ YES ☐ NO

16. Does your school have specific guidelines about how the master schedule should be adapted for ELs? 0

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ OTHER ____

17. Please name any curriculum or materials that are **provided specifically for your middle school EL students.** *We are interested in textbooks as well as supplementary materials.*

Courses/Programs	Textbooks and/ or supplementary materials **specifically targeted to ELs.**	Is this a core text or supplementary material?	Is this in the **primary language?**
Newcomer	____	____	____
ELD	____	____	____
Math core	____	____	____
Math intervention	____	____	____
ELA core	____	____	____
ELA intervention	____	____	____
Sheltered content courses (indicate course names)			

18. On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is "highly involved," to what extent are you or other school leaders involved in guiding specific instructional strategies used at your school site in **ELD or academic content courses in which ELs are enrolled**? Select # from the pull down menu. ____

19. We are interested in knowing about the strategies or arrangements you require teachers to use with EL students, in **either ELD courses** and **academic content courses**:

    a. What do you **require** teachers to emphasize? *Please mark all that apply.*

    ☐ READING ALOUD ☐ READING WITH UNDERSTANDING ☐ VOCABULARY
    ☐ GRAMMAR ☐ PRONUNCIATION ☐ CORRECTNESS (ACCURACY)
    ☐ FLUENCY ☐ OTHER ____

    b. Do you **require** particular classroom structures? *Please mark all that apply.*

    ☐ CENTERS ☐ HOMOGENEOUS GROUPING ☐ HETEROGENEOUS GROUPINGS
    ☐ SMALL GROUPS ☐ OTHER ____

20. What academic supports does your school site provide that are **specifically targeted to ELs**?:

    a. **During the school day**: *Please mark all that apply.*

    ☐ PRIMARY LANGUAGE SUPPORT ☐ PUSH-IN SUPPORT FROM TEACHERS
    ☐ PUSH-IN SUPPORT FROM AIDES ☐ PULL-OUT SUPPORT FROM TEACHERS
    ☐ PULL-OUT SUPPORT FROM AIDES ☐ LABS (please describe) ____
    ☐ OTHER ____

    b. **Outside the regular school day**: *Please mark all that apply.*

    ☐ EXTENDED DAY ☐ INTERSESSION ☐ SATURDAY SCHOOL OR SUMMER SCHOOL
    ☐ OTHER ____

21. Other than the STAR, CELDT, and Aprenda tests, does your school administer any other assessments that are specifically for middle school ELs?

Type of Assessment	Name of test/ assessment	Purpose	How frequently is each assessment administered?
Formative Assessments	____	____	____
Benchmark assessments	____	____	____
Writing tests	____	____	____
Practice tests	____	____	____
Other	____	____	____

22. For the **2007/08** school year, please list the professional development your staff participated in that was focused on (a) the instruction of ELs, and (b) helping staff to interpret and use the data from assessments given to EL students:

Name of professional development	Purpose	How many sessions? Over what period of time?	About how many and what type of staff attended?	Sponsored by the district?
____	____	____	____	____
____	____	____	____	____
____	____	____	____	____
____	____	____	____	____
____	____	____	____	____

Add any additional notes here: ____

INTERVIEWER: HIGHLIGHT ANY QUESTIONS ANSWERED AND TRANSFERRED FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE PROTOCOL.

- For multiple-choice and other closed response items, **DELETE** the answers that do not apply.
- For responses: Written/Pre-Interview = RED; and Verbal = GREEN
- In **bold parentheses** you will find the number of each question as it appears on the PIQ

School Interview Protocol
Hewlett Promising Practices for Middle School English Learners Study

A. Introductory Questions

1. (1) We would like to know a little about your background—especially as it relates to EL programs at this district.

   a) How long have you been the ____ *[name position]* in this school? ____ *[# of years]*.

   b) How long have you been in the school in total? ____ *[# of years]*.

2. (2) What is the main focus of your work? *Please mark all that apply.*

   INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT COMPLIANCE/ACCOUNTABILITY
   BUDGET OTHER ____

3. (3) In addition to yourself, who at your site has *primary* responsibility for the following:

   a. Overseeing instruction for ELs. ___

   b. Overseeing EL-related compliance/accountability. ___

   c. Monitoring EL-related budgets ___

   [Probe: How much time does each individual devote to these tasks, e.g., percent of FTE for these jobs?]

   ____

4. We are trying to get a sense of the big picture in your school. What would you say are your school's **three primary areas of focus** in supporting ELs' English language acquisition and academic development?

   1. ____

   2. ____

   3. ____

   [Clarify as needed, but make sure to stay "big picture" with this question.]

5. We know that there are many challenges in supporting ELs' language acquisition and academic development, but what would you say are your school's **primary challenges**?

   1. ____

   2. ____

   3. ____

   [Clarify as needed, but make sure to stay "big picture" with this question.]

6. (4) Does your school have a written plan/policy that provides *specific* guidance on the instruction of ELs that is different from the district's plan?

   YES NO OTHER ___

   If yes, please write the name of the plan/s ___

   a. What year was the plan/s adopted? ___

      [Probe: If it has been more than 2 years, has the plan been updated since then?]

      ____

   b. In your opinion, what are the **three most important** components of the plan/s?

      1. ____

      2. ____

      3. ____

c) On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is "completely implemented," to what extent has the plan been implemented? *Select # from the pull down menu.* ___

i. Why did you give it a [#]? Please explain.

___

[Probe: What specific evidence is there that the plan has been implemented? Please give 1 or 2 specific examples of evidence.] ____

d) *[If applicable given the stage of implementation]* What evidence or data do you have that shows your plan is working for ELs? Please describe any specific indicators (e.g., percent of ELs who attain a 4 or a 5 on the CELDT).

____

7. (5) On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is a "great deal," to what degree does the district shape your school's approach to the support and instruction of ELs? *Select # from the pull down menu.* ___

a. Why did you say [name their response]? What are the primary ways that the district influences your instruction?

____

[Make sure to stay "big picture" with this question.]

B. Instruction and Support Considerations

Since this study focuses on grades 6-8, we are interested in learning about the programs and/or courses you offer for the instruction of middle school ELs.

8. (6) What descriptors do you use to distinguish between ELs at different English language proficiency levels? For example, does your school use CELDT levels (Beginner, Early Intermediate, etc.) or different descriptors?

___

[Probe: If they are not based solely on CELDT scores, what other indicators are used?]

9. (7) Does your school distinguish "newcomers" from other ELs with low levels of English proficiency? (For example, are ELs who have been in the country for 2 years or less distinguished from other ELs in CELDT levels 1 and 2?). If so, please describe your school's definition for "newcomers".

___

a. Do you have a newcomer program or newcomer classes? ____

English Language Development

10. (8) Please fill in the table below to describe key aspects of the English Language Development (ELD) services your middle school ELs are receiving:

English Language Development			
Format for ELD instruction	ELs of what CELDT levels receive ELD in this format?	The number of minutes per day for ELD is at least: a. 15 b. 30 c. 45 d. 60 e. Other f. No policy/guideline	Who teaches your EL students ELD? a. Resource or specialist teachers b. Credentialed teachers with EL credentials (e.g., CLAD, BCLAD) c. Credentialed teachers without EL credentials d. Instructional aides e. Other f. No policy/guideline
Standalone classes	___	___	___
Embedded in ELA	___	___	___
Embedded in ELA intervention	___	___	___
Other (please describe)	___	___	___

[Probe: if you offer ELD standalone classes, what are these classes called?]

11. (9) If ELD is delivered in standalone classes, please mark all that apply to how students are grouped for these courses:

WITHIN 2 CELDT LEVELS (e.g., CELDT levels 1-2 are grouped together for ELD)
MORE THAN 2 CELDT LEVELS (e.g., CELDT levels 1-3 are grouped together for ELD)
N/A NONE OTHER ___

Please describe the grouping strategy. ____

12. If the ELD is embedded in ELA or ELA interventions, how is the ELD content delivered? (e.g. in small groups? In "strategic" intervention support classes?) Please explain. ___

13. (10) Primary language is used by ELD instructors:

AS NEEDED NOT AT ALL N/A OTHER ___

14. (11) Please mark the appropriate boxes below if your school has specific guidelines about how EL students should be placed or exited from **ELD**:

a. Placement: YES NO Exit: YES NO

b. Please explain the **primary criteria** that you use to place and exit students from ELD.

Placement:

Exit:

[Probe: Do you use any assessment/criteria beyond the CELDT?]

c. Are these the same as the district criteria? YES NO

15. Please describe any other important practices in your school that are related to how ELD is structured or delivered. ____

16. Do you find that any of the guidelines that your school has in place regarding ELD are difficult to implement? Which ones? Why? ____

Academic Content

17. Does your school offer sheltered academic content classes? If so, please describe the main ways in which these classes differ from mainstream content classes.

18. (12) Please fill in the table below to describe key aspects of services for academic content your middle school ELs are receiving:

Academic Content				
Type of content courses	ELs of what CELDT levels should receive academic content in this format?	Which content areas are delivered in this format? a. ELA b. Math c. Science d. Social Studies e. Other (please name)	Who teaches your EL students their academic content? a. Resource or specialist teachers b. Credentialed teachers with EL credentials (e.g., CLAD, BCLAD) c. Credentialed teachers without EL credentials d. Instructional aides e. Other	Are English Only students also in these classes? a. Yes b. No
Sheltered content courses	____	____	____	____
Mainstream content courses (with SDAIE)	____	____	____	____
Primary language	____	____	____	____
Other (please describe ____)	____	____	____	____

19. (13) Primary language is used by instructors of sheltered or mainstream academic content courses in which ELs are enrolled:

AS NEEDED NOT AT ALL N/A OTHER ___

20. (14) Other supports for sheltered or mainstream academic content courses in which ELs are enrolled (e.g., the use of teachers' aides or shadow/companion classes):

    YES NO

    If yes, please describe. ___

21. (15) Please mark the appropriate boxes below if your school has specific guidelines about how EL students should be placed or exited from sheltered **academic content classes:**

    a. Placement: YES NO Exit YES NO

    b. Please explain the primary criteria that you use to place and exit students from sheltered academic content courses. ____

22. What do you find to be the biggest challenges in the area of placement into/exit from specific sheltered academic content classes with support? ____

23. Please describe any other important practices in your school that are related to how sheltered or mainstream academic content courses in which ELs are enrolled are structured or delivered. ____

24. Do you find that any of the guidelines that your school has in place regarding academic content for ELs are difficult to implement? Which ones? Why? ____

Other Instructional Issues

25. (16) Does your school have specific guidelines about how the master schedule should be adapted for ELs?
YES NO OTHER ___

    a. Are these the same as the district's guidelines? If not, please explain the primary principles of this guidance.

    [Interviewers: We are trying to learn about how hard the school is working to ensure that ELs are not tracked/segregated during the day.]

26. Are there certain classes that ELs are not able to take, whether they are subject matter courses or electives? Why?

    a. What are the classes they are not able to take? ____

27. Do you provide language or transition support for RFEP students? If so, please briefly describe.

Curriculum and Materials

28. (17) Please name any curriculum or materials that are provided **specifically for your middle school EL students.** We are interested in textbooks as well as supplementary or ancillary materials.

Courses	Textbooks and/ or supplementary materials **specifically targeted to ELs.**	Is this a core text or supplementary material?	Is this in the **primary language**?
Newcomer	____	____	____
ELD	____	____	____
Math core	____	____	____
Math intervention	____	____	____
ELA core	____	____	____
ELA intervention	____	____	____
Sheltered content courses *(Please indicate course names)*	____	____	____

[Interviewers: Make sure to clarify that we are only interested in knowing about materials that are specifically for ELs.]

Specific Instructional Strategies

29. (18) On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is "highly involved," to what extent are you or other school leaders involved guiding specific instructional strategies used at your school site in **ELD or academic content courses in which ELs are enrolled**? Select # from the pull down menu. ____

    Why did you give it a [#]? Please explain. ____

30. (19) We are interested in knowing about the strategies or arrangements you require teachers to use with EL students, in **either ELD courses and academic content courses**:

    a. Are there particular strategies you require teachers to use with ELs?

    If so, please describe. ____

b. What do you **require** teachers to emphasize? *Please mark all that apply.*

READING ALOUD READING WITH UNDERSTANDING
VOCABULARY GRAMMAR PRONUNCIATION CORRECTNESS (ACCURACY)
FLUENCY OTHER ___

c. Do you **require** particular classroom structures? *Please mark all that apply.*

CENTERS HOMOGENEOUS GROUPING SMALL GROUPS
HETEROGENEOUS GROUPINGS OTHER ___

d. Is there a specific structure of lessons that you require? (Such as the three-part lesson plan called either "into, through, and beyond" or pre-reading, in-reading, post reading.)

____

e. Are there any other instructional strategies that you require that we have not yet talked about? ____

[Probe: To what extent are teachers actually implementing these strategies? Are there differences between the implementation by ELD versus content area instructors? If any, what are the barriers to implementation in classrooms?]

31. Overall, if you had to characterize the teaching and learning that takes place in classes with ELs, what would you say makes it different than instruction for EOs?

____

[Probe: Are there different ideas, arrangements, levels of intensity?]

____

Instructional and Support Programs for Els

32. (20) What academic supports does your school site provide that are **specifically targeted to ELs**?

a. **During the school day**: Please mark all that apply.

PRIMARY LANGUAGE SUPPORT
PUSH-IN SUPPORT FROM TEACHERS
PUSH-IN SUPPORT FROM AIDES
PULL-OUT SUPPORT FROM TEACHERS
PULL-OUT SUPPORT FROM AIDES
LABS (please describe) ___
OTHER ___

b. What is the purpose of these supports?

[Probe: At what level ELs are they targeted (e.g., CELDT 3 and below)? What proportion of the eligible ELs are taking advantage of these supports?] ____

c. Outside the regular school day: Please mark all that apply.

EXTENDED DAY INTERSESSION SATURDAY SCHOOL OR SUMMER SCHOOL
OTHER ___

d. What is the purpose of these supports?

[Probe: At what level ELs are they targeted (e.g., CELDT 3 and below)? What proportion of the eligible ELs are taking advantage of these supports?] ____

Assessment

33. (21) Other than the STAR, CELDT and Aprenda tests, does your school administer any other assessments that are **specifically for middle school ELs**?

Type of Assessment	Name of test/ assessment	Purpose	How frequently is each assessment administered?
Formative Assessments	___	___	___
Benchmark assessments	___	___	___
Writing tests	___	___	___
Practice tests	___	___	___
Other	___	___	___

Add any additional notes here: ___

C. Staffing Considerations

Staffing

34. What are the **three greatest challenges**, if any, that your school faces in ensuring that all ELs are taught by teachers who know how to support their EL students' language development?

    1. ____

    2. ____

    3. ____

Professional development program(s)

35. Does your school have a professional development plan for its teachers of ELs that is different than the plan district has? If yes, please state the name of the plan and describe its key features.

    ____

    [Probe: Is the plan focused on EL specialists only, or subject matter teachers as well?]

    ____

36. (22) For the 2007/08 school year, please list the professional development your staff participated in that was focused on a) the instruction of ELs and b) helping staff to interpret and use the data from assessments given to EL students:

Name of professional development	Purpose	How many sessions? Over what period of time?	About how many and what type of staff attended?	Sponsored by the district?
___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___

Add any additional notes here: ___

[Probe: Does your school offer time for teachers to collaborate together to discuss issues related to the instruction of ELs? If so, what is the primary focus of this collaborative time intended to be? When and how often is it?] ___

D. Next Steps

37. Is there anything else that your school is doing to serve the needs of ELs that we have not yet talked about?

____

Final note:

Thank you very much for your time today, etc. I'd like to mention just two more things:

1) If I find that there are issues that I am confused about after this interview, is it OK if I follow-up with you either by phone or email? ____

2) If you have written documents that explain any issues we talked about today, we would be delighted if you would send them to us. (For example, the plan for ELs, documents that specify guidelines or policies for instruction in ELD or academic content courses for ELs, placement/exit from classes, etc.) ____

E. Interviewer Reflection

Wow:

Puzzle:

Context:

APPENDIX B.
INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDIES

Bay City Middle School 126

Foothill City Middle School 133

Inland City Middle School 143

Ocean City Middle School 150

Valley City Middle School 160

Bay City Middle School

Located in the heart of a large, urban district, Bay City Middle School serves a poor, primarily Latino population. Even though the school differentiates itself in an open-enrollment district by offering a special program of advanced courses, the principal notes that Bay City is often "not chosen." Instead, he characterizes it as a neighborhood school in a neighborhood of newly arrived immigrant families and other Latino families who have settled in the inner city.

As has been true for the past 15 years at Bay City, about four of every ten students enter the school as English Learners. Over the years, a highly structured, multi-level ELD program has been constructed to serve these students. Sadly, it is a program where English Learners tend to stay English Learners, hobbled by ELD instruction that moves at a glacial pace, ELD textbooks that never rise above fourth or fifth grade content, and much teacher-fronted instruction in content area classes that keeps students mute and removed from their own learning.

Change, however, is in the works, sparked by a few committed teachers and an assistant principal who recognizes how debilitating the unexamined status quo has become.

School Culture and Resources to Support English Learners

For nine years, leadership of Bay City's ELD program has been in the hands of the school's EL coordinator. She oversees the school's comprehensive ELD program, which includes course sequences for ELD/ELA, ELD content courses, SDAIE content courses, and reading intervention courses. Many schools would welcome this apparent cornucopia of support for their English Learners. The overriding culture surrounding this EL establishment, however, has been one of low expectations and low access to grade-level curriculum.

The ELD program is housed with the "Language" department. Though all students in the school are required to learn a second language, English Learners are not allowed to study their first language unless they are ready to be reclassified at advanced CELDT levels. "When they had EL students," the ELD coordinator explained, "the foreign language teachers hated it. The students were not literate in Spanish. They would say *hui* instead of *fui* and *muncho* instead of *mucho.*" Now, many students who could otherwise build competency in their first language are denied the potential boost toward academic success in L2 that L1 literacy affords.

Professional development to support English Learners is limited to the ELD teachers. They attend district-wide meetings every six to eight weeks, after each ELD benchmark assessment. The teachers reported that they find this time together valuable for discussing student performance and sharing best practices. The ELD department also collaborates informally as a small community, according to one school administrator. Nonetheless, as one teacher observed, "Different people have different priorities. For some the focus is grade-level content. Others want to make the [redesignation] numbers."

English Learner Identification, Classification, and Reclassification

Bay City Middle School has highly specified structures and processes for identification and classification of ELs and placement in its curricular program, as well as for reclassification and follow-up. For newcomers to the U.S., the EL coordinator administers the CELDT to determine ELD level, and assesses Spanish reading and writing performance. EL students who have been in the district the prior year arrive with CELDT scores, ELD/ELA *High Point* curriculum placement levels, and up to three years of CST scores. Regardless of CELDT scores, district guidelines permit students to enroll in ELD/ELA only if they have attended U.S. schools three years or less. Using this information, the EL coordinator places students in the appropriate set of courses that make up the school's English Language Learner (ELL) Program, including ELA/ELD courses, ELD content courses, SDAI content courses, reading intervention courses, electives, and physical education.

The school's reclassification criteria are clear: an overall CELDT score of 4 or 5 with no less than 3 on any subpart, a CST language arts score of at least 317, a writing sample assessed by a district rubric as "grade-level," and teacher recommendation. While these criteria are at the low end for the case study schools, Bay City's reclassification rate of 12.2 percent is also at the low end, barely matching the statewide rate of 10.8 percent.

The district mandates tracking students for three years after they are reclassified, and at Bay City, it is the EL coordinator who monitors these students who either arrive as recently reclassified or who reclassify while enrolled. Students' recent CELDT scores, CST scores, and grades are all tracked, and if there is a discrepancy in performance, for example between CST scores and grades, the district expects teachers to respond.

Academic Trajectories

Twenty-two percent of Bay City's English Learners are enrolled in the ELD program, where they have limited access to core grade-level content and curriculum. For these students, middle school is typically a *decelerated* three-year journey through *High Point* curriculum. In most middle school ELD programs, the widely used *High Point* program ends with materials at a sixth grade level. However, in Bay City students spend a full year at a pre-introductory level. Consequently, Bay City ELD students progress only through fifth grade content (see the table below).

Implementation of *High Point* Scope and Sequence in Bay City Middle School

Publisher's Recommended Program		one year	one year	one year
Textbook Level/Grade		Intro & Basics/1–3	Levels A & B/4–5	Level C/6

Bay City Middle School's Program	one year	one year	one year	
Textbook Level/Grade	*Highpoint* Lakeside/pre-intro (*& Access English*)	Intro & Basics/1–3	Levels A & B/4–5	

At the same time that their English language development is lagging, Bay City students in ELD/ELA *High Point* have other limitations on their access to grade-level content. First, they receive no social studies instruction. Science is not offered students who enter at CELDT level 1. Math placement for students scoring at CELDT levels 1 and 2 is limited to a beginning ELD math course.

Students scoring at CELDT level 3 are typically placed in intermediate ELD math and science, although some students are able to take a grade-level mathematics course.

Students scoring level 4 on the CELDT are placed in SDAIE grade-level math, SDAIE grade-level science, and English Only (EO) core language arts and social studies (Bay City does not offer SDAIE grade-level English or social studies, which teachers reported is sorely needed). Any students who score below basic or far below basic on the English language arts CST are placed in one of two intervention classes described below.

At CELDT level 5, math and science placements are either grade-level SDAIE or grade-level English only. For language arts, students are placed in English only classes. Again, intervention classes are assigned to students with very low English language arts CST scores.

The school's two remedial reading programs include *Reading Lab,* a one-period teacher-designed intervention focused specifically on improving students' performance on state tests, or a two-period *Language!* class that enrolls English only and English Learner students reading at least two years below grade level. Students enroll in these intervention classes in lieu of electives.

As for the 78 percent of English Learners that Bay City deems "ineligible" for ELD, they are placed in EO mainstream classes (where teachers will ostensibly differentiate students' instruction). These placements disregard students' CELDT level and likelihood of succeeding. Many of these students are likely to score below basic or far below basic on the language arts CST, and so be assigned to the *Language!* intervention. Some teachers referred to these particular students as "lifers," English Learners for life, with little hope of improving their condition (including during a three-year stay at Bay City Middle School).

In total, fully 40 percent of the school's English Learners populate the two remedial reading programs.

Not all staff members are inured to the situation for the school's English Learners, however. Independently, both administrators shared frustration with curricular and instructional decisions that prolong students' participation in the EL program (in which 80 percent of the courses use below-grade level curriculum) and in *Language!* (which uses second through fifth grade curriculum). Readily acknowledging that students are not challenged sufficiently, one administrator suggested that those who exhibit behavioral problems are often acting out due to embarrassment over their academic performance.

For the school year 2009–10, the assistant principal for instruction is planning several changes that will accelerate students' movement through the ELD curricular program, including removing one level of the newcomer strand, which will cut in half the time students spend "getting ready" to learn English. Similarly in math, only sixth and seventh graders at beginning and intermediate levels of ELD will enroll in ELD math. All eighth graders will enroll in algebra. Those who need it will enroll in a slower paced algebra course and in a math intervention.

Similarly, students' movement through the *Language!* program will be accelerated by eliminating the first-year level entirely and offering the second-year level to the neediest students only. Other low-scoring students will be placed in a two-period language arts/social studies core and in *Reading Lab.* The rationale for all these changes is fundamentally the same: After completing the ELD and/or reading intervention curricula, students typically emerge below grade level (fourth and fifth grade). The changes reflect the strong belief that giving English Learners appropriate access to core curriculum will better serve them.

Finally, one of the ELD teachers is being given time to act as an instructional coach for the school. This teacher is one of the few in the five case study schools who manages the mandated ELD curriculum in such a way that her students also receive regular grade-level instruction.

Teaching and Learning

At Bay City Middle School, a number of district and school-level structures and processes affect the nature of teaching and learning. ELD/ELA teachers are bound by the district to use the *High Point* curriculum. Additionally, the tight organization of the ELD/ELA program results in shared practices, including well-structured lessons, total physical response at the beginning levels, and oral language requiring the use of complete sentences. In every ELD/ELA classroom observed, these practices were in place and teachers demonstrated confidence and interest in their students.

A number of language strategies learned during professional development were also in place, including those that support the academic skills of reporting information, predicting, acknowledging ideas, soliciting a response, or disagreeing with another's ideas. Classroom posters providing formulaic expressions such as "I predict that..." or "I don't agree with you because..." were evident and students were observed using these linguistic supports effectively for class discussions and writing. Students were also using these practices in *Language!, Reading Lab,* and two of three math classes observed. The intermediate and advanced ELD/ELA teachers reported that providing students with such formulaic expressions was one of their most effective instructional practices. Both of these teachers also reported using Reciprocal Teaching, a small-group structure in which students work together to understand text through a predict, question, clarify, and summarize sequence.

However, much of the instruction observed across the school was whole-group and teacher-directed, with few opportunities for quality peer collaboration. More-

over, not once were teachers observed working with small groups of students or engaging in sustained, purposeful dialogue with small groups.

The content of some instruction consisted of small, relatively decontextualized bits of content rather than understanding of key concepts and how they relate and cohere into a whole. The result of such instruction, according to one *Language!* teacher, is that students "never want to do anything on their own." Likewise, an ELD/ELA teacher commented that much of the curriculum is too teacher dependent and leads students to depend on direct teacher instruction. "If you treat them like babies," she added, "they will not learn."

As noted, one ELD/ELA teacher regularly uses grade-level curricula and standards. She found the pacing of High Point too slow and figured out ways to provide students with some access to core curriculum. "I don't do everything in *High Point,*" she reported, "and it doesn't cover everything." Instead, this teacher squeezes in a week or so after each *High Point* instructional unit to bring in core literature, including poetry, and to teach grade-level standards such as "theme." Students in her class are also in the habit of making regular class presentations, which they have learned to enhance with visuals and technology.

Concerns

Bay City Middle School has invested in developing clear curricular paths for EL students and a common set of practices, which the ELD teachers have adopted. Yet the school struggles to move students through the ELD/ELA program expeditiously and bring them to grade-level performance. About 40 percent of EL students are placed in reading remediation courses. In addition, because of the district's restriction on which students are eligible for courses in the ELD program, 78 percent of Bay City ELs are enrolled in English only classes, regardless of their need for sheltered instruction or other content area supports.

Within the ELD department, a tension exists between the goals of reclassification versus providing access to grade-level academic content. The ELD coordinator, who reported historically having "100 percent support" from the principal, appears to have heavily influenced the present EL program which, while coherent, emphasizes ELD instruction and reclassification often at the expense of access to core curriculum. The API is interested in shifting priorities.

As instituted now, the ELD curricular program isolates students from the mainstream for years. Access to core curriculum is dependent on teachers' capacity to

"squeeze" it in between *High Point* instructional units. The curricular material for ELD/ELA, ELD math, and ELD science courses are below grade level, and therefore do not align with state content standards. Students in the ELD program have very limited access to core curriculum until they are at early advanced or advanced ELD levels. Consequently, students typically emerge below grade level in skills, making reclassification difficult. Additionally, teachers report that the program does not prepare students to enter the core curriculum classes.

Planned changes to pick up the pace in the ELD and *Language!* programs and to offer a new language arts/social studies course and more support for grade level math are intended to address some of these concerns for the 2009-10 school year.

BAY CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL (grades 6, 7, 8)	
Total School Population	871
Number of ELs	335
Student Groups (%)	
English Learners	38.5
Free and Reduced Lunch	84.2
African-American	2.1
Asian	4.8
Latino	81.7
White	6.9
Other	4.4
Major Languages Spoken (15% or higher)	
Spanish	91.9
Other Languages Vietnamese Portuguese Filipino	

BAY CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL Reclassification Criteria	
CELDT scores Total score average Average all subparts	 4 or 5 3+
Scores in ELA CST	≥ 317
Scores in Math CST	N/A
District Writing Sample	grade level
High Point Level C	N/A
Teacher Recommendation	yes
Reclassification Rate (State average)	12.2 (10.8)

Foothill City Middle School

Foothill City Middle School is a small, autonomous school with just under 300 students, about half of them English Learners. Opened in 2001, it is part of a large, urban school district in one of California's most diverse and troubled cities. Although Foothill City is a public school, one that any student in the district may attend, the school demographics reflect the low-income Latino and Asian neighborhood in which it is located. The school fits naturally into its community, where small shops cater to the neighborhood's established ethnic and linguistic groups.

Mornings at Foothill City Middle School find teachers and administrators greeting students cordially, by name, as they arrive. Many students get to school extra early, to participate in the school's "AM Boost" program, designed especially for the long-term English Learners who make up more than half of the school's EL population.

Teachers at Foothill City are very public about their own efforts to improve. In a school with a full-time "instructional facilitator," professional development focuses on strategies for supporting English Learners, and teachers also select their own growth targets, which they work on in teams, posting results of their action research around the school.

Parents are an especially valued asset in the school, recognized with a Family Resource Center and a paid position for the school's community liaison. Parents attend adult English classes at the school, as well as a variety of parent-run activities.

The atmosphere, for students and adults alike, is one of comfort and belonging. Foothill City has the feel of a community-based school, and it focuses on serving its community well.

School Culture and Resources to Support English Learners

In addition to an impressive amount of professional development support, much of it focused specifically on working with English Learners, the school has created a number of structures and schoolwide practices to support students. These range from common use of language across disciplines and classrooms to specific, focused interventions to promote students' acquisition of academic English.

This academic year, professional development had two areas of focus. Both were lead by the school's instructional facilitator. The first series focused on the importance of quality talk for English learners, cooperative learning structures, and cohesive use of graphic organizers across disciplines. The second series had the goal of creating and maintaining a team-culture at the school, with teachers who collaborate, share, and support each other. For example, teachers co-plan the focus and curriculum for their classes together and provide peer coaching and peer classroom observations and reflections. Although no meetings were observed where this collaboration took place, teachers were noted stopping by each other's rooms to check in, compare lesson plan notes, and discuss a certain strategy that they had implemented.

In addition, teachers also participate in what the principal calls, "teacher growth." Teachers self-select a target area that they would like to improve in their own teaching, and then focus groups are created to address these concerns. The culmination of this form of action research is a presentation by the teachers, to teachers, complete with their target of concern, how they addressed the concern, and before and after samples of student work. These presentations are posted in the hallways for all to see and are a prominent reminder of the teachers' commitment to their students and their own professional growth and expertise. One English teacher explained, "The school has a team-culture. We are teachers who collaborate, share, and support each other. This is true for every discipline, in every grade. We are a team."

In order to foster a sense in students of ownership of their own learning, the school has a building-wide practice evident in every classroom — a statement of the daily learning target, worded in students' language and viewed from their perspective. This reflects the school emphasis on promoting students' sense of ownership and autonomy. Every teacher, across the disciplines, presents the daily learning target in "student friendly language." For example, learning targets for a seventh grade English class one day were "I can summarize a text that I have read" and "I can participate in a class discussion using academic language." The learning targets for a social studies class were "I can summarize what I have read" and "I can discuss issues in the text and make connections to my life experiences." In all of the classes observed during a three-day visit, every teacher utilized "student-friendly" learning targets, as well as an exit ticket that required students either to apply or reflect on their achievement of the stated learning target.

Another emphasis at the school is the development of parental skills within the same supportive and inviting atmosphere provided for students. The on-site Family Resource Center offers English classes to parents three days a week and other parent education classes once a month. On two of the three days that observations were conducted at the school, an English class was being conducted for parents in the library.

The principal asserted that a major strength of the school is the consistent parent participation that has evolved. Parents are instrumental in planning meetings, celebrations, fundraisers, and workshops. They also offer classes for other parents, such as knitting and reading. A schedule of weekly and monthly parent-run classes was displayed on the wall of the Family Resource Center; this schedule is also sent home to parents monthly, and parent volunteers call each home, inviting parents to attend the English classes and the parent-run classes.

The Family Resource Center also serves as a catalyst for parental support of students and, thus, of teachers. During the English Learner Advisory Council (ELAC) and the School Site Council (SSC) meetings, parents hold workshops for other parents to show how they can support students in school, read report cards and progress reports, what quality homework looks like, and so on. The director of the Family Resource Center is a paid position, funded through the after-school program, but all other personnel at the center are volunteers, and there appears to be no shortage of them. Their success in involving parents is evident in the average attendance at monthly SSC meetings (75 parents) and ELAC meetings (25 parents). Sign-in sheets from recent meetings confirm the school's assertion that these meetings are highly supported and attended by parents.

Together, these structures and collaborations help form a cohesive relationship between families and the school. Teachers and administrators believe that because parents feel welcome and validated, they are more willing to support the students — by coming in to the school and by the support they offer at home.

English Learner Identification, Classification, and Reclassification

Foothill City Middle School has taken up the challenge of educating its English learners, beginning with a focus on adequate assessment and adequate placement of students. For incoming sixth graders, as well as other new students, the school pays

close attention to the CELDT and CST scores. In many cases, however, the CELDT scores are a year old, and students have moved beyond their stated level. Therefore, in addition to using CELDT scores when available, all incoming students are given an internal assessment, the Stanford English Language Proficiency Test, by the school's English language coordinator. This test is typically administered and graded one week before school starts. In addition, how long a student has been in this country is also taken into consideration for placement decisions. Because over half of the school's students are second generation ELs, it is important to make placements that recognize their particular needs, as well as those of newcomers and other ELs.

Once enrolled and placed in classes, students are monitored through district benchmark tests, as well as by classroom performance and involvement.

Academic Trajectories

Foothill City Middle School is small enough so that the different academic trajectories are not only well defined but are also easily implemented. All newcomers are placed on one of two pathways, depending on grade level. Entering sixth and seventh graders are placed in a newcomer ELD/social studies class and are mainstreamed for all other classes, which they attend in small groups and accompanied by an aide. The eighth grade newcomer students are placed in mainstream classes exclusively, but they have an aide who accompanies them to their English language arts class.

Students at ELD levels 3 and 4 are placed in mainstream classes. They also participate in a mandatory "AM Boost" class every day before school formally begins. This class, described in detail below, is designed to provide students with the language structures and functions they will need to actively participate in their English/humanities class each day. Students can move from one trajectory to another, based on teacher recommendation or the district benchmark test administered each semester.

Teaching and Learning

Several practices are in place at the school to promote students' academic success and well-being. Some target only EL students, but others are schoolwide.

All students in the school attend a first-period Advisory class. The purpose of the Advisory is two-fold. It is in this class that assignment books are checked and academic goals are set, but it is also a place for community building, character building, and for what the school calls "challenge activities." During one observation, for example, the entire advisory period was taken up by a game about academic choices, entitled "College for All" and developed by one of the teachers at the school. Students and teachers discussed the various paths that students can take to go to college, both traditional and non-traditional, with the overt message that every student at the school will attend college.

Every teacher and administrator in the school has an Advisory class, including the principal, assistant principal, and ELD coordinator. Not only does this help make each section of Advisory a manageable and productive size, but it also allows administrators to stay connected and responsive to students in ways that they could not otherwise.

Advisory is considered part of the instructional day, with three grade-level Advisory coordinators assigned to design the curriculum and facilitate the structure of the class. The three Advisory coordinators plan together, with a goal of ensuring that there is a flow and cohesiveness across the three grade levels. Every Friday, each Advisory coordinator meets with her grade-level teachers to share the upcoming week's Advisory focus and lesson plans and to receive feedback from teachers regarding the success of recently implemented lessons and suggestions for future areas of focus.

A second academic structure directly targets English Learners: AM Boost. This before-school class arose from recognition of the unaddressed language needs of students at CELDT levels 3 and 4. A major goal of AM Boost is language skill building and a focus on developing students' ability to use academic language in their content area classes. The class is designed to front-load the academic and linguistic skills that students need to fully participate in their classes that day, particularly in English/humanities. For example, during one of the observation days, the English language arts classes were going to be having a Socratic seminar. Students would be arguing for and against animal testing, drawing on several articles they had read. To support students' success, the learning target of the AM Boost was "I can prepare to be an active participant in a Socratic seminar about the pros and

cons of animal testing." During the course of the class, students indeed prepared in a number of ways, including by sorting sentence strips into categories of "arguments for" and "arguments against" animal testing, discussing various arguments in pairs, brainstorming phrases to use when agreeing or disagreeing with someone, and reviewing and then practicing with "discussion card" formulaic expressions to help in constructing statements of agreement and disagreement. The ELD coordinator at the school explained, "Our goal is to arm those ELD 3 kids with the academic language they need to be successful in high school. Our goal should be to send our kids to high school to be in mainstream classes and not ELD classes." The principal concurred, in terms of refusing to quit on students: "We need to use high-challenge, academic language with all students, but especially with our long-term 3's, who traditionally linger in ELD for years."

While AM Boost targets English support, mainly for humanities courses, the need for extra support in math and science is also recognized. This is handled in two different ways. First, there is also an AM Boost for students who are below grade level in math. For students who are below grade level in math and English, the priority is English, so those students attend the English AM Boost and then attend an after-school math intervention at the school and staffed by tutors from a local nonprofit organization.

Additionally, students at CELDT levels 1 and 2 have their own, self-contained English and social studies class (the newcomer ELD class), but they are mainstreamed for math and science. For these classes, a tutor accompanies the students and helps with translation and clarification on the spot.

The ELD teachers do not use *High Point,* which they found to have "watered-down language and content." Instead, they use a course of study supplied by the district, *The ELD Toolkit,* as well as the district's scope and sequence for the state ELD standards. In addition, the ELD teachers, with the help of the school's ELD coordinator and instructional facilitator, create their own materials. The focus for ELD is to introduce and use a combination of formulaic expressions and activities such as picture walks and gallery walks to promote students' language output. For example, in one class students had the choice of two cards to use in a class discussion—a green card and a red card. The green card had a "thumbs up" symbol on one side, and on the other, formulaic expressions to use when agreeing with a person's

argument ("I agree with that statement because..." or "I also feel the same way. I think..."). The red card had a "thumbs down" symbol, and language to use when disagreeing ("I disagree with that statement. I believe..." or "I have a different opinion. I believe...").

The instructional facilitator also promotes the use interactive tasks that require students to speak to one another, collaborate, create dialogues from pictures, and so on. Finally, ELD students are required to make a number of oral presentations in class. The ELD teachers credit the use of these strategies for the success of the ELD program, in particular the newcomer class. When the school year started, there were nine newcomer students. By the middle of the year, based on district assessments, seven students had moved to ELD 2, and two had moved to ELD 3.

A third practice in place at Foothill Middle supports English Learners, and all other students as well. Language use is kept consistent across disciplines and grade levels. For example, a chart in every classroom lists the learning target for the day, the day's agenda, and the assigned homework. Every class in the school begins in the same way, with a student reading aloud the concrete, first-person learning goal for the day. In the sixth grade English class, the learning target one day was "I can identify and explain the parts of a paragraph, including topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences." For AM Boost one day, the learning targets were "I can contribute ideas to a discussion by using academic language" and "I can reflect on how I've grown as a reader, writer, artist, and person this year." A learning target in the ELD class was "I can write a thoughtful paragraph with a strong concluding sentence on the district assessment." At the end of class each day, a portion of the period is devoted to reflection on the learning goal, through class discussion or partner sharing and an "exit ticket" that students write and turn in to the teacher before leaving class.

In all of the observed ELD and AM Boost classes, there was a focus on student talk and interaction, with instances of student collaboration, partner sharing, and active student engagement. The classes moved at a quick pace, were student-centered, and were purposeful, with clearly stated objectives or learning targets. Teachers demonstrated high expectations for their students, and students had a clear understanding of the teachers' academic and behavior expectations. When asked about expectations in her classes, one social studies teacher explained, "I use

materials that support and push students. I want students to understand themes and to learn excellent research skills." When asked to describe what ELs need to be successful in school, this teacher's answer echoed that of several others. "They need lots of opportunities to interact, build vocabulary, and lots of practice using language in context. What they all need is what they are getting here, at this school. To be in a classroom culture that supports them and recognizes the brilliant students they are."

Support for English learners extends into the mainstream classes, where teacher practice mirrors what was observed in the ELD and AM Boost classes. For example, in a sixth grade social studies class, students were working in groups of four on "tree maps" for a paper on ancient Egypt. Previously, each small group had been assigned one topic, such as hieroglyphics, pharaohs, medicine, and so on. Students in each group had researched their topic using the textbook and additional books and articles provided by the teacher. They had written down their findings on 3x5 note cards. On this day, students were placing their research cards on a large piece of chart paper under the following categories: "What is it?" "Outstanding Examples," "Cool Facts," and "Role in Ancient Egypt." Before a research card could be placed on the tree map, group members had to discuss the card and agree on its placement. The discussions during this activity were animated, as students agreed and disagreed on which card to place in which category, what evidence was most relevant for making a decision, and whether or not the information was needed and valid. All students had to weigh in and final placement of each card was decided by a vote.

This sort of supportive atmosphere was found in many classrooms, but not all. There was no evidence of student-centered teaching in the math classes. In one class, when the teacher asked students if they understood the lesson, only three students out of 22 gave a thumbs-up sign, but the teacher moved forward anyway, despite the students' clear lack of understanding. Classroom management was also a problem in the math classes.

Despite the ineffective classroom management in math classes, across the school the expectations for classroom behavior were transparent. Every classroom featured a list of "Seven Community Agreements." Whenever a class displayed the slightest

bit of restlessness, many teachers would say, "Pause," and then asked students to reflect on the community agreements and decide if they were being followed.

These agreements, like the "I can" learning targets, are from the students' point of view. Students are asked to honor learning times; mutually respect each other and the teacher; state their needs; say "pass," if necessary, when called upon; honor the hand [no shout-outs]; and give each other appreciations. The only negatively stated agreement is the imperative "No Putdowns."

Although the community agreements are designed for students, they appear to have the effect of shaping the teachers' behavior as well. Teachers were respectful of students, thoughtful, and acknowledged students' positive behavior.

In addition to the community agreements, the consequences for poor behavior are very clear for both teachers and students. If a student does not honor the agreements or is disruptive in class, he or she is sent to the office and asked to fill out a "responsibility reflection," a series of reflective questions about behaviors and next steps, and then to meet with the teacher during lunch or recess. The use of the responsibility reflection is left to the teacher, and its use was observed in a number of instances.

The principal believes that these disciplinary techniques are necessary in order for students to have clear expectations and for teachers to have unified expectations. The principal maintained that if students have clear guidelines, both students and teachers are better able to handle themselves. Although the community agreements and responsibility reflections are uniform for all classes, each grade level team sets up their own steps in terms of discipline and decides together what the chain of consequences is to be. The job of the administration, then, is holding teams accountable for the steps they have created. "Good kids sometimes make bad choices," the principal explained. "What we need to do is empower students to make better choices."

Concerns

A general concern is that although this school seems to be doing everything that we know is necessary for English Learners to thrive — a focus on language, student interactions, high expectations, quality talk, support for teachers and their growth,

parent engagement, and an involved administration — English Learners' test scores at Foothill City have been slow to rise, although for the academic year of 2008-2009, CST scores rose significantly.

Another concern is that although the administration and the bulk of the teachers are in agreement about what quality education looks like for English Learners, there are still some classrooms where teachers seem reluctant to let go of their control and hand responsibility over to the students; from the perspective of the school's instructional facilitator, "A lot of teachers are really good at scaffolding, but as a school we need to do a better job of removing certain scaffolds and constructing them elsewhere if we want our students to move forward. We need to do everything that we are doing, but do it better."

FOOTHILL CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL (grades 6, 7, 8)	
Total School Population	287
Number of ELs	132
Student Groups (%)	
English Learners	46
Free and Reduced Lunch	90.2
African-American	8.0
Asian	5.9
Latino	80.5
White	2.4
Other	3.1
Major Languages Spoken (15% or higher)	
Spanish	95.5
Other Languages Vietnamese	

FOOTHILL CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL Reclassification Criteria	
CELDT Overall early advanced or advanced	Intermediate level or higher on all subtests: listening/ speaking, reading, writing
Scores in ELA CST	≥ 324
Scores in Math CST	N/A
District Writing Sample/ Grade	C or better in subject
High Point Level C	N/A
Teacher Recommendation	yes
Reclassification Rate (State average)	19.2 (10.8)

Inland City Middle School

Inland City Middle School is located in a solidly middle-class neighborhood, but neighborhood students tend to enroll elsewhere. The school is in its fifth year of Program Improvement (PI), and its population has waned from 880 students before PI to 641 students currently, a 27 percent decline. The drop in the number of English Learners has been even more precipitous, 55 percent over the same period.

Yet, in the past two years, the school's API index has risen impressively: 41 points in 2007-08 and 30 points in 2008-09. The school's English Learners reclassify at twice the state rate. And the principal reports that more and more good teachers are drawn to Inland City.

The bedrock of the school's focus on improvement has been universal access to grade-level content. With active leadership from the principal, Inland City has put in place programs and structures that reach for success instead of remediation. For example, all students who are not ready for algebra are placed in intensive double-period, gender-segregated prep classes with some of the school's best teachers; it turns out that they get ready. Forty percent of English Learners enroll in mainstream courses; their classmates are native English speakers, and the content is at grade level or above. Even English Learners at the lowest CELDT levels participate in the school's improvement culture, finishing the three-year *High Point* sequence in two years, in classes where teachers use it only as a supplement to the grade-level content they otherwise provide.

These successes aside, the principal has not stopped pushing and feels that still too few teachers have English Learners clearly in focus. She plans to start the 2009-10 school year asking each teacher to reflect and answer this question: "You can tell who the EL students are in my class because...."

School Culture and Resources to Support English Learners

At Inland City, the principal attributed improvements in student achievement to a variety of structures and processes that the school instituted with the aim of improving teaching and learning. One, a concerted schoolwide effort to focus on students' active engagement and use of academic language, was observed in several classrooms.

Another factor cited for students' improved achievement is the institutionalized review of data, standards, and student performance to inform practice. As the principal reported, at the beginning of the school year, teachers meet to review CST scores, CELDT scores, and other pertinent student data. After quarterly district benchmark testing, departments meet to review student performance and to reflect on teaching. At all times, individual student data is also available to teachers. In interviews, teachers discussed these practices as contributing to better-targeted instruction.

The principal also believes that the school now feels more welcoming to students. An emphasis on personalizing the school has meant that teachers know and connect with students more closely. Indeed, during observations, several teachers exhibited personal knowledge of their students, warm relations with them, and patience.

English Learner Identification, Classification, and Reclassification

Inland City has clear procedures for identifying and classifying ELs, but it does not have a full-time EL coordinator. The former EL coordinator, who is retired, returns to the school at key times to help identify, test, and place students, in addition to completing administrative paperwork.

Most students arrive with CELDT scores from the prior year, ELD/ELA *High Point* curriculum placement levels, and up to three years of CST scores. To refine placement of English Learners, the district has divided the five levels of the CELDT into more levels. Newcomers go to the district's matriculation center where primary-language staff administer CELDT tests and introduce families to U.S. schools. Students return with assessment results and the EL coordinator places them in the appropriate set of courses.

Reclassification criteria at Inland City are the highest of the case study schools and among the most stringent encountered in the whole study. Students can reclassify under two different sets of criteria. The first set requires a score of 4 on all subparts of the CELDT, CST scores of at least 350 in mathematics and English language arts, and teacher confirmation that the student performs grade-level work independently. The second set of criteria requires the same CELDT scores and teacher confirmation but allows lower CST scores if classroom-based assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics are sufficiently high.

Despite these stringent requirements, the school's 2008-09 reclassification rate of 21.2 percent exceeds the district (10.2 percent) and state averages (10.8 percent) by far. After reclassification, the school monitors students for two years, using a district form.

Academic Trajectories

Inland City Middle School emphasizes access to grade-level curricula and standards for EL students. In the ELD program, this means using the ELD *High Point* curriculum as a supplement and moving students through it in two rather than the typical three years. At the beginning and early intermediate levels, *High Point* Basics through Level A are used, but the teacher stresses grade-level ELA standards. At the intermediate levels of ELD, the primary curriculum is *Holt Plus Literature,* a grade-level curriculum adapted for struggling readers and writers; *High Point* Levels B and C are used to supplement it.

As the intermediate ELD/ELA teacher explained, "*High Point* is at a lower level and not connected to the content standards, so it doesn't prepare students for the CSTs. I use the Holt pacing to prepare them for the benchmark tests." During observations in her class, this teacher was using the seventh grade Holt literature curriculum and instructing students in how to write a response to literature. Grade-level content and academic language abounded: character analysis, plot, foreshadowing, theme, and so forth. The teacher reported that the accelerated instruction during this second year in ELD/ELA prepares most students to reach early advanced or advanced levels on the CELDT and move on to mainstream ELA.

Students at beginning and early intermediate CELDT levels enroll in three periods of ELD/ELA, grade-level math (based on CST performance level), physical education, and an elective. Early intermediate ELs enroll in grade-level social studies as a cohort. Lower- and upper-level intermediate ELD students enroll in two periods of ELD/ELA, grade-level social studies (as a cohort), science (as a cohort), math, and physical education.

Early advanced and advanced students enroll in mainstream classes. According to the EL coordinator, 40 percent of all EL students, all at the early advanced and advanced levels, enroll in mainstream classes with English Only students. The classes are labeled SDAIE ELA because all teachers possess CLAD credentials.

Any student in the school, EO or EL, who is struggling in language arts enrolls in a two- or three-period block that uses a grade-level curriculum aligned with grade-level content standards, rather than a below-grade-level reading intervention. For other courses, including GATE courses, student placement is driven by CST performance, grades, and teacher recommendations. All students enroll in math courses based on math CST performance. Consequently, the school master schedule is built around math first and ELD classes second.

Taken together, the structures, processes, and activities in place at Inland City reveal determined efforts to improve performance for the benefit of students, teachers, and the school as a whole. At the same time, tension about these efforts is sufficiently strong among a subset of teachers that researchers could not observe their classrooms.

Teaching and Learning

The structures and processes implemented as part of the school's improvement efforts and discussed earlier include some promising practices. Among these, four stand out as particularly important for English Learners:

- dedicating time and resources (staff and departmental meetings) to examine and reflect on students' performance data, including CELDT, to inform instructional practice for the purpose of achieving specific learning and performance goals;
- making individual student data readily available to teachers to inform instructional practice for the purpose of achieving specific learning and performance goals;
- providing English Learners at all levels with access to grade-level curriculum; and
- providing teachers the authority to adapt the pacing calendar and curriculum, for the purpose of achieving specific learning and performance goals.

The principal plans to focus departments on the needs of ELs by requiring them to address the question "What are you doing for the EL students?" every time they meet. Throughout the year, as language arts, math, science, and social studies departments meet to discuss district benchmark results — by class, individual, strand,

and standard — the principal feels that the emphasis on ELs will facilitate their continued improvement.

A central computer system provides teachers access to individual student performance throughout the year. A language arts teacher reported that she regularly accesses individual students' performances on benchmark strands to determine areas of growth and areas to reteach. She also regularly prints out individual reports to analyze students' answers and how they went awry. The data and her analyses inform her instruction. After each benchmark, this teacher also meets with students individually to review their performance, progress, and areas of need and to create goals for the future.

In an effort to ready students for proficient levels of mathematics achievement on their CSTs and for algebra, Inland City Middle School has instituted an unusual grouping, curricular, and scheduling strategy. It targets students who are at the basic and below basic levels in mathematics, separates them by gender, and places them in two-hour pre-algebra blocks with some of its best teachers. These teachers adapted the district pacing calendar, slowing it down to meet the needs of their students. Emphasizing depth rather than breath, the teachers cover less material, focusing on the essentials that would prepare students to achieve at proficiency levels on the CST and to enroll in algebra the following year. So far, this approach has yielded promising results. In 2009, eighth-grade EL students performed unusually well, with 34 percent scoring proficient or above, far above the state average of 14 percent.

At the classroom level, researchers observed promising instructional practices in the classes of two of the mathematics teachers. They engaged students in quality tasks and assignments requiring practice, application, and extension of academic concepts and skills. They focused on students' production of oral and written academic language. They used a variety of scaffolding strategies to support students' learning, such as modeling and cognitive structuring with graphic organizers and visual representations.

Both teachers used a variety of organizational structures. Students were grouped into pairs or small groups for productive work. Full participation was accomplished through the use of individual white boards and teacher monitoring and feedback. The teachers also conferenced with individual students to discuss performance and learning goals.

As one of the math teachers pointed out, "You have to know your clientele" as well as your subject matter. "What do students need to know in order to learn the concept or the problem you want them to learn?"

Concerns

At Inland City Middle School, the organizing principle is improving teaching and learning for all students, including ELs, by emphasizing grade-level curricula and content standards. A related theme is accelerating rather than remediating students. This approach is evident in the school's ELD/ELA program and in its math program. Rather than use below-grade-level curricula and remediate students, the school provides quality instruction to give students access to grade-level curricula. Indeed, only 6 percent of ELs are in courses designed for students struggling in language arts. Even given the school's stringent reclassification criteria, the reclassification rate of 21.2 percent is a testament to Inland City's forward-looking efforts to support English Learners.

The CST math performance of the school's eighth grade EL students is more evidence of the school's powerful approach: students take math based on CST scores, and 34 percent of the school's English Learners scored at proficient or above. In addition, Inland City's innovative approach to helping students at basic and below basic levels of proficiency deserves attention. These students are separated by gender and offered intensive, accelerated instruction. It is important to note that some of the best teaching observed during this study occurred in two of these classrooms.

Even given these notable successes, an area of concern is that of the school's 99 ELs, 49 percent are at early advanced and advanced levels and have not met criteria for reclassification. Inland City's criteria for reclassification are so stringent that they slow the reclassification process. Many native English speakers would be unable to "reclassify" if they had to meet the same standards.

A final concern is that although Inland City has implemented a number of structures and processes to improve teaching and leaning, promising instructional practices were observed consistently in only two classrooms, while isolated instances of promising practices were observed in others. Moreover, the refusal of a subset of teachers to be observed reflects a tension in the school that detracts from overall improvement efforts.

INLAND CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL (grades 7, 8)	
Total School Population	641
Number of ELs	99
Student Groups (%)	
English Learners	15.44
Free and Reduced Lunch	67.7
Latino	34.6
African-American	23.9
White	22.5
Asian	15.9
Other	3.1
Major Languages Spoken (15% or higher)	
Spanish	58.6
Hmong	18.2
Other Languages Mien Cantonese Lao	

INLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL Reclassification Criteria	
Option A	
CELDT scores Total score average Average all subparts	 4 or 5 4+
Scores in ELA CST	≥ 350
Scores in Math CST	≥ 350
District Writing Sample	N/A
High Point Level C	N/A
Teacher Recommendation	Yes; confirm student independent, no need for ELD or sheltered instruction
Option B	
CELDT scores Total score average Average all subparts	 4 or 5 4+
Scores in ELA CST	≥ 324
Scores in Math CST	≥ 324
District Writing Sample	80%
High Point Level C	75%
Teacher Recommendation	Yes; confirm student independent, no need for ELD or sheltered instruction
Reclassification Rate (State average)	21.2 (10.8)

Ocean City Middle School

Ocean City Middle School is a large school with roughly 1,000 students. All but about 40 qualify for free or reduced lunch. The transient rate at the school is also high: over 300 students left during the course of the 2008-09 school year, and new students continued to arrive through the last week of school, many of them newcomers from Mexico and Central America. In total, student turnover at the school is about 40 percent each year.

Five years ago, Ocean City looked like the stereotype of a low-income, high-turnover school. An old building to start with, it was dirty, in need of paint, and trash abounded, inside and out. The school had seen eight principals in 10 years, and the lack of continuity had taken its toll. "Curb appeal" may not be high on the data reported for successful schools, but when Ocean City's current principal came on the scene, he made it his point of entry. He had the building cleared of trash, cleaned, and painted, and he implemented a uniform policy that is strictly enforced each morning by staff members who enter every classroom and check students' attire.

The principal did not stop with trash abatement and dress codes, however. The next thing he did was to institute a writing curriculum, even for electives. Writing had not been emphasized in any class and not until the eighth grade. Even then, the most that students were asked to write was a paragraph. "Now," he says, "they are expected to write essays, not just a paragraph, and not just in the eighth grade."

Students' mental health also became a concern of the principal. "About 10 percent of our students are depressed. These kids are really stressed out, based on where they are living, how they are living, and what is expected of them in this world. The girls shut down, boys become disruptive." To help address the needs of these students, the principal has arranged with a local mental health organization to be on site for the first three weeks of school to identify students who may need some intervention and to provide them and their families with psychological support services.

This year, at the principal's initiative, the school is piloting a new program to address the linguistic and academic needs of the newcomer students, and from the initial results, this program is proving to be a successful addition.

At Ocean City Middle School, the role of a strong principal in changing the culture and instructional programs and practices of the school is clearly in evidence.

School Culture and Resources to Support English Learners

Ocean City Middle School has several schoolwide structures in place to support English Learners, which are implemented in varying degrees. First, in response to the high number of newcomers, the school is piloting a "newcomer class" this year for the first time. In this self-contained class of 20 students, one teacher teaches all subjects, except for computer and PE, when the newcomers mix with the mainstream students. The goal of the class is to move students quickly to an ELD class. This newcomer class and its trajectory are discussed further below.

Second, teachers are provided with specific professional development in order to meet the needs of their English Learners. All teachers participate in SDAIE training, and in addition all new teachers to the school participate in a five-day "teacher induction," which includes one day of classroom management and four days of EL professional development, with opportunities for teachers to learn and plan for instructional practices in their classrooms that benefit English Learners. (The principal described some of these practices as working in pairs or small groups, and utilizing academic language rather than watered-down language). In several classes these practices were readily visible, but researchers also observed several classes where they were absent.

Third, all teachers in the school have been trained by the district to use "Thinking Maps"—a series of graphic organizers to be used across all subjects. These include graphic organizers for sequencing, cause and effect, summarizing, compare and contrast, and response to literature. These graphic organizers are displayed in every classroom, but during classroom observations, researchers saw only a handful of teachers actually use them. When an observer asked students about the graphic organizers, they were able to explain what they were used for and to show the samples of them in their own student daily planners (planners which every student in the school receives on the first day of school).

The district supports the use of small group instruction and provides ongoing professional development and support by funding two site-based coaches, one for

ELA and one for math. These coaches teach part-time at the school and spend the rest of the time supporting teachers, through on-going professional development and push-in work with small groups of learners.

A number of teachers mentioned that the coaches' professional development presentations and follow-up in-class support were helpful in engaging all students, not just their EL students. One of the literacy coaches described the goal being to prepare students for high school and the real world through strategies that increased their opportunities to work in small groups and to speak and interact. According to the principal, the coaches' in-class support has allowed teachers to differentiate instruction and to help EL students newly transitioned from the newcomer class to mainstream classes to keep up with the same curriculum as their peers.

English Learner Identification, Classification, and Reclassification

Ocean City Middle School has several structures in place for the identification and placement of their ELs. Because of the high influx of students who are either new to the district or new to the country, the school can only rely on previous CELDT scores for a portion of the time. For those newcomer students who arrive without CELDT scores — and often without data of any kind — two assessments are given at the school site, *Momentum Math* and a *High Point* diagnostic test. After these students have completed three units in *High Point*, they are reassessed. The teacher of the newcomer class demonstrated with a series of graphs how she keeps track of students' progress and scores; these data are also shared with the students themselves, so that they are kept abreast of their progress and momentum. The newcomer teacher believes this visual representation of students' progress is a positive factor in their English acquisition.

For students who arrive at the school with a cum folder, the school considers a variety of factors for placement of students, including CELDT scores, CST scores, grades, behavior reports, and GPA. Teachers are asked by the principal and the literacy and math coaches to provide input regarding how student placement is working, to learn whether the student has been misplaced, or, if a student suddenly shows more aptitude, whether the student should be moved to the ELD 2 class (only ELD 2 was offered in the 2008-09 school year, although ELD 3 is sometimes

available) or into ELA. Students stay in the newcomer class no longer than a year, and are moved into either ELD 2 or ELD 3 as soon as possible. At this point, students travel through the master schedule, with 90-minute blocks of ELD and math (mainstream students have the same schedule, with 90-minute blocks of English and math).

The principal described the district as being "data driven," and students as well as teachers are aware of their scores. All teachers are trained in and encouraged by the principal and coaches to use the district website, LROIX, which contains multiple data, including student CST and CELDT scores and district benchmarks. Although the principal also described the school itself as a "data school," he pointed out that he does not use data as part of teacher evaluations. Rather, he described using data with each teacher to brainstorm what worked well and what needs to be improved, based on the percentage of students who either moved or did not move forward.

Reclassification criteria are clear, and consistent with other schools in the study. Students are reclassified if their overall CELDT score is a 4 or a 5, and if they score a 3 or higher in all subparts, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They must also score at least a 325 on the CST in language arts. Of the 26 students in ELD 2 this year, eight were reclassified as fluent English proficient.

Once students are reclassified, they are monitored through CST data as well as through authentic assessments. Reclassified students continue to receive in-class support of the ELA and math coaches, both of whom push in to classes to support these students in small groups. The fact is, however, that in a school with roughly 1,000 students, two coaches cannot meet the needs of all students.

Academic Trajectories

English Learners at Ocean City are placed in newcomer or ELD classes, or in mainstream classes in one of two categories, though the principal insisted that there are no "tracks" at the school and all students receive the same rigorous content.

If students are new to the country and are non-English speakers, they are placed in the self-contained newcomer class. *High Point* is used for this course, although

the teacher says she supplements with her own material, as well as selected texts from the mainstream HOLT ELA textbook, where the texts are longer and address topics more deeply. Students stay in this course anywhere from three months to one year, depending on their unit assessments and teacher observations. Since the CELDT is given only once a year, these scores are not utilized in the placement of students into this class, as most arrive without previous test or school data. CELDT test scores are a factor at the end of the year, in moving newcomer students.

Students who score a level 2 on the CELDT are placed in an ELD 2 class but are mainstreamed for all other classes. As in the newcomer class, the teacher in the ELD 2 class uses *High Point* but also supplements the material with mainstream texts.

All of the core courses at Ocean City are either "strategic" classes or "accelerated." Those students who are placed in a strategic class score basic or below on the CST, or are ELD 3 or 4 based on their CELDT score. In addition, many of the students in these classes are students who are Reclassified-Fluent English Proficient. While the strategic and accelerated classes follow the same pacing guides, and have the same student expectations, the strategic classes are intended to utilize more small-group work and more SDAIE strategies. Researchers' observations did not support this, however. The level of support for students seemed to depend more on the expertise of the teacher than whether or not that teacher was teaching an accelerated or a strategic course.

With the principal's arrival five years ago, the school began allowing ELs to have electives. The electives, he believes, keep students "energized." As he explained, "Our students need joy in school. School cannot be all academics; everyone here gets an elective — we offer Spanish, computer, band and orchestra, creative writing, art, pottery, AVID, MESA (math and science), economics, and dance. These classes are for all kids at this school."

Teaching and Learning

The newcomer class is taught by a fluent Spanish speaker — an immigrant herself — though at no time during observations did she speak Spanish to the students. She uses *High Point,* but she asserted that the textbook gives students limited informa-

tion, brief, atomistic texts, and a few good literary pieces, so she supplements with her own materials and materials from the mainstream classes. "It is a difficult situation," she explained, "because while *High Point* teaches at the students' level of English, many come with prior knowledge in terms of subject matter. However," she added, "this also varies from student to student. The academic levels of the students differ so much — some come to school with a kindergarten level of school or less, and others come with a twelfth grade reading level in their home language."

An example of how this teacher differentiates instruction is illustrated in the lesson below, a *High Point* lesson on "Our Nation's Symbols." The textbook focuses heavily on the 13 stripes and 50 stars of the American flag, so the teacher brought in symbols from the students' own countries, as well as excerpts from the mainstream history textbook.

She asked the students to reflect a moment on their own country's flag, its symbols and colors, and then to share this information with a neighbor. After students worked with a partner, some of them shared with the class relevant information about Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Peru, Argentina, and Vietnam. If a Spanish-speaking student slipped into Spanish, the teacher helped the student articulate the same ideas in English.

Following this exchange, which students found interesting, they worked with synonyms and antonyms, based on the highlighted *High Point* vocabulary. During this task, students once again worked in pairs, while several students moved to a small group to work with an aide. The teacher explained that these students had been in the country only a few weeks and were non-literate in their home language. They needed to develop the ability to read and write. One student had arrived within the week, despite the fact that there were only a few weeks left in the school year.

For the next hour, students worked in groups of three in centers that focused on expanding understanding of the day's lesson and included bridging activities, word study, buddy reading, and collaborative posters.

Throughout the class the teacher spoke exclusively in English, paraphrasing what she said to help those who had to struggle to understand her. During her presentations and explanations, the teacher used academic English, modeling for the

students the language she wanted them to learn; at no point did she water down the curriculum or the language. Over the course of several observations, the teacher consistently engaged the students academically and linguistically. The success of this class is well appreciated by the principal. "The one downside," he said, "is that we cannot keep them in the newcomer class if they are showing great gains, which they all do. They start out in this class, but then quickly, based on classroom based assessments and district tests around High Point, they are moved into an ELD 2 class."

The teacher of the newcomer class emphasized that the students in her class thrive because of established classroom norms. "They feel safe and supported and are not afraid to try to speak English in class. They know they will not be laughed at." She also acknowledged that having a paraprofessional in the class to work with the newest arrivals in a small group allows these students to work on the same lesson as everyone else, but to receive more individualized attention and support. Although the newcomer class is in its first year, the success of the students, who are able to move quickly and successfully into the ELD 2 class and participate in the master schedule of classes, is testimony to its promise.

The ELD 2 class exhibits similar promising practices for English Learners. The teacher has high expectations, moves at a quick pace, and incorporates multiple learning modalities daily in his lessons, including drawing. The following description of a class period is typical of several ELD 2 classes that were observed.

At the beginning of class, the 26 students took out their completed timelines of important dates in the book they were reading, *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker. The teacher first asked students to reflect on what they learned in the beginning of the text, called "Exposition," and to share with a partner what took place in that particular section of the book. He then asked students to write in full sentences on their whiteboards what important events occurred on May 6, according to the text. Students carried out this task alone, but then paired up with a partner to compare notes and clarify any misunderstandings. As students engaged in this activity, the teacher circulated around the room, helping students expand their writing by asking them guiding and probing questions, such as "Tell me more about that" and "Why do you suppose he reacted that way? What was happening in the story at that time?" Finally, he asked for volunteers to share their responses with the class, as he transcribed

their answers on the whiteboard at the front of the room. Although several students volunteered, half of the responses came from students who did not volunteer but were called on by the teacher.

This sort of activity reflects the teacher's philosophy with respect to what English Learners need in order to succeed. "ELs need rigor," he said. "And they need to have the same expectations put upon them that they will face when they transition into an ELA class." For example, he explained that rather than using the graphic organizers provided in the *High Point* textbook, he uses the same ones that are used in the mainstream classes, many of which were prepared by the school's literacy coach. The ELD 2 teacher believes that this overall approach is working. "The students' growth is outstanding," he said.

While the teachers of the newcomer and ELD 2 classes have high expectations of students and engaged them in academic and meaningful discussions and texts, the mainstream classes did not consistently offer the same support. For example, in one mainstream English class, half of the 90-minute block was devoted to silent reading, a daily occurrence according to a student queried by an observer. During this time, at least two girls were clearly texting messages on their cell phones, and one boy, rather than reading the books that the teacher had set out on the desks, constructed a "shelter" out of four books and then inserted his head inside. At no point did the teacher, who sat at her desk correcting papers, stop this sort of behavior, or even seem to notice. Finally, towards the end of silent reading, some 40 minutes into the class period, the teacher asked the boy whose head had been inside the book shelter the whole time to leave the room, which he did very slowly, taking several minutes to walk from his desk to the door.

Several uninspired teacher-centered classrooms were also observed. In one, for example, a seventh grade math class, 32 students were seated in rows. There was no interaction between students and little interaction between teacher and students. No academic language was used, except by the teacher. In fact, almost no language was used by the students. This classroom dynamic was not uncommon.

Concerns

Students in the newcomer class and the ELD 2 class receive ample support through the expertise of their teachers, the supplemental materials used to enhance *High Point,* support from the literacy and math coaches, and the ongoing professional development of all teachers. The principal notes, however, that outside of these classes, implementation of "best practices" varies. When asked why some students at the school are not doing well, he replied, "Students fail because they are sitting in teacher-fronted classes. They are bored." In comparison with the strong newcomer and ELD classes, much more teacher-talk, much less group work, and much less student engagement were the norm.

The principal of Ocean City Middle School has high expectations of all teachers and students, as do the two coaches. All three commented on the need for academic rigor, and all commented that they believe the connection between rigor and success for ELs depends on exposing them to academically rich materials, academic language, and practices that require students to actively participate and use higher order thinking. Not all teachers have recognized the importance of these practices. According to the principal, some teachers instead focus on students' living conditions or blame the parents when some students continue to struggle. "There is still a ways to go to get everyone on board," the principal acknowledged, but he is committed to making the effort.

OCEAN CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL (grades 6, 7, 8)	
Total School Population	991
Number of ELs	392
Student Groups (%)	
English Learners	39.6
Free and Reduced Lunch	96
African-American	17.6
Asian	2.6
Latino	67.7
White	1.8
Other	7.8
Major Languages Spoken (15% or higher)	
Spanish	89.5
Other Languages Khmer Hmong	

OCEAN CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL Reclassification Criteria	
CELDT scores Total score average Average all subparts	 4 or 5 3+
Scores in ELA CST	≥ 325
Scores in Math CST	N/A
District Writing Sample	N/A
High Point Level C	N/A
Teacher Recommendation	N/A
Reclassification Rate (State average)	11.0 (10.8)

Valley City Middle School

Valley City Middle School is one of the highest performing schools in a large, urban district. It is home to three separate "small" schools. About 1,200 of its approximately 2,300 students have competed for places in the campus GATE program. Another 850 or so have won lottery places in the campus magnet program, which focuses on mathematics, science, and technology. A third school serves a group of about 350 students as a neighborhood school, in a relatively upscale neighborhood. Both the magnet and neighborhood schools have sheltered streams of classes, accommodating the 73 English Learners on campus.

It is important to understand the composition of the student body because the school's very small percentage of English Learners reclassify at a very high rate — 31 percent. In fact, 41 percent of Valley City students are former English Learners, having been redesignated Fluent English Proficient (FEP) at some point in their schooling. At the same time, there is a dramatic difference between the experience of two groups of Valley City's English Learners, the highest-scoring 20 percent who are mainstreamed into all content area classes, except English language arts, and the other 80 percent who spend their days in sheltered classes, grouped with special education students and any students identified with serious behavior problems.

In a school culture steeped in success, the highest-performing ELs seem to make the transition to FEP. For the other English Learners, a core of skillful teachers is dedicated to supporting them, but class assignments for these students are stigmatizing and demotivating.

School Culture and Resources to Support English Learners

As a top performing middle school with the highest rate of attendance in its district for 11 of 13 years, Valley City Middle School touts an achievement-for-all culture. According to the principal, "We have high expectations for everyone and high expectations for them [EL students], too."

Yet it is almost entirely up to the EL coordinator and a small cadre of teachers to look out for these students in a school where they tend to disappear. As the EL coordinator explained, "Because the EL numbers are small, it is easier [for the school] to focus on the greater majority." Comments from the sheltered content teach-

ers are consistent with the view that English Learners are a low priority, or worse. "Teachers don't want to take sheltered classes," in the opinion of one teacher who has herself elected to do so. Another teacher described taking on sheltered classes out of a feeling that the English Learners were being short-changed. "They want to learn," this teacher says, "and I wanted to teach them, because it was chaos with a former teacher." Another sheltered instruction teacher who loves teaching a sheltered class acknowledged that although it is her favorite class, "It is also the most work." Concern for the EL students clearly drives these teachers, who form a strong core of support for them.

One structural support that Valley City offers the English language development program is a common planning time for the EL coordinator and the ELD/sheltered teachers. Built into the master schedule, this is a time that the coordinator and teachers value as an opportunity to meet and discuss EL instructional practices and other shared needs. The school also provides a classroom aide to the EL department, who travels to different classes as requested by teachers and scheduled by the EL coordinator.

The school provides teachers with incoming students' CST and CELDT test scores at the beginning of the year and schedules department meetings quarterly, after benchmark assessments, to discuss student performance. With regard to these activities, both the assistant principal and the EL coordinator noted that it is entirely dependent on individual teachers to take advantage of the data they receive. One sheltered instruction teacher described looking at cums, CSTs, CELDT scores, IEPs, and so forth to be able to assess and teach the "whole student" based on individual needs.

District professional development for teachers of English Learners has emphasized three SDAIE strategies: the use of anticipatory guides, numbered heads together, and think-pair-share. One teacher was observed using one of these strategies. The use of "Thinking Maps" is another district priority, and in 2008-09, the sixth grade sheltered teachers were all trained in the use of these cross-curricular graphic organizers; the seventh and eighth grade sheltered teachers are expected to be trained in 2009-10. Professional development in the ELD/ELA *High Point* program is also available, and one teacher reported participating in it. In the school generally, professional development for working with ELs is not a priority.

English Learner Identification, Classification, and Reclassification

Valley City Middle School has clear structures and processes for identification, classification, and curricular placement of ELs, as well as specific criteria for reclassification and follow-up. Most Valley City EL students have been in the district before enrolling in the school, and they arrive with CELDT scores, ELD/ELA *High Point* curriculum placement levels, and CST scores. Placement, by the EL coordinator, in ELD/ELA courses is based on these assessments, regardless of length of time in the district ELD program.

Reclassification criteria are clear and comparable to those of other case study schools, although the language arts score of 300 is the lowest among these schools. As noted, the reclassification rate of 31.1 percent, in 2008-09, is the highest among the case study schools. The reclassification process can be initiated once students enter Level C in *High Point.* Also, at the end of each semester, the EL coordinator reports that she tries to meet with teachers to discuss the needs of students who are close to reclassifying.

After reclassification, the school monitors students' academic progress for two years. In the first year after reclassification, students are expected to earn C grades and above and to score at basic or higher levels on the language arts CSTs. In the second year after reclassification, students are expected to maintain C grades or above and to score proficient on the language arts CSTs.

Academic Trajectories

Valley City Middle School emphasizes access to core curriculum for all EL students, although the experience is very different for the highest scoring English Learners and all the rest.

Students in the school's ELD/ELA courses have some access to grade-level language arts curriculum and standards, though it is constrained by the *High Point* curriculum. In math, science, and social studies, students have access to grade-level curriculum in either mainstream or sheltered classes. The highest-scoring students are placed in a sheltered English class but then in mainstream classes for the other content areas. However, for the majority of ELs, (about 80 percent) access to grade-level math, science, and social studies is in mixed-roster sheltered classes, where

they are grouped with special education students and EO students who are low performing due to poor behavior and work habits. Some of these courses are team taught by a sheltered teacher and the special day class teacher and an aide. This grouping policy precludes most EL students' integration with higher performing students who model appropriate classroom behavior and study habits. In the EL coordinator's experience, such grouping negatively affects EL students' development, whereas grouping in mainstream classes with high performing students affects them positively. "The students with good models have moved quickly," she reported. "Those without good models don't move forward, they get stuck." Another cost of such grouping is stigmatization for the courses and for students, according to the EL coordinator. Instead, she would group the EL students needing sheltered instruction with higher performing students.

All ELD/ELA classes are double periods and are organized around *High Point* materials. The EL coordinator reported that students entering at beginning levels of ELD complete the program in three years. In the advanced section, students receive five units of *High Point* curriculum and five units of grade-level ELA literary response and analysis. Most EL students at Valley City (71 percent) have completed the ESL/ELD courses and/or are at early advanced or advanced levels of ELD and have not reclassified. Of these students, those scoring CELDT levels 4 or 5 and basic on their language arts CSTs enroll in a grade-level, sheltered, preparing for reclassification English and social studies — a two-period block with the same teacher. For sixth graders, such placement means that all of their courses will be in the sheltered stream. Starting in seventh grade, students can enroll in honors courses in math and science, based on teacher recommendations, although EL participation in honors courses is low. Students scoring at CELDT levels 3 and above and proficient or advanced on the language arts CSTs also enroll in grade-level sheltered English unless they have a teacher recommendation to enroll in mainstream English.

Teaching and Learning

The common planning time available to the EL teachers has led to shared practices that benefit English Learners. A science teacher reported, for example, that the sheltered science teachers had adopted the use of student composition books in science. According to this teacher, students' use of their composition books for

notes, homework, labs, reflections, and so forth had had a significant impact on their success. Another science teacher makes sure all his EL students have access to the same content as those in the GATE program. "I use all of the same assignments for my sheltered and GATE classes," he said, explaining that this is accomplished by structuring all project work to be done in class. "We need to take responsibility for teaching them," he added.

Researchers also found a number of promising practices among three teachers in the ELD/ELA sheltered streams. For all three teachers, engaging students in grade-level content and learning tasks was at the center of their instruction — as was a concern about equity. To keep apace, they tailored instruction for EL student success rather than slowing it down or "remediating." Even at the beginning and intermediate ELD/ELA levels, a teacher reported engaging students in producing "parallel products," that is, products similar to those she required of her mainstream class. In planning for EL students' success, these teachers kept a focus on oral and written academic and content language production, comprehension, and application of concepts. They used a variety of classroom organizational structures including grouping students into pairs or small groups for productive student-student talk and work. One teacher also conducted small-group dialogical instruction. Teachers also used a variety of scaffolding strategies, including questioning, modeling, cognitive structuring using graphic organizers, and varied visual and auditory representations of concepts and texts. A teacher who wanted to challenge students to balance chemical equations started by contextualizing the standards-based work students would accomplish within the prior knowledge and experiences of many of them, salsa making. As students moved on to grade-level fare, they wrote daily lab reflections as homework. Notations about "What I learned" accumulated into impressive records of students who had accepted and risen to academic challenges that teachers were willing and able to support.

Concerns

A theme at Valley City Middle School is high achievement for all students. For EL students, this emphasis includes grade-level curricula and content standards, in addition to ELD/ELA provided at a brisk pace for those who need it — irrespective of the length of time they have been in U.S. schools. Several teachers of EL students

pride themselves on providing the same content, assignments, and projects to their sheltered classes as to their other classes, tailoring their instruction to assist students to learn successfully. Indeed, some of the most promising instructional practices of all study observations occurred in these teachers' classrooms. In addition to the school's high reclassification rate, only 5 percent of EL students enroll in reading remediation classes. Finally, 28 percent of Valley City English Learners score proficient on their science CST.

These achievements notwithstanding, one concern is that EL students and their teachers are isolated. Eighty percent of EL students spend most of their day in sheltered, multi-rostered courses with special education and low-performing EO students. This grouping policy precludes their integration with higher performing students who model appropriate classroom behavior and study habits. The result is stigmatization for students and resistance to participating in the sheltered courses on the part of most teachers. Furthermore, isolation of these students in sheltered classrooms with low performing students may very well slow their progress to reclassification. Indeed, in the EL coordinator's experience, EL students integrated with higher performing peers move more quickly.

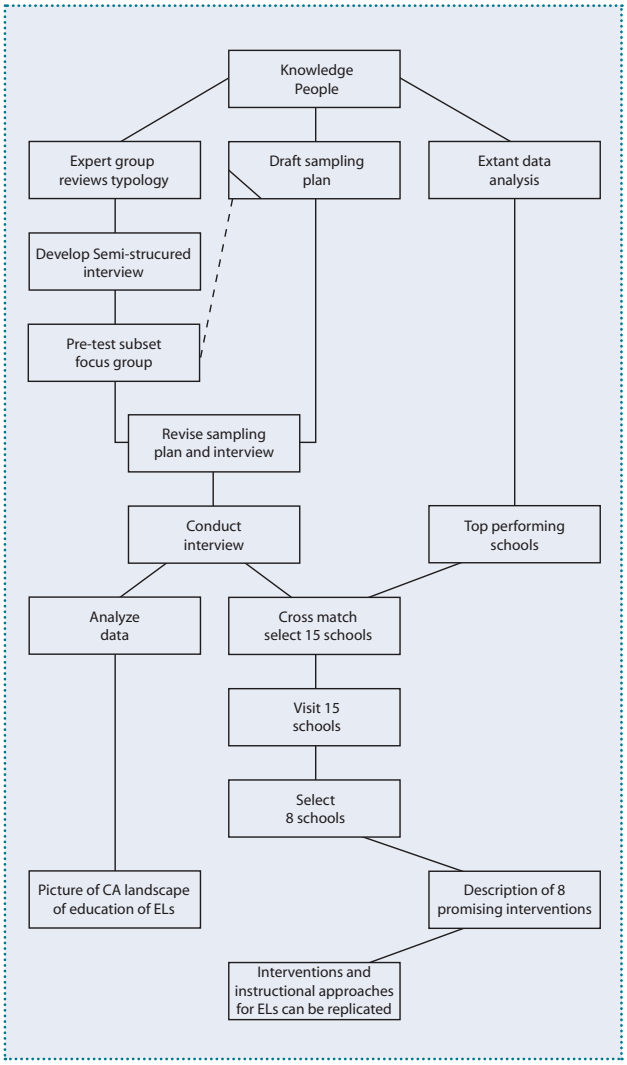
VALLEY CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL (grades 6, 7, 8)	
Total School Population	2278
Number of ELs	73
Student Groups (%)	
English Learners	3.2
Free and Reduced Lunch	37.1
African-American	6.8
Asian	17.7
Latino	33.2
White	34.5
Other	7.8
Major Languages Spoken (15% or higher)	
Spanish	65.8
Other Languages Armenian Arabic Farsi Korean Russian	

VALLEY CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL Reclassification Criteria	
CELDT scores Total score average Average all subparts	 4 or 5 3+
Scores in ELA CST	≥ 300
Scores in Math CST	≥ 300
District Writing Sample	N/A
High Point Level C	grade C or better
Teacher Recommendation	yes
Reclassification Rate (State average)	31.1 (10.8)

APPENDIX C.
STUDY LOGIC MODEL

Study Logic Model

The promising practices logic model guided the design and implementation of the study. As indicated in the figure below, the design of both phases resulted from two spheres of expertise: Dr. Aída Walqui and her staff's theoretical and practical knowledge of quality instruction for English Learners and the context of EL education in California, and WestEd quantitative research staff's knowledge of sampling methodology.



WestEd's knowledge of the field of EL instruction informed the composition of the expert advisory council, the development of the Phase 1 interview protocol, and its pilot testing in the field. Both WestEd and the advisory council felt that piloting the protocol in the field, rather than in a focus group, better matched actual interview conditions, thus offering the best opportunity for refinement of the instruments and processes.

Simultaneous with this effort, WestEd quantitative staff developed a draft sampling plan and began gathering extant data. By the end of the development period, the final sampling plan was in place.

Phase 1 included the development of the interview instruments, training of interviewers, recruitment of districts and schools, data collection, and analysis for Phase 1.

Phase 2 included selection of schools for the first wave of site visits, how the eventual promising practice sites were chosen, and the processes involved in the development of the case studies.

WestEd, a nonprofit research, development, and service agency, works with education and other communities to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults. While WestEd serves the states of Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah as one of the nation's Regional Educational Laboratories, our agency's work extends throughout the United States and abroad. It has 17 offices nationwide, from Washington and Boston to Arizona, Southern California, and its headquarters in San Francisco. For more information about WestEd, visit our website: WestEd.org; call 415.565.3000 or, toll-free, (877) 4-WestEd; or write: WestEd / 730 Harrison Street / San Francisco, CA 94107-1242.

WestEd.org