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Teachers and English Language Learners Experiencing the Secondary Mainstream Classroom: A Case Study

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This dissertation, **TEACHERS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS EXPERIENCING THE SECONDARY MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY**, by **AMANDA MONEYHAN RUIZ**, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

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ABSTRACT

TEACHERS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS EXPERIENCING THE SECONDARY MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY

by
Amanda M. Ruiz

The number of linguistically and culturally diverse students entering public schools is increasing (Echeverria, Short & Powers, 2006; Williams, 2001) and mainstream teachers are responsible for making content comprehensible for these students (Clegg, 1996; Georgia Department of Education, 2008); however, test scores and graduation rates indicate that English language learners (ELLs), across the nation, are consistently underperforming on content based assessments and failing to complete high school (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cruz & Thornton, 2009) . Using a constructivist lens and the concept of the instructional dynamic (Ball & Forzani, 2007), this dissertation presents the experiences of the mainstream teacher and 5 ELLs enrolled in an inclusive, single semester, secondary mainstream US Government course.

Through vignettes created from observations, interviews, reflections and document analysis, this semester long qualitative case study presents the experiences of the mainstream teacher and ELLs. Constant comparative analysis of data revealed three themes (1) returning to the past; (2) navigating the classroom; and (3) preparing for the future. Continued analysis revealed five assumptions held by both the mainstream teacher and the ELLs which shaped the experiences of the participants within this mainstream classroom: (1) all members of this classroom were capable of achieving success through work; (2) achieving present success was directly linked to lessons learned from the past; (3) facilitating success means seeking to understand and interact with others (4) being a “team player” offers protection from uncomfortable situations; and (5) teachers and students expect content classes to prepare students

for the future . The findings of this study capture the complexity of the mainstream classroom and imply that the success of the mainstream teacher and ELLs alike depend upon increasing appropriate professional development which maximizes the instructional knowledge of mainstream teachers, generating a supportive and collaborative school and classroom environment for teachers and students and ensuring the implementation of a relevant and immediate curriculum.

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by
Amanda M. Ruiz

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ABBREVIATIONS

AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress. This is the yearly measure of progress indicated in the federal 2001 educational legislation No Child Left Behind
ELL	English Language Learners
ESOL	English Speakers of Other Languages. This is the name of the program which provides services, not the students themselves
GHSGT	Georgia High School Graduation Test
Inclusion	The act of enrolling English language learners within a mainstream classroom and relying on the mainstream teacher to provide necessary instructional accommodations
Mainstream	Classrooms in which the teacher may or may not have ESOL training and the course curriculum is grade level and delivered in English
NCLB	The No Child Left Behind Educational Act of 2001

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The population of the United States continues to grow and become more culturally and linguistically diverse, and the public schools are reflecting those trends (Echeverria, Short & Powers, 2006; Williams, 2001). According Ballantyne, Sanderman and Levy (2008), there are over five million English language learners (ELLs) currently enrolled in American schools. This increasing population of ELLs, combined with educational success as defined by student performance on high stakes content-based assessments, has shifted large numbers of ELLs into the mainstream classroom (Cho & Reich, 2008; Echeverria et al., 2006). With this shift, particularly in secondary schools, there has not been an increased amount of academic success for these students. In fact, across the nation and specifically within Georgia, research indicates that ELLs are consistently underperforming on high stakes tests and failing to graduate from high school in higher rates than their English speaking counterparts(Echeverria et al., 2006; Georgia Department of Education, 2008; Williams, 2001). This lack of academic success for secondary ELLs signifies that the secondary inclusive mainstream classroom is a context which needs to be further explored.

This chapter begins with the background and rationale for this study, followed by a statement of the research problem and question and a succinct discussion of the findings. A brief overview of the four components crucial for understanding the

inclusive classroom: (1) the internal and external environment; (2) the experiences of the mainstream teacher; (3) the experiences of ELLs and (4) the content based language and literacy needs of ELLs follows. Next, there is an explanation of the constructionist theoretical framework which shapes this study. Finally, the chapter closes with a discussion of the significance of the study and its findings.

Background and Rationale

My personal experience as a high school ESOL teacher has directly contributed to this research. The current struggle for success by secondary ELL's (Cho & Reich, 2008; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007) is no different now than when I began teaching in 1999. In my first school, which served over 450 ELLs, there was no established curriculum for ELLs. Each teacher in the English Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) program selected the content that they wanted to teach. In fact, I remember asking what I should teach the students and being told that they knew nothing in English, so anything I taught them would be more than they knew. Having just left a course load of three mainstream ninth grade literature classes and two title one reading courses, I knew that my English language learners needed intentional instruction if they planned on graduating from high school.

My need to understand how and what to teach ELLs has not changed. As I entered graduate school, I sought to understand how I could improve my instruction for ELLs, particularly in ways that would benefit them as they participated in the mainstream classroom. For secondary students, success in the mainstream class is not only reflected in course grades, but also by success on high stakes tests such as the Georgia High

School Graduation Test (GHS GT). Students and mainstream teachers alike ask me for help in the mainstream classroom and I often feel underprepared provide guidance. My need to better understand the phenomenon of the inclusion of ELLs into the mainstream secondary classroom from the perspectives of both the mainstream teacher and the ELLs is the basis of this study.

Importance

As educators we must acknowledge our responsibility of providing an equitable education to ELLs who are included in our mainstream classrooms. The numbers of students included in these classrooms is continuing to grow. According to the 2005 census, there are 5.1 million ELLs in US schools (US Census, 2005). Along with the increasing population of non English speakers, many immigrants have also changed settlement patterns (Cho & Reich, 2008). Arizona, California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois have 61% of the ELL student population. However; states such as Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee have experienced a 300% growth in ELL population between 1995-2005 (National Clearinghouse of English Language Acquisition, 2010). Georgia has experienced a 291% growth of ELLs from the year 1995 to 2005 (National Clearinghouse of English Language Acquisition, 2010). These new settlement patterns are also reflected with the school systems. Often, states with historically high concentrations of English language learning students have long established school support structures; while the areas within the south eastern US, which are experiencing such dramatic growth, may not have these structures in place yet. In short, this settlement shift has often resulted in larger numbers of ELLs attending schools with fewer ESOL classes and as such, the mainstreaming of

more ELLs into the regular classroom (Cho & Reich, 2008; Echeverria et al., 2006). Another factor contributing to the movement of ELLs into the mainstream classroom are federal and state educational policies, such as No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and California's Proposition 227, which have shifted ELL education from a focus on additive English programs to early exit, subtractive English immersion models (Echeverria et al., 2006). Briefly stated, states measure the academic success of secondary ELLs using the same instruments as native English speakers. Many educational policy makers, using precedent set by previous policies, available funding, political concerns, and educational research have concluded that inclusion in the mainstream content classroom is the best way to instruct these students (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Clegg; 1996). However, these secondary students are not being academically successful. This situation demands that educational researchers develop a better understanding of the inclusive secondary mainstream classroom, through the experiences of the mainstream teacher and the ELLs as they interact with each other, the content and the environment as a means of helping better prepare new teachers and offer professional development for currently practicing teachers.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

According to test scores and dropout rates, ELLs seem to be struggling to gain both the content knowledge and academic language skills they need to score on these high stakes content tests and thus graduate from secondary school (Cho & Reich, 2008; Collier & Thomas, 1989; Duff, 2001). As immigration rates increase and states become focused on performance-based instruction, more and more ELLs are being instructed in the mainstream classroom. Researchers have investigated individual components of this

inclusive classroom by focusing on the mainstream teacher, the ELLs, the content or the environment; however there is limited research which seeks to explore the interactions between these components as a way of understanding the context of the inclusive classroom.

This semester long, single case study explored the secondary inclusive mainstream classroom, by examining the experiences of the teacher and the ELLs who were within this contextualized classroom as they participated in interactions with each other and the content. This study answered the following questions:

1. How does a secondary mainstream teacher experience the phenomenon of the inclusion of ELLs in a mainstream content area classroom?
2. How do ELLs experience the phenomenon of inclusion within the secondary mainstream content area classrooms?
3. How do the points of interaction between the secondary mainstream teacher, the English language learners, the content and the context shape the experiences of the inclusive classroom?

Theoretical Framework

To comprehend the socioconstructivist learning theory which guided the design of this study, one must begin with an understanding the epistemological stance of constructionism. Constructionism is seated within an interpretivist paradigm which asserts that reality does exist outside the realm of human interpretation; however it is human interpretation which makes meaning of this reality. Crotty (1998) defines constructionism as the belief that “all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of interactions

between human beings and their world” (Crotty, 1998, p.42). Constructionists understand that knowledge is neither purely objective nor purely subjective. Objects do exist, but they are given meaning by subjects which interpret them. Therefore, knowledge is constructed through the interactions between the subject and the object.

Constructionists agree that humans create “concepts, models and schemes to make sense of meaning” and that this meaning is constantly being adapted in response to new experiences (Schwandt, 2000). Crotty (1998) also explains that not only is knowledge constructed through our human interactions with the world, but also our understanding and participation within these interactions is defined by our prior experiences within our culture. “For each of us, when we first see the world in a meaningful fashion, we are inevitably viewing it through lenses bestowed on us by our culture” (p.54). The belief that knowledge is the result of interactions, with the world, others, objects and information, which are shaped by our past experiences, is fundamental to this study.

Crotty (1998) indicates that constructivist learning theory is a branch of constructionism because it focuses on the individual and his or her internal meaning making processes. As a constructionist, Vygotsky introduced the socio cultural learning theory by asserting that individual learning originates within social interactions. In the words of Vygotsky (1978), "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level” (p.57). He believed that learning and development were interrelated. Understanding an individual’s development requires understanding the culture of the individual. In fact, studying these social and cultural interactions is the only way to understand the mental functioning of individuals (Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). Vygotsky believed that children are born with some abilities

such as perception, attention and memory, but that these abilities develop into internal mental functions through social interaction with more knowledgeable adults and peers (Vygotsky, 1986). Socioconstructivist learning theory guides the understandings of learning and teaching within this study.

Vygotsky's socioconstructivist learning theory had direct implications for instruction, and thus the concept of the classroom. Vygotsky introduced the idea of the child as an active problem solver. He cements this assertion with the idea of the *zone of proximal development*. The zone of proximal development refers to the discrepancy between problems a learner can and cannot solve alone. Instruction, then, is the act of a more knowledgeable person, interacting with a learner and assisting the learner in solving a problem. By accepting this learning theory, instruction becomes redefined as interactions which are designed to scaffold active learners towards higher levels of thought. For Vygotsky (1986), "the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it" (p. 188). Instruction, therefore should not focus on a child's actual developmental level, but instead push the learner to a higher level of development through the interaction with support. Learning is tied to interactions between a more knowledgeable person and the learner. Within a classroom, this can be constructed as teacher to learner, but can also be learner to learner. Therefore, understanding the experience of the classroom requires investigating these interactions.

Ball and Forzani (2007) offer an understanding of the interactions within a classroom through a process referred to as the instructional dynamic. This recursive process consists of interactions between teachers, students, content and context. These components are interpreted, acted upon and responded to in a series of overlapping

events. For example, the teacher, operating in a particular school environment, begins by interpreting the subject matter and creating the means of engaging with the students within this content. Engaging with the content, happens within the environment of the classroom and within the specific discourse of that discipline, is an active process based on an interpretation of the students' needs. As the students participate in this interaction, they interpret the teacher, the content, the environment and their peers, eventually generating a response. This response and its context are then reinterpreted by the teacher and the process repeats over time. Ball and Forzani (2007) acknowledge that this process is not linear, that these interactions and interpretations are happening simultaneously. This process of interactions, interpretations and response will continue as long as the teacher and student are participating in the class. Therefore, knowledge is not an objective entity which can be passed from person to person and remain generally unchanged as one passes an object. Instead, knowledge is generated through experiences. In this way, learning is the active process of interaction and interpretation. Learning is contextual and is shaped by individual experiences of the present situation and the individual's past experiences (Dewey, 1938). The instructional dynamic provides the four categories of teacher, student, content and context as a way of organizing and discussing the types of interactions within the mainstream classroom. The understanding of the instructional dynamic was the means of identifying, collecting and analyzing the interactions as they occurred within this mainstream classroom.

Understanding that interactions are the basis of learning in the classroom, it is important to understand what is meant by classroom interaction. Within this study, classroom interactions included instructional decisions, classroom talk, classroom

behaviors, and the assumptions that seem to guide these activities. Of obvious importance to this study, was that a majority of the interactions within this mainstream classroom were conducted in English, the target language of the ELLs. This means that the classroom instruction and conversation occurred in a language that may or may not have been understood by the students attempting to participate in the discourse. The ability and willingness of ELLs to participate in this discourse was important regarding for both content and language acquisition. Acquiring a second language requires communicating in the target language. Long's (1996) interaction hypothesis supports the use of classroom conversation which encourages the language learners in the production of meaningful interactions as a means of facilitating language development. This theory asserts that when ELLs are engaged in purposeful talk, they seek more corrective feedback and their language becomes more comprehensible. Any verbal interactions, particularly those within the classroom, are extremely important to language learners. All language learners need ample opportunity to interact within the target language.

However, the ability of a student to interact within the target language is also guided by the students' knowledge of how to interact within that language. Research has concentrated on determining the context of the classroom, including unspoken rules and norms for language and behavior and links the students' familiarity with teacher/classroom talk or discourse patterns with higher achievement (Cazden, 1988; Delpit, 1995; Gee, 1996; Heath, 1983; Mehan, 1979). Specifically, students must be able to infer the classroom rules of conversation and behavior by using the linguistic cues given by the teacher regarding when and how to respond in the classroom in order to be academically successful (Cazden, 1988; Delpit, 1995; Gee, 1996; Heath, 1983; Mehan,

1979). For some, this knowledge is considered cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Students must not only learn to display *what* they know, but they must also know *how* to display what they know (Mehan, 1979). An ability to use the expected discourse appropriately within a cultural context provides people access to various cultural groups and benefits associated with the culture. Understanding classroom talk, including patterns and opportunities for discussion is essential to understanding the experience of the mainstream classroom. However, interactions in that classroom are not limited to talk; classroom interactions also include behaviors.

Behaviors, as a form of communication, are supported by research which uses a systems approach to communication. The systems approach asserts that a person is unable to avoid communicating when in the presence of another person because communication occurs with every behavior displayed in another's presence (Watzlawick, Bevin & Jackson, 1967). The systems approach is also concerned with the effect of one's behavior on the other person. In the classroom, both teacher and student behaviors and the perceptions of those behaviors are important interactions for understanding the experiences of the members of the classroom (Wubbles & Brekelmans, 2005). Some research indicates that teaching is a recursive process, in which the strategies and behaviors of the teacher simultaneously influence and are influenced by the students (Ball & Forzani, 2007; Cooper & McIntyre, 1994). This process links teacher interpersonal behavior to the motivation of students. Students interpret the behaviors of teachers as a reflection of that teachers' personal opinion of the subject matter or the student (Cooper & McIntyre, 1994; Wubbles & Brekelmans, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). In her theory of subtractive schooling, Valenzuela (1999) discusses the importance of teacher

interpersonal behavior. She begins by explaining the differences between the American concept of education as academic training and the Mexican concept of *educación* which includes academic training and helping students have a “sense of moral, social, and personal responsibility” (p.23). She explains that for many Mexican students *educación* is structured around personal relationships. For many Latino students “to care about school” means to build personal relationships with the teachers and peers and that this contrasts with what it means “to care about school” for Americans. She argues that in American secondary school, to care about school involves valuing the academic skills, rules for behavior and subject matter. Valenzuela argues that this fundamental difference in caring and failure to build relationships with these students, affectively “subtracts” resources from these students. In short, the teacher interpersonal behavior strongly affects these students. Students entering a new classroom undergo a cultural adjustment in which the student must learn which practices will be valued within the new environment. Often ELLs discover that the unspoken rules which were successful in their cultures of origin may not be acceptable in the new environment (Cruz & Thornton, 2009). Along with understanding interactions as both behavior and talk, it is equally important to understand that both the spoken and unspoken intentions of the teacher and the student are important considerations while exploring classroom interactions.

Often instruction is discussed as an intentional act by the teacher (Ball and Forzani; 2007; Dewey, 1938; Friere, 1998; Vygotsky, 1986). However, it is important to remember that the activities in a classroom often are not intentionally instructional, yet they operate in that way. *Hidden curriculum* is a term used to describe all of the unrecognized and sometimes unintended knowledge, values, and beliefs that are part of

the learning process and structure in schools and classrooms (Giroux & Penna, 1979). For some, the hidden curriculum is necessary as it promotes the beliefs and values of our society and helps students learn the norms they will need for adult life (Jackson, 1968). Others see the hidden curriculum as dangerous because by teaching these values, the assumptions of one group is often held as more valuable than another and the struggles of marginalized students are perpetuated (Vallance, 1980). Apple (1980) also explains that students often “creatively act to control their school environments” and that these actions are often a rejection of this hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum must be explored in interactions which include both classroom talk and behaviors.

Teacher and student relationships are instructionally important, yet some would argue that they are part of the hidden curriculum. These relationships, which not only involve the academic content of the subject area, but also include the personal well-being of the student, shape classroom interactions. At the same time, the absence of these personal relationships may not be intentional, but they also serve as instructional interactions because they develop student’s negative understandings of themselves and their value within the classroom (Noddings, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). In short, instructional interactions are not always intentional not are they always academic in nature. Both overt instructional interactions which are related to curriculum and interactions which are part of the hidden curriculum are equally important for understanding the experiences of the teachers and the ELLs within a mainstream classroom.

Understanding the experience of the members of a mainstream classroom requires recognizing that classroom interactions can be intentionally and unintentionally

instructional and they occur through classroom discourse and behavior. Using the epistemological understanding that knowledge is constructed through interactions between the individual and the world, the study accepts that classroom learning takes place through interactions. Therefore, this single case study seeks to understand the experiences of teaching and learning for the mainstream teacher and the ELLs in a secondary inclusive mainstream US Government classroom. The constructionist design of the study will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Content and Context of the Inclusive Classroom

Content

Research indicates that the content of the inclusive classroom should be driven by an integration of both disciplinary knowledge and language acquisition (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Duff, 2001; Snow, 2005). This means that mainstream teachers need some knowledge of second language acquisition and an understanding of the differences between the communicative and academic English (Dong, 2004; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno, 2007, Williams, 2001) even though they often do not. For secondary ELLs, acquiring both disciplinary knowledge and academic language is dependent on students being taught academic literacy (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Current research has explored the discipline specific nature of academic literacy and indicates that approaching content instruction through the teaching of particular literacies which are specific to the discipline could provide specific benefits for ELLs (Lee & Spratley, 2010; Moje, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Siebert & Draper, 2009). Other research has focused on the development of content-based instructional practices

Some of this research focuses on models which provide specific approaches to ensuring the inclusion of both language and content objectives (Chamot & O' Malley, 1994; Echeverria, Vogt, & Short, 2000). Other pieces of this research are centered on classroom accommodations designed to help make instruction of content within the inclusive classroom more conducive to academic success for the ELLs (Dong, 2004; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno, 2007, Williams, 2001). For example, in social studies, teachers should provide ELLs with context for content by activating prior knowledge, using visuals and realia, and creating opportunities for students to negotiate meaning and ensure that students and teachers are meaningfully communicating (Verplaetse & Migliacci, 2008). Understanding how the content of the ELL inclusive classroom is shaped by both language and disciplinary knowledge is important for understanding the phenomenon of the inclusive classroom.

Context

The context of the inclusive classroom is shaped by both internal and external elements (Ball & Forzani, 2007; Clegg, 1996). The success of the ELL in a mainstream classroom often correlates with a supportive internal and external context. Research indicates that a classroom which focuses on generating knowledge through socio-cultural interactions is extremely beneficial for ELLs (Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004, Verplaeste, 1998; Williams, 2001). Through these sociocultural interactions, a classroom environment built on understanding and appreciating language diversity can develop. This environment helps ELLs relax and feel unthreatened and encourages them to interact in English with the teacher and peers (Dong, 2004; Heath, 1983; Williams, 2001). In the classroom, activities which demonstrate valuing of the home language and cultures also

contribute to creating a safe environment for ELLs (Cummins, 2000; Williams, 2001). Another important characteristic of non threatening environments is a space in which ELLs have personal relationships, based on authentic caring, with the teacher and their peers within the class (Noddings, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). The internal classroom environment is shaped by a variety of factors, but the role of the school, in shaping the classroom environment cannot be overlooked. School policies and practices towards educating ELLs directly influence the environment of the inclusive mainstream classroom (Major, 2006).

Experiences of Mainstream Teachers

Currently, there is an abundance of research which focuses on the perceptions and preparation of the mainstream teacher regarding the inclusion of ELLs. This research is focuses on the positive and negative perceptions of mainstream teachers regarding the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Some of this research indicates that mainstream teachers have had positive experiences with inclusive education and will continue to include instructional practices which are helpful to ELLs (Buck, Mast, Ehlers, & Franklin, 2005; Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006; Wang, Many, & Krumeneker, 2009). For other teachers, the experiences with the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom has resulted in the mainstream teacher feeling underprepared to instruct ELLs in the mainstream classroom and often ignore or reject the ELLs in the classroom (Cho & Reich, 2008; Echeverria et al., 2006; Harklau, 1994; Karabenik & Noda, 2004; Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006). For many mainstream teachers, neither the preservice training, nor current opportunities for professional development are adequate in preparing them to instruct ELLs (Batt, 2008; Clair, 1995; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Without the

opportunity for meaningful professional development, which can help mainstream teachers with classroom practice, experiences with inclusive education may continue to be negative (Batt, 2008; Karabenick & Noda, 2004). Research demonstrates that teacher perceptions of inclusion, both positive and negative, which are based on previous experiences, greatly influence the success that the ELLs have in the class and the subject area (Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Youngs & Youngs, 2001).

Experiences of English Language Learners

Exploring the experiences of the mainstream teacher is important; however, equally as crucial to understanding the experiences of the English language learners within the inclusive classroom. ELLs who enter US secondary schools face unique challenges (Echeverria, et al., 2006). As adolescents, these students are navigating normal stages of identity development experienced by teenagers, while simultaneously acquiring language. Not only do these students question which language to use, but there are also questions of which English to learn (Lippi-Green, 1997). Often, school language policies which eliminate bilingual instruction or require Standard English only in classrooms indicate an attitude that immigrants in the United States must speak accentless English, which uses standard punctuation and grammar and can be easily understood by all, in order to be embraced as Americans. The either/or language policies of schools, which promote only the acquisition of a non-stigmatized variety of English, are contributing to loss of the home language for these students and contributing to identity confusion (Aparicio, 2000; Fillmore, 1996). There are also concerns of discrimination and acculturation which may shape the experiences of the ELL in the mainstream classroom, including concerns about adopting new cultural norms and establishing a

means of “fitting in” with peers(Gunderson, 2000; Harklau, 1994) Though these issues shape the general experience of schooling for ELLs, they can play out in specific ways in the mainstream classroom.

Not only are these secondary students negotiating identity development, they are also aware that “ language is the focus of every content area task, with all meaning and all demonstration of knowledge expressed through oral and written forms of language” (Collier, 1987, p.618). As with other secondary students, the amount of choice ELLs have in determining which courses they must have in order to graduate or who will be teaching these courses varies from school to school and district to district. Often, students do not determine which courses are offered with ESOL support and which they must take in the mainstream. Instead, these decisions are rendered by administrators and are subject to change depending on population, resources, and funding. Though these students are required to take courses in the mainstream, there is minimal research which explores their experiences within these inclusive classrooms.

Looking at the elements of Ball and Forzani’s (2007) instructional dynamic as separate construct is informative, but not enough. In order to more fully understand the phenomenon of the inclusive classroom my research design allows for an exploration of interactions between content, environment, the mainstream teacher and ELLs. The single case study interpretive design allows for this in depth exploration.

Overview of the Research Design

Because of my experiences with both mainstream teachers and ELLs, I remain convinced a means of helping ELLs be successful in the American school system is

through an understanding of the experiences of the mainstream teacher and the ELLs in the individual mainstream content area classrooms. Therefore my study used a single case study research design to conduct a detailed exploration an inclusive US Government classroom in order to understand the experiences of the mainstream teacher and the ELLs within that classroom and in what ways these experiences are shaped by the interactions between the mainstream teacher, the English language learning students, the content and the internal and external context of the classroom.

Since this is a study of the bounded system of an inclusive content area classroom, the data collection for this study was limited to the length of the course. The data collection began in January of 2010 and continued through the conclusion of the course in May of 2010. Data were collected using a variety of methods. The study included 26 hour-long observations in order to understand the interactions between the teachers, the ELLs, the content and the context. As a participant observer, I took field notes during these observations and used them to better understand the interactions within the classroom. Also, I conducted three types of interviews with the participants, including in-depth interviews, mini-interviews, and reflections. These interviews included open-ended questions informed by observations and designed to elicit the informants' experiences of the inclusive classroom. These interviews continued throughout the data collection time frame. I also used document analysis of classroom artifacts as a way to understand the inclusive classroom. These forms of data collection were analyzed and thematically coded (Merriam, 2009) and presented in the form of a montage as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) in order to describe the secondary mainstream inclusive classroom.

Significance of the Study

Ball and Forzani (2007) argue that educational research often investigates only one component of the educational process. As seen in the research which explores ELLs in the mainstream, there has been research which focuses on the mainstream teacher, the ELLs, the content or the environment which contributes “helpful knowledge about problems in education, but it is not sufficient for unpacking, understanding and solving these problems” (p. 532). There is no single solution for the problem of secondary ELLs not achieving academic success in US schools; however, an increased understanding of the inclusive mainstream classroom, by understanding the interactions between the mainstream teacher, the ELLs, the content and the environment and how these interactions shape perceptions is crucial to begin forming solutions to these problems.

In the next chapter, I will review the literature regarding ELLs as a group including further definition of the term *ELL*, program models used for instructing these students, and their academic success. I will further establish a background for my study by specifically discussing ELLs in Georgia. I will continue by exploring the literature regarding the content and the environment of the inclusive classroom. The literature review ends by exploring the literature regarding the experiences of both the mainstream teacher and ELLs in these inclusive mainstream classrooms.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

Currently, there are an increased number of ELLs enrolled in secondary mainstream classrooms. One cause of this increase is the growing population of ELLs and their relocation into areas with administrators and educators who have little experience and funding for working with students learning English (Cho & Reich, 2006; Echeverria et. al., 2000). Another major factor causing an increased inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom has been from the implementation of the NCLB Act of 2001, which redefines academic success. According to this legislation, successful secondary students perform well on state administered content-based examinations, regularly attend and graduate from high school within four years. For secondary ELLs, this legislation emphasizes content knowledge above the acquisition of English and promotes the inclusion of ELLs into the mainstream content classroom as quickly as possible (Echeverria et al. 2006; Mantero & McVicker, 2006; Ramos, 2005). This increasing non-English speaking population located within a content centered definition of academic success, combined with a shortage of certified ESOL and bilingual education teachers (Cho & Reich, 2008; Echeverria et al., 2006) creates an increased number of English language learning students in the mainstream classroom. Understanding the phenomenon of the inclusive mainstream classroom from the experiences of mainstream teacher, the ELL and the ways in which this experience is shaped through the interactions of teacher,

student, content and context, has important implications for providing equitable educational experiences for all students.

This chapter offers the reader background information for this study beginning with an overview of the political nature of educating ELLs. Following this section is information which includes: (a) understanding English language learners as a group, (b) possible program models and language services in K-12 schools and (c) the academic performance of ELLs. Next, the focus narrows and I discuss English language learners in Georgia. Then, using the four components of Ball and Forzani's (2007) instructional dynamic: content, environment, mainstream teacher and ELLs; the research literature regarding the teaching and learning of ELLs in an inclusive classroom is reviewed.

English Language Learners and Their Academic Experiences

Understanding the academic experience of ELLs in the US begins with investigating the educational policies regarding ELLs. These policies are closely linked to other political issues including sentiments towards immigration and use of language other than English. Within the US, there are an estimated 11.8 million undocumented immigrants (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Passel and Cohn (2009) estimate that the children of undocumented immigrants composed 6.8% of the student population in K-12 settings. This influx of undocumented immigrants has added another area of political discussion which links immigration and educational policy. The debate centers on the fundamental question of the educational rights of the estimated 1.7 million undocumented children currently in US schools (Passel & Cohn, 2009). One result of this debate, was the continuous legislative activity on the 2001 proposal of HR.1918 and S. 1291 in the 107th

Congress. Over the years this bill has become known as the Development, Relief, Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) act, which offers legalized status to the undocumented persons within the United States who were brought to this country under the age of 16, have received a high school diploma in a US school and who attend two years of postsecondary education or complete 2 years of military service. This type of discussion reflects of the link between immigration, language policy and educational policy. The link between immigration and educational policy is not new.

Historically, policymakers in the United States have held a range of attitudes towards immigrants, languages other than English, and educational policy has reflected these trends. These attitudes have ranged from “pragmatic acceptance to deliberate policies of forced extermination and assimilation” (Schmid, 2000; p.62). Typically these policies correlate with the increasing number and changing demographics of the immigrants entering the country. This connection between immigration and language policy becomes evident in looking at the early 20th century.

Initially, the United States had a liberal immigration policy and it also had some form of bilingual education (Brisk, 2006; Colombo & Furbush, 2009). However, attitudes towards immigrants began to shift in the early 1900’s. This shift resulted in developing policies which were shaped by fear that increased immigration, particularly from groups that differed from the current ethnic makeup of the US, threatened national identity (Schmid, 2000). This underlying ideology has become overt in the attitudes towards immigration and resulting language policies of this time.

One group of policies has focused on limiting the number of immigrants allowed to enter the United States. For example, The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 attempted to

eliminate an immigrant group which was deemed undesirable and unlikely to assimilate easily in the United States. Other laws, such as the Immigration Act (1921) and the Johnson Act (1924) simply limited the number of immigrants which would be allowed to enter from each country (Brisk, 2006; Schmid, 2000). Other groups were met with a variety of laws designed to quickly assimilate them into the United States or to deport them if they did not (Schmid, 2000). Many of these laws were focused on language. Laws requiring newspapers be translated into English and abolishing the teaching and use of German in the schools were enacted. Similarly, the southern and eastern European immigrants were also targeted through language policies which included the first English language requirement for naturalization. Along with the anti immigrant sentiment, the development of new standardized tests perpetuated the view that intellect and knowledge of English were the same. By 1923, thirty four states banned teaching in the students' native language (Brisk, 2006; Schmid, 2000). These language policies resulted in a sink or swim approach to education for the immigrants in US schools.

Sink or Swim

A sink or swim policy is dependent on the belief that if the non –English speaking students worked hard, they would learn English and be successful students (Brisk, 2006; Colombo & Furbush, 2009). This type of instruction is also known as submersion. The student is submersed in the second language with no support in the primary language (Lotherington, 2004). In the past, this approach or policy towards ELLs was often not acknowledged because employment was not dependent on immigrants quickly acquiring academic English, nor was a high school diploma for the basis of employment.

Immigrants had more time and less societal pressure to develop their English skills. There was little pressure for schools and no established policy for educating these students.

Lo Bianco (1999) explained that this lack of policy is a policy in and of itself. The decisions of a community are the policy of that community. For the English language learners (ELLs) in school, this de facto sink or swim language policy informed the practice of the teachers. In short, teachers continued teaching in the ways that they always had and the responsibility of learning the material and the language fell on the shoulders of the students. Congress passed the first Bilingual education Act in 1968; however, the sink or swim language policy and the resulting teaching practice were considered the norm until the landmark case of *Lau v. Nichols* in 1974.

The Effects of Lau V. Nichols

In 1970, a group of ELLs and their parents, whose primary language was Chinese, sued the San Francisco Board of Education claiming that the lack of specialized language instruction for students who spoke little to no English was a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Supreme Court ruled that students who did not speak English were denied equal opportunity to education when the instruction was conducted in a language which they did not understand and the system was making no effort to teach English to these students (Brisk, 2006; Fischer, Swimmer, & Stellman, 2007). This ruling made sink or swim instruction unlawful, however the courts did not specify what means of specialized language instruction should be used for these students. The *Lau* decision became codified when Congress passed Title VII, otherwise known as the Bilingual Education Act of 1974.

Bilingual Education

Title VII provided funding for the training of teachers and providing the specialized education for the ELLs in school systems. The original version of the bill promoted bilingual programs which maintained the students' native language and developed the English of the ELLs, but the final version ended up promoting the use of bilingual education as a transition into English (Brisk, 2006). It is important to understand between these two types of programs. In general, bilingual education is defined as any instructional program which offers instruction in the native language (L1) and target language (L2) of the participants. Scholars agree that programs vary based on the linguistic outcome of the program (Brisk, 2006; Lotherington, 2004). Programs that are considered *additive* focus on adding the L2 to the L1 of the participants, creating bilingual and biliterate students. These programs are called maintenance as they intend to at the very least maintain the students' linguistic abilities in the L1. Often these programs use immersion models. Some of these models offer total immersion into L2 with support in the L1. Eventually when the students demonstrate proficiency in the L2, the L1 is reintroduced and instruction continues in both languages. Another form of immersion is when the students are immersed in instruction in both the L1 and the L2 equally (Brisk, 2006; Lotherington, 2004). Canada, Australia and the United States have used these programs to successfully create bilingual and biliterate students. Programs that are *subtractive* focus on replacing the L2 with the L1. These programs intend to create students who are literate in the L2, without concern for the development of the L1. Transitional programs are subtractive because the L1 is used with the purpose of transitioning the students into the L2. This indicates that the focus of the program is on

the L2, without concern for maintaining or developing the L1. These programs are used to move a student from the use of one language to another. The choice of program, additive or subtractive, was never mandated in the Supreme Court's decision.

Event though the program model for instructing ELLs was never mandated, federal legislation showed a clear preference for subtractive models. The Bilingual Education Act of 1974 focused on transitional bilingual educational models, which are subtractive in nature (Brisk, 2006; Lotherington, 2004). After its passage, several states revoked their English only legislation regulating the language of instruction in schools. However, the district court case of *Castenada v Pickard* (1981) opened the door for English only programs by establishing a three prong test which only indicated that a system's program must (1) be based on sound educational theory, (2) recruit and train teachers for this instruction and (3) be assessed to determine if the instruction is working (Arellano-Houchin, Flamenco, Merlos & Segura, 2001; Brisk, 2006; Fischer, Schimmel, & Stellman, 2007). In the renewal of Title VII in 1984, the emphasis on bilingual education decreased and it included funding for English only programs. The renewal in 1988 increased the funding for English only programs even more. Title VII was once again renewed in 1994, but at this point the political context that was building against bilingual education reached its peak (Brisk, 2006).

Recent Immigration and Resulting Language Policy

Around 1980, the number of people migrating to the United States began to rapidly increase. According to the Migration Policy Institute (2007), the percentage of foreign born persons within the United States is increasing. By 2007, the percentage of people in the United States, was approaching the sizes that were seen in the early 20th

century. Within these migration trends, are increasing numbers of undocumented immigrants. These immigrants, both documented and undocumented, were primarily from Latin America and Asia and their numbers began to encourage the government to provide education, ballots, emergency services in languages other than English (Brisk, 2006; Schmid, 2000). Language policy becomes most stringent when the native speakers feel threatened by the official recognition of other languages (Lo Bianco , 1999). As it did in the early 20th century, as the immigrant population begin to grow, so did the official English movement.

Official English

The group U.S. English began in 1983 and supports official English. They can be found on websites such as <http://www.us-english.org/>. US English, Inc. self reports that it is the nation's oldest and largest citizen's action group which advocates for the unifying role of English in the United States. The chairman, Mauro E. Mujica, a Chilean immigrant, is quoted on the website as saying, "Let me be clear: Encouraging immigrants to learn English is not about bigotry or exclusion. On the contrary, teaching newcomers English is one of the strongest acts of inclusion our government can provide." For him and supporters of his group, the assimilation of immigrants through language is the only way to preserve the American Dream for immigrants in this country. Scholars argue that the idea that immigrants do not want to learn English is inaccurate and inflammatory propaganda (Judd, 2000; Schmid, 2000). Schmid (2000) also argues that there are connections between U.S. English and the anti immigration group the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). Separating the official English movement from anti immigration sentiments is difficult.

Proposition 227

Along with the negative attention on bilingual education that came from the US English, bilingual education suffered a severe blow in 1998, when California approved Proposition 227. Proposition 227 was submitted to the 1998 ballot in California under the name “English for the Children” by software engineer Ron Unz. Unz submitted this proposition as a way to end bilingual education in California public education because he believed it was failing. Unz (1997) argued against bilingual education in California for a variety of reasons. He stated that California school system spends in excess of four million dollars a year funding bilingual education which is “bilingual” in name only. Unz (1997) implied that Proposition 227 provided parents the choice in keeping their children in bilingual education if necessary and is the solution to educating the ELLs of California. Unz argued that these students were not learning English quickly enough and that parents had the right to choose what type of education their students were given. Unz’s motivation is called in to question because after the success of Proposition 227 in California, Unz began his national campaign of English for the Children and began successful campaigns in Massachusetts and Arizona. In both of these states, the parental right to opt for ELLs to be enrolled in bilingual education was removed. It seems that the larger motivation of this initiative was to end bilingual education. The voter’s choice to remove bilingual education in several states across the nation explained the national preference for English only instruction for ELLs. It also cemented the shift from additive bilingual education models to subtractive models.

No Child Left Behind

Surrounded by the official English movement, increasing immigration and a concern for the condition of the nations' schools, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was enacted in 2001. This act replaced Title VII and replaced it with Title III "Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students." The term bilingual education has been removed from the legislation and has been replaced with English language acquisition. This shift is evidence of a shift away from bilingual education and towards English only instruction (Brisk, 2006). However, perhaps a more powerful shift towards English only instruction comes because of this legislation's focus on standardized testing and accountability.

With this act, academic success was redefined across the nation. This act measures academic success of individual schools based on categories of attendance, graduation rates, and test scores. The students in the school are categorized into subgroups which include racial categories, students who are on free and reduced lunch, students with disabilities and English language learners. Underperformance of a single subgroup on a standardized test can potentially label a school as not making Adequate Yearly Progress. In short, the success of an entire school can be determined by the success or failure of ELLs on state administered testing (Cho & Reich, 2008; Echeverria et al., 2006). Regardless of time spent in the country, ELLs still participate in portions of the standardized tests.

Each state defines who will be considered an ELLs by interpreting the federal definition of ELL found in the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). In this act, a student with limited English proficiency is one who has sufficient difficulty in use of English to

prevent that individual from learning successfully in classrooms in which the language of instruction is English. According to descriptive case study report by National Center of English Language Acquisition, 90.7 % of state school systems use a home language survey to identify students who are possibly ELLs. Using the responses on this survey, students who may qualify for ESOL services then take an exam of English literacy and oral proficiency (Zehler et al., 2003). Once tested, if the student qualifies according to the guidelines established by the individual state, he or she is considered ELL and eligible for ESOL services. Because of these varied policies, students who are ELL in Georgia and receive ESOL services, may not be considered ELL or receive ESOL services in other states. Defining what it means to be proficient in English and role which a school has in achieving this goal is central to creating policy regarding the education of ELLs.

Determining Proficiency in the US

Within the K-12 educational system, English language learners are a diverse group of students who are identified and labeled as ELL by a state selected language proficiency exam. These students are identified as requiring additional academic support because they are not yet proficient in English (Ballantyne et al., 2008). Defining language proficiency is complex. Cummins (1984) explains language proficiency as mastery of both quickly acquired or surface Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and the more slowly acquired and less visible the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALPS). BICS are the language skills used in everyday communicative situations and CALPS are needed to manipulate language in academic settings. Cummins' Linguistic Interdependence or "Iceberg" Theory (1984), asserts that language

learners have language knowledge and skills which are shared between the primary and additional language, and often these skills are below the surface or unseen in language production. The common skills create a foundation which aids in the development of subsequent languages. This theory creates a distinction between English for communication and academic English.

Other theorists offer an understanding of proficiency in terms of communicative competencies (Canale & Swain, 1980). In this understanding of language proficiency, three components: grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic, comprise communicative competence. A speaker must know and demonstrate (a) grammatical competence: the correct syntax and phonology of a word, (b) sociolinguistic competence: the appropriate use of discourse and (c) strategic competence: what verbal and non verbal strategies are used to ensure communication. Both theories indicate that proficiency in a language is determined by knowing how and when to use language. Often, language proficiency of ELLs is discussed by categorizing the student based on English fluency (Colombo & Furbush; 2009; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Often these categories are established based on amount and complexity of the English vocabulary and grammatical structures produced by the ELL. For secondary students, proficiency in language also includes an understanding of how to use language within the classroom. Tikunoff et al. (1991) explain that ELLs need to be educated in ways that help them develop language competencies which allow them (a) to participate in class by responding to classroom procedures, (b) to interact by using rules of classroom and social discourse and (c) to acquire new academic skills.

Aside from the common characteristic of acquiring English, ELLs are a diverse group of students. Of the students identified as ELLs in the United States public schools,

79.6% are Spanish speaking and over 50% of these students were U.S. born. The other groups include 2% Vietnamese speaking, 1.6% Hmong speaking, 1% Chinese speakers and the remaining are other language speakers (Zehler et al., 2003). These students vary in length of time in the United States, native language, age, prior educational experiences and background, socioeconomic status and living situation in the United States (Cho & Reich, 2008; Corson, 2001; Echeverria et al., 2006). Each of these characteristics shapes both the rate at which a student attains proficiency in English and the individual learning experiences of the student.

School systems generally adopt program models for delivering language services. Colombo and Furbush (2009) offer an explanation of these program models by focusing on the expected language outcome, length of time students are expected to participate, and the language of instruction. The continuum of services ranges from additive programs, which seek to add English by continuing to support, develop and instruct in the student's native language, to subtractive programs which generally focus only on the development of English, with no regard for the development of native language. At one end of the continuum are additive program models, which usually require participation for 5 years or more, use both English and native language for instruction, and seek to graduate students who are both bilingual and biliterate. Early exit and late exit transitional bilingual programs generally last from three to five years and provide instruction in the native language and English, but promote a shift from the native language to the target language. These programs are seated in the middle of the continuum. Nearing the subtractive end of the continuum are Sheltered English Immersion and English to Speakers of Other Language programs which allow for the

shortest participation time (1 – 3 years), are conducted in English only, and are concerned with producing English speaking students (Colombo & Furbush; 2009; Lotherington, 2004). As stated in Hakuta and Garcia (1989), there is little dispute over the goal of most programs for ELLs and that is to “mainstream” students into monolingual English speaking classrooms with maximum efficiency” (p.367). This need for efficient teaching means that the educational models used for educating ELLs tend towards these subtractive models. From these program models, individual systems then adopt instructional models which determine if the ELLs are going to receive separate instruction or inclusive instruction. Often times, these decisions are determined by a variety of factors including school personnel, available budget, size of ELL population, student age and English proficiency level.

Though the group of ELLs is diverse in so many ways, overall the students who are considered English language learners are generally not as academically successful as their English proficient counterparts within US schools. Though this difference may seem obvious, it is of increasing concern as fewer ELLs are graduating from high school and they are also underperforming on high stakes assessments. The National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) indicated that in 1995, 29.1% of high school dropouts were immigrant students and that 46.2% of these dropouts were Hispanic (NCES, 1995). More recently, NCES (2004) indicates that when compared to their English speaking peers, three times the number of students who do not speak English at home will drop out of school. In the 2006-2007 school year, only 46.4% of the ELLs who began high school in Georgia graduated in a standard number of years (US Department of Education, 2009). Consistently, ELLs have not demonstrated the same academic performance, as measured

on standardized reading tests as their English speaking peers (Cho & Reich, 2008; Echeverria et al. 2006). The National Association of Educational Progress (2005), using results from one of the few nationally administered tests, indicates that ELLs are dramatically underperforming. The scores for 8th grade ELLs on this exam indicate that only 4% of ELLs are scoring at proficient or advanced levels of reading comprehension. These national statistics indicate that the ELLs in public schools are struggling to be academically successful, and these trends are evident in Georgia.

English Language Learners in Georgia

Understanding the specific role of ELLs in Georgia is also important to this study. Georgia identifies ELLs by a home language survey and then assesses them with a screening test, which is a component of the English language proficiency exam Assessing Comprehension and Communication English State to State (ACCESS). This exam is used by the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium which is composed of twenty member states. According to the Georgia Department of Education (2009), when a student enrolls in Georgia public schools and indicates a language other than English as the predominate language spoke in the home, the child must be assessed for ESOL services. If a student demonstrates a limited proficiency in English based on these test scores, that student then qualifies for services.

Demographically, the ELLs in Georgia follow national trends. In the 2007-2008 school year Georgia reported an enrollment of 79,894 ELLs in the public schools and 65,815 ELLs who received language services (USDOE, 2009). This report also indicated that of these students, 63,811 indicated Spanish as their primary language. Other large

primary language groups of ELLs included Vietnamese, Korean and Chinese (USDOE, 2009). Along with varying nationalities, these students vary in their previous schooling experiences, their socio-economic and immigrant status, and language proficiencies.

In Georgia, the English language services are generally subtractive. Delivery models include: within a specifically scheduled class period that is ELL exclusive (scheduled and limited to middle and high school), within a mainstream classroom (push in or inclusion), pulled out of the mainstream classroom for a portion of time (pull out), in center where a group of students receive language instruction supported through multimedia sources (a resource center), or at a separate location (a cluster center) (GADOE, 2009). The state does not mandate which models will be used by local school systems.

Currently, Georgia is shifting its focus towards content-based education for English language learners. According to the Georgia Department of Education (2006), in the public k-12 settings in Georgia, there are two components that must be included in all instruction for ELLs. The first is sheltered (adapted) content-area instruction which is defined as “all teaching staff that have contact with ELLs, including classroom teacher and special area teachers, must make accommodations to allow ELLs meaningful participation in their classes” (p.1). A second component is entitled “Instruction in English to Speakers of Other Languages” which is defined as “providing instruction to these students that has the specific aim of increasing language proficiency” (p.1). These state instructional components mandate that all teachers provide both content and language instruction. Noticeably missing from this mandate is a means to determine the

preparedness of teachers working with ELLs nor does it require professional development to assist these teachers in learning how to scaffold instructions for ELLs.

With academic success for ELLs being contingent upon performance on content-based assessments; educators are searching for a highly effective way to instruct these children in both content and language. Georgia increased ESOL class sizes in middle and high school in order to “encourage the delivery of sheltered instruction by mainstream teachers holding the ESOL endorsement” (GADOE, 2006). Though this is the stated intention of the GADOE, the state test scores indicate that the ELLs are still struggling to master both the language and content.

Using data from the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement Report Cards reflecting the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) scores for the state, ELLs are not performing as successfully as their native English speaking peers on this high-stakes test. This test is used to determine Adequate Yearly Progress for the schools and thus, the students. This test becomes even more significant as students must also pass this test in order to graduate. As seen in Table 1 the percentage of ELLs failing the GHS GT on the first attempt is contrasted with native English speakers.

Table 1

Percentage Failure Rates on GHS GT for ELLs and Non ELLs

Content Area	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
	English Language Learners		
Language Arts	26%	42%	32%

Mathematics	20%	18%	12%
Social Studies	32%	45%	32%
Science	58%	39%	29%
Non English Language Learners			
Language Arts	2%	7%	5%
Mathematics	4%	4%	3%
Social Studies	16%	10%	9%
Science	17%	10%	7%

Note: These values are from first time test takers.

This information indicates that in Georgia, the ELLs who are taking these assessments are not exhibiting the content proficiency of their native speaker counterparts. Since the definition of academic success is equal for both groups, and now more than ever, both groups of students are receiving their content instruction in the mainstream classroom, clearly, there is a need to better understand the nature of the inclusive classroom.

Teaching Content in the Inclusive Classroom

Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms

The content of any inclusive classroom should center on both English language development and increasing disciplinary knowledge. An inclusive educational setting should acknowledge commonalities between Second Language Acquisition theory and learning theory. Verplaeste and Migliacci (2008) offer four components which highlight the commonalities in each type of theory. Both include these common tenets:

- The naturally endowed ability to learn (p.10);
- Language input and course content must both be comprehensible (p.10);
- There must be opportunity to engage with content, to interact with others about that content(p.10);
- An environment which is safe and stimulates learners cognitively and through interactions (p.10).

In secondary settings, it is particularly important that inclusive classrooms operate on these principles because of the complexity of the course content and the speed at which ELLs must master the language (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). According to research, in order for language and content to be comprehensible, there must be some understanding of instruction of both content and discipline literacy, including language. For some secondary teachers, this proves difficult as content knowledge is often assigned more status than literacy knowledge (Arkoudis, 2006). This perspective foregrounds content instruction and subjugates literacy instruction. For a mainstream teacher to offer both literacy and content instruction, Short (1997) asserts that teachers must have a knowledge of English as a language, knowledge of content and knowledge of how classroom tasks should be achieved in order to provide quality instruction for ELLs.

Mainstream Teacher and Language Knowledge

Mainstream teachers should understand issues of language acquisition and proficiency (Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Dong, 2004; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Verplaeste & Migliacci; 2008; Williams, 2001) in order to support their

ELLs. One important understanding for the mainstream teacher is that language is acquired in a natural order (Chomsky, 1988; Krashen, 1981). Theorists assert an order in which human beings acquire the grammatical structures of a language, in both a first and second language, and that this order is not altered regardless of instruction or experience. Consequently, teachers should understand that though students will follow a prescribed route when acquiring English, teachers very much impact the rate at which an ELL can acquire the language (Cruz & Thornton, 2010). In order for teachers to support ELLs in acquiring the language, the mainstream teacher first needs to understand the difference between social and academic English.

In order to help the mainstream teacher understand the proficiency level of the students, the mainstream teacher must understand the differences between communicative language competence, (BICS) and academic language competence (CALPS) (Cummins, 2000). Often, classroom discourse can be filled with discipline specific language that is more sophisticated than the proficiency of the language learners within the classroom, however the teacher may not be aware that the student is struggling with the CALPs because the child can communicate effectively on a social level. The distinction is important for mainstream teachers because of the emphasis on the need for the classroom teacher to communicate content in a way that can be understood by the student (Williams, 2001). Also important is the mainstream teachers' recognition that learning the academic language of a content area is much more cognitively demanding and takes more time than learning communicative language (Karabenick & Noda, 2004).

The mainstream teacher must have some understanding of the language proficiency of the students in order to tailor classroom instruction (Cummins, 1984;

Dong, 2004). As stated earlier, language proficiency involves knowing how and when to use a language in order to accomplish a goal. Krashen and Terrell (1983) have offered four stages of proficiency which have been adopted by many school systems in the US. In the preproduction stage, ELLs are simply using receptive skills and often engage in nonverbal responses and may have a receptive vocabulary of 500 words. During this stage of acquisition, ELLs focus on learning communicative English. The next stage of acquisition is the early production stage. These learners may utter one or two word responses and generally have a receptive vocabulary of 1,000 words and an active vocabulary of 100 to 500 words. The third stage is speech emergence. These students have a receptive vocabulary of 7000 words and an active vocabulary of up to 2000 words. These students focus on interacting in English and are developing both communicative and beginning academic English. In the fourth stage, intermediate fluency, ELLs have native like fluency in social English, but not in academic English. The students may have a 12,000 word receptive vocabulary and a 4000 word active vocabulary. These students need continued development of academic English (Cruz & Thornton, 2010; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Distinguishing between academic and communicative language is essential in helping ELLs develop language, but mainstream teachers must also help develop content. This requires knowledge of both content and academic literacy with a discipline.

Understanding that each discipline has a specific discourse and positioning literacy as the means by which members of that discipline communicate is a profoundly different approach to both content and literacy instruction for mainstream teachers. Ballantyne et al. (2008) assert that in order to teach ELLs, the mainstream teacher does

not need excessive information about second language acquisition, but instead needs to focus on discipline specific language such as the meaning of *plot* in mathematics versus *plot* in literature. The teaching of discipline specific language is also suggested by Dong (2004). Within the fields of math, science, English, and social studies, knowledge varies based on issues, methods of inquiry, rhetorical and linguistic conventions (Greene & Ackerman, 1995), which frame discipline specific contexts. For ELLs, this approach to content instruction means a shift towards teaching the specific skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking in the discipline, as a way of understanding the content. This understanding of disciplinary literacy as a means of teaching content would be beneficial for ELLs. Researchers have also developed instructional models designed specifically for instructing ELLs in content and language. These models are grouped under the label of Content Based Instruction (CBI).

Content-Based Instruction

With academic success for ELLs being contingent upon their performance on content based assessments, educators are searching for a highly effective way to instruct these children in both content and language (Walzlinkski,2006). Content-based instruction (CBI) is a solution to this dilemma. This type of instruction is such that “learners in some sense receive a ‘two for one’ that is, [both] content knowledge and increased language proficiency” (Snow, 2005, p.694). In this type of instruction, the content is a means of teaching language. There are three classifications for CBI. These are theme-based models which allow the instructor to build language instruction around themes or topics, the sheltered model in which a content area specialist teaches a content course using specific accommodations and strategies for ELLs, and the adjunct model

where an language specialist and a content specialist link to offer content-based language instruction (Snow, 2005). In theory, the inclusive mainstream classroom should function as a sheltered instructional model in which a content specialist teaches a content area using special strategies to help make the language more comprehensible. This instructional model has demonstrated an increase in both content and language acquisition, but in the secondary implementations, there seems to be “a greater emphasis on content than language” (Snow, 2005, p.698). One way to reduce an imbalanced approach to content based instruction is through the use of programs.

CBI Programs

The first of two commonly used programs for CBI which focuses on subject area instruction is Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) is a transitional program for intermediate ELLs as a means of transitioning from the ESOL program to the mainstream classroom (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994). This approach includes lesson planning which focuses on the integration of content, language and learning strategies. To do this, teachers must distinguish between declarative and procedural knowledge within instructional materials and content matter. Finding content-area teachers who are also trained in ESOL or ESOL teachers who have a strong interest in content is an important component of the success of CALLA. Through analysis of the needs of the ELLs and the grade level curriculum requirements, CALLA objectives should be established. These CALLA objectives would then be used to develop curriculum and materials for instructing ELLs. CALLA strives to help teachers instruct ELLs in content areas.

Another instructional model which is designed to improve the instruction of ELLs in the mainstream was presented by Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2000). The Sheltered Instruction Operational Protocol (SIOP) is a means of evaluating lessons and as a result, adapting these lessons into a means of delivering quality sheltered content instruction to ELLs. This sheltered instruction can include ELLs and mainstream students. Using this model Echeverria et al. (2006) conducted a study to determine the effects on student achievement. The findings indicated that ELLs who had received SIOP instruction performed better on expository essay assessments. The developers of both CALLA and SIOP promote an intentional development of lessons which emphasize both content and language development.

In order for the mainstream teachers to offer quality instruction for ELLs within a content area, they must have basic knowledge about acquiring language and specific knowledge about the language and literacy skills needed for their discipline. Content based instruction assumes that the teacher has a level of knowledge regarding English and understandings of content area literacy. This assumption has resulted in programs designed to help teachers make these distinctions.

Academic Literacy

Helping ELLs be successful in school requires more than language development. In fact, these students must develop academic literacy to be successful in school. A report generated for the Carnegie foundation defined academic literacy as (a) reading, writing and oral discourse for school; (b) discipline specific; (c) requiring knowledge of a variety of texts; and (d) influenced by students' cultural, personal and social experiences and literacies outside of school (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). This report emphasizes the

differences between struggling adolescent readers and ELLs in their attainment of academic literacy by articulating specific differences in areas like vocabulary development, prior knowledge, and oral proficiency. This distinction is important, as often ELLs are treated as if they are struggling adolescent readers and their literacy needs are the same (Harklau, 1994).

This understanding of academic literacy is important in secondary schools, where content area teachers have traditionally struggled with implementing literacy practices. Often secondary teachers understand literacy as ways of increasing students' abilities to access content, but not as necessary for learning the content (O'Brien, Stewart & Moje, 1995). For ELLs, this makes accessing content particularly difficult because this view essentially says lacking the ability to read and write fluently in English, means the content is also inaccessible. Often, teachers do not explicitly teach components like vocabulary, assessing the material, reading graphs charts and maps and text structure as supports for academic literacy development (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

Recently, however scholars have been arguing for a new, more discipline specific literacy (Green & Ackermann, 1995; Greenleaf et al., 2001; Lee & Spratley, 2010; Moje, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Siebert & Draper, 2009). This shift means recognizing that each discipline is specific in its literacy skills and that each discipline has a specific discourse composed of ways of "knowing, doing, believing and communicating" (Moje, 2008, p 99). These discourses are seen in the structure and genres of disciplinary texts, the use of specific vocabulary and register in oral and written communication within the discipline, the use of graphic representations of information within a discipline and specific instructions for writing, reading and generating

knowledge which vary based on the disciplines (Green & Ackermann, 1995; Greenleaf et al., 2001; Lee & Spratley, 2010; Moje, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Siebert & Draper, 2009). Of particular interest to this study is an understanding of what it means to be academically literate within the social studies.

Literacy within Social Studies

Social scientists generate knowledge using specific reading and writing strategies. Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2006) assert that the social studies require “certain cognitive skills including: understanding cause and effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, collecting, organizing and interpreting data, hypothesizing and making inferences” (p.114). Social scientists depend on an ability to critically read primary sources as a means of developing an informed accounting of historical events and an informed opinion about history. They read this information with the understanding that its *truth* is limited to the perspective of the author and its intended purpose (Lee & Spratley, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Wineberg, 1991). However, research has shown students read historical documents as if they were truth (Wineberg, 1991). A lack of disciplinary knowledge and a lack of strategy knowledge have been cited as a cause for this type of naïve reading (Hynd, Holschuh, & Hubbard, 2004). In order to become literate in history, adolescents need assistance in *thinking like a historian* (Hynd et al., 2004; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Wineburg, 1991). For example, a historian critically reads a variety of texts searching for a complete picture of the event or person being described, while acknowledging and challenging the biases of the author. Students in social sciences are expected to have thinking skills which include: informing, describing, explaining, analyzing, comparing, contrasting, inferring, and evaluating (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994).

A majority of these skills are used in class by participating in classroom discussion or producing written texts (Boyer, 2006). For ELLs the task is doubled. First, these students must use content that has been delivered in English to conduct these higher order thinking skills and secondly, they must produce oral or written representations of these skills in English. This is a challenging task.

There is an extensive amount of reading in the social studies classroom and a large portion comes from textbooks (Lee & Spratley, 2010). Often these textbooks use passages filled with long, embedded clauses, cause and effect sentences and inverted sentence order in which sentences begin with because (Chamot & O' Malley, 1994). These sentences also use passive voice for describing cause and effect (Brown, 2007). These researchers argue that social studies teachers are better prepared to help students focus on comprehending vocabulary and text structure which is not general to all disciplines. This text structure is different from the texts of many of the learning texts used in the ELL classroom and may prove challenging for ELLs in the mainstream classroom (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Cruz & Thornton, 2009). Many secondary social-studies teachers are unaware of the specific ways in which reading and writing happen within the discipline of social studies, and so they do not explicitly teach these literacies.

Social studies teachers may struggle with allowing students the opportunity to connect materials with their own experiences (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Brown, 2007; Echeverria et al, 2006). They often assume a concept is universal, when it is actually culturally specific. For example, depending on prior experiences, concepts for words such as "government" might be different. These prior experiences also create

background knowledge, which is generally quite different for ELLs. Chamot and O'Malley (1994) emphasize that many ELLs will have limited prior knowledge regarding the history, institutions, geography, and culture of the United States. Often in secondary social studies, this background knowledge is assumed and the current curriculum depends on that prior knowledge. Social studies classrooms, including government, also depend on students being able to listen to a teacher and take notes, automatically filtering the extraneous information (Cruz & Thornton, 2010). Another area of difficulty is vocabulary. In government, words like *democracy*, represents complex and abstract concepts which may be unfamiliar to ELLs (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). These specific difficulties in government need to be addressed by teachers instructing ELLs. Along with specific literacies for government, there are other instructional accommodations which can benefit ELLs within the classroom.

Instructional Accommodations

Using an ELLs English proficiency level, linguistic abilities and content literacy teachers must create tasks that help students advance both language and content area knowledge. To help teachers better understand how to make these pedagogical choices, Cummins (1984) discusses language acquisition using a heuristic known as Cummins' Quadrants. These quadrants are used to help guide teachers in making pedagogical decisions based on understanding classroom tasks by focusing on the amount of contextual support (visuals, scaffolding, manipulatives, language repetition and reinforcements) provided and the cognitive demand for producing the language needed to complete the task. Tasks that have high contextual support and low linguistic demand are in Quadrant I and tasks that have low contextual support and high linguistic cognitive

demand (language that is abstract, technical or subject specific) are in Quadrant IV. In Quadrants II and III the context or cognitive linguistic demand varies, and are used to move ELLs from Quadrant I to Quadrant IV. These quadrants are designed to help students progress in task difficulty as they acquire more language, however often ELLs are moved from ESOL classrooms with Quadrant I tasks into mainstream classrooms that use Quadrant IV activities, with minimal preparation (Cruz & Thorton, 2010).

Hill and Bjork (2008) offer another way of helping teachers understand how to match cognitive demand of tasks with linguistic demand, by offering teachers a grid which offers language proficiency levels and corresponds them with questioning cues from Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of thinking objectives. In order for ELLs to be successful in the mainstream classroom, the context and linguistic complexity of a task must be correctly aligned with the language proficiency of the students trying to complete the task. Understanding the complexity of a task allows the classroom teacher to make the best choice of instructional approach.

Instructional Approaches

The literature offers many effective instructional approaches for ELLs. At the heart of all of these instructional accommodations is scaffolding. Scaffolding instruction provides students the opportunity for teacher and peer supported student learning. The concept of scaffolding was born from an application of Vygotsky's (1978) understanding of the *zone of proximal development*. The zone of proximal development is defined as "those functions that have not yet matured but are process of maturation" (p. 86). More simply put, *the zone of proximal development* is the space between what a child can do

alone and what they can do with assistance. This means that the content and language of the classroom is consistently academically challenging, but must be made accessible for all of the students, including the ELLs. In order to ensure that students are functioning within the *zone of proximal development*, instruction should include scaffolding based on student strengths (Vygotsky, 1978). This classroom structure creates an environment through social interactions with a more experienced person, who could be a peer or the teacher; students will construct meaning of content (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, teachers can support student learning by demonstrating solutions, modeling, providing feedback, questioning, cognitive structuring, cueing, prompting, elaborating, inviting participation, offering explanations, and verifying and clarifying understandings (Many, 2002). Scaffolding instruction is essential to the development of academic skills which students cannot develop on their own. For English language learners, scaffolding serves three purposes, as it has to be specifically designed to help students garner literacy within the content area, expand academic literacy skills, and increase proficiency in the target language (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006; Harper & deJong, 2006; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Verplaeste, 1998; Williams, 2001).

Acknowledging, valuing and using student prior knowledge as a point of departure in instruction is the basis of scaffolding. Regardless of individual proficiency within English as a language, ELLs come to school with prior knowledge which should be used to enhance instruction. By using advance organizers, providing activities which build schema, and helping focus student attention on key concepts and issues, teachers

can help students build on prior knowledge (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Walqui, 2008). Using prior knowledge recognizes that ELLs come to schools with “funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) and that these can be used to help provide effective instruction. “The teacher’s responsibility is to connect the lesson to the student, not the student to the lesson”(Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002, p. 117). Other researchers argue the use of cues and questioning is a means of helping ELLs access background knowledge (Hill & Bjork, 2006). There are a variety of ways to help students make use of the knowledge they bring into the classroom.

Providing context for new ideas and concepts is another means of scaffolding instruction. The use of nonlinguistic representation is imperative in the instruction of the ELLs (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994; Brinton & Snow, 1997; Walqui, 2008). Using realia such as film, manipulatives, and pictures help create a context for students who may not have the background knowledge needed to understand a new idea or concept (Walqui, 2008). For ELLs, some researchers argue that along with contextualization, explicit instruction is also necessary. Often this direct instruction includes a focus on academic strategies, socio cultural expectations and academic norms is necessary to provide effective instruction to ELLs (Harklau, 1994; Chamot & O’Malley, 1994; Brinton & Snow, 1997; Walqui, 2008). Helping students learn how to use academic skills through activities which model and instruct such as reciprocal reading (Palinscar & Brown, 1985) or the explicit instruction and modeling use of cognitive strategies are essential for helping ELLs be successful (Walqui, 2008). Use of pre-reading strategies which provide background knowledge and introducing key vocabulary and guided reading strategies offers opportunities to model fluency; inferencing, and connecting (Carrasquillo &

Rodriguez, 2002). Helping language learning students develop and access cognitive learning strategies is a key component of teaching English language learners.

Along with accessing background knowledge and establishing instruction for ELLs, teachers must provide ELLs many opportunities to interact through reading, writing, listening and discussing oral and written English texts (Cruz & Thornton, 2010; Walqui, 2008). One form of classroom interaction is the discussions which occur between teacher and student. In order provide this the classroom teacher must focus on the language used in classroom discussion (Cruz & Thornton, 2010; Dong, 2004; Williams, 2001). These conversations offer opportunities for language to be modeled by the teacher and practiced by the students; however, these recommended classroom conversations are a break from the traditional IRE (initiate, respond and evaluate) structure found in classrooms, and require explicit instruction for the teacher to implement successfully (Cruz & Thornton, 2010; Dong, 2004). Other strategies to help ELLs be successful in classroom interactions focus on the teacher using slow, clear speech, avoiding the use of idioms, and making of wait time (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006, Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Verplaeste, 1998; Williams, 2001). Focusing specifically on the language being used, including grammatical forms and the use of cognates is also important (Harper & deJong, 2004; Williams, 2001). Teachers should also provide relevant and meaningful tasks which create active learning experiences (Walqui, 2008). Along with these skills for interacting with ELLs, the teacher can serve as a source to model and expand on the correct use of English grammatical structures and vocabulary (Dong, 2004; Hill & Bjork, 2006). Another recommendation guiding the

instruction of ELLs involves an emphasis the grammatical structures or particular vocabulary words which will be needed to complete a specific activity, and specifically provided instruction regarding the grammatical structure or vocabulary form (Dong, 2004; Hill & Bjork, 2006). Providing effective opportunities for classroom instruction requires teachers move away from the teaching style of lecture and into a more interactive learning for students.

Providing ELLs opportunities to interact in English should not be limited to conversations between teacher and students. Walqui (2008) recommends offering opportunities to collaborate with other students in meaningful ways. Collaboration provides opportunities to interact in English, which is necessary for the development of language skills. Williams (2001) suggests that structured classroom conversations are an important way to help ELLs develop language proficiency. Hill and Bjork (2006) recommend using classroom conversation as an opportunity for the mainstream teacher to model appropriate uses of language and to help students become aware of their own language use. However, some researchers indicate the interaction between native speakers and ELLs does not naturally occur in mainstream classrooms and that oftentimes ELLs may not possess the language skills to fully participate in collaborative activities (Harper & de Jong, 2004). Therefore, the use of collaboration requires specific planning and a clear understanding of the language needs of the students within the groups (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Hill & Bjork, 2006; Walqui, 2008).

One of these language skills is vocabulary development. According to some, academic vocabulary is learned is only learned from teachers or text (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). As such, teachers must be diligent in helping students identify academic

vocabulary. Teachers should be aware and help students recognize the type of vocabulary being taught. According to Garcia and Garcia (2010) vocabulary words can be divided into three tiers. Tier 1 words are words used in everyday instruction, tier 2 words are words used in this content but may be used in other areas also and tier 3 words which are specific to a content area (Garcia & Garcia, 2010). Helping students distinguish the type of vocabulary being taught can help with retention. Vocabulary instruction should also include the use of pictures and opportunities to use the new words in speech.

Using the informal comments of ELL students, Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002) offer the following practical suggestions:

- Write legibly; major concepts
- Make sure everyone has had time to copy information;
- Handouts and guide sheets should accompany lecture to support students;
- Audiovisual material used to reinforce material given via lecture or reading;
- Use clear and slow speech;
- Provide written instructions for major assignments;
- Use several examples to demonstrate major concepts ;
- Explain concepts step by step;

- When ELLs ask questions, repeat the question and correct the phrasing;
- Avoid slang;
- Choose interesting a multicultural curriculum including literature from students' cultural backgrounds; and
- Involve families.

Oftentimes, however, strategies for ELLs are reduced to checklists of changes which can be made to help include ELLs. However, “teachers must do more than simply implement a few strategies from ESL methodologies” (Echeverria et al., 2006, p.199) in order to improve academic success for ELLs. Students need a systematic instruction that teaches them content, academic literacy and academic language that allows them to be successful in mainstream classrooms and on standardized tests. Harper and de Jong (2004) express the concern that the needs of ELLs are not recognized as different from the needs of other learners and that teaching ESOL is a menu of pedagogical adaptations which will benefit all learners. Instead, these researchers argue that ELLs need specific instruction in the “grammatical, morphological and phonological aspects of the language” (p.153) and “direct instruction on forms and function of the target language “(p.153). For these researchers, pedagogical approaches used in teaching ELLs should foreground both content and language.

ELL instruction should also involve discussions of the uses of English and the power associated with the uses of various discourses. (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Walqui, 2008). Finally, understanding that language and culture are tightly entwined,

teachers are responsible for modeling academic and sociocultural norms and helping students be aware of them and their utility (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Walqui, 2008). Culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000) which is comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative and emancipatory in nature can provide one means of discussing this type of critical literacy. The instruction of ELLs must go beyond good teaching and into specific lesson planning and implementation with strategies which are effective in helping ELLs attaining both language and content knowledge.

Components of the Inclusive Classroom

There are a variety of components which can be discussed when exploring the environment of an inclusive classroom. Clegg (1996) offers an understanding of the environment needed to facilitate the language development of ELLs. In this research, an environment which facilitates language development is divided into external and internal contexts. For Clegg (1996) The external context includes the wider school policy and community attitudes towards language; while the internal classroom environment deals with issues of atmosphere, language input, interactional forms, contextual support for language development and task and task sequencing. Previously, I reviewed the literature regarding the content, the local and state school system and national understanding of education for ELL students. Therefore, this section begin will focus on the internal environment of the inclusive classroom and will follow with an exploration of how the school influences or shapes this environment.

Classroom as Community

Socio cultural learning theory asserts that learning must involve interactions with a more knowledgeable other. In a classroom setting, the role of more knowledgeable other can be filled by teacher or peer (Vygotsky, 1978). However, for this learning to take place, students and teachers must interact. For the ELL these social interactions in the target language are important for the development of concepts and language (Cummins et al., 2000; Dong, 2004, Verplaeste, 1998). These interactions may be limited if there is not the sense of community. The idea of community, in which members are participatory and interact in order to construct knowledge, assumes a socio-constructivist approach to education (Vygotsky, 1978).

For ELLs, a classroom which functions as a community is particularly successful. “In an effective classroom, teachers and students engage in the co-construction of a culture that values the strengths of each person and respects their interests, abilities, languages and dialects (Walqui, 2008, p.104). Students and teachers cannot have these interactions without a classroom environment which supports learning. The emotional climate of a classroom fosters the academic progress within that classroom (Williams, 2001). Of course, inherent to this idea of socially constructed knowledge within the classroom, is the assumption that students feel comfortable enough to participate in the oral interactions within the classroom. This means that the inclusive classroom must provide a non-threatening atmosphere for these students (Williams, 2001). The literature on the non-threatening classroom for ELLs generally focuses on three themes: issues of language, issues of culture, and establishing personal relationships between students and teachers. “The classroom environment plays a significant role in how students perceive

themselves both linguistically and academically” (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002). Classroom environment should demonstrate respect and concern for all students and provide a place in which ELLs are willing to participate and interact within the target language.

Issues of Language

Because the ELLs are language learning students, the inclusive classroom environment is shaped by issues of language. Research recommends that mainstream classrooms create an environment which people are comfortable with natural responses (e.g. laughter, first language use, silence, and fatigue) which occur when ELLs interact using English (Curran, 2003). Mainstream classrooms can also limit the linguistic skills necessary to participate in the procedures of the classroom. Providing contextual support, including pictures and routines, can help to reduce the reliance on language for completing basic classroom tasks. In this way, classroom organization reduces the opportunity for ELLs losing information in unexpected transitions (Curran, 2003). Conversations regarding the practicality and discomfort involved in language learning along with consideration of the procedures within the classroom are important for facilitating an environment in which ELLs will be successful.

Colombo and Furbush (2009) recommend that mainstream teachers attempt to establish a classroom culture in which discourse varieties are recognized and valued, and also enable students to learn the standard US English discourse generally used in the classroom. This recommendation challenges the mainstream teacher to hold a fundamental philosophical understanding of the very concept of English. This approach

to language rejects the idea that English as a single, standard language with global and regional variations, and instead understand English(es) as a plural, which recognizes that conceptually “the language of English” is not a single entity, but instead has a variety of equal forms which are defined by the geographical location of speakers and the social and cultural context in which it is spoken (Bolton, 2006). This understanding of English(es) is not the prevalent belief in US school language policies, and is challenging for some educators to embrace (Corson, 2001; Lippi Green, 1997). This approach to understanding language which positions all languages as inherently equal and challenges people to make them socially equal too. This idea is salient for ELLs, who are navigating both the practical and social implications of embodying two languages.

Valuing Home Languages and Cultures

Understanding languages this way helps mainstream teachers establish a non-threatening classroom environment because they accept and value the home languages of the students (Williams, 2001). For English language learners, this is particularly important. Along with administrators, parents and the community at large, many mainstream teachers believe total immersion is the best way for the students to learn English. Total immersion means that in order for the students to be successful in acquiring English, mainstream teachers need to exclude the use of the first language from the classroom and insist that ELLs communicate in English only. These teachers believe that it is the schools’ responsibility to teach in English (Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Mantero & McVicker, 2006; Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006; Youngs & Youngs, 2001) and not to provide instruction in the home language. Often some mainstream teachers believe the responsibility of heritage language maintenance falls to the parents and the community

outside of the school (Lee & Oxelson, 2006). In contrast, Fillmore (1991) determines through a large scale survey, that the acquisition of English, through English only instruction has a significant correlation with amount of the heritage language used at home. More importantly, her study concludes that the learning of English in an English only situation significantly increases the chances of losing the heritage language, even if the parents continue to use the language at home. This resulting language loss is difficult for students, parents, and communities (Fillmore, 1991). Mainstream teachers who understand this concern for language loss may have empathy for ELLs and may express this empathy in the classroom environment (Dong, 2004). A non-threatening classroom environment values students' home languages through discussions of cognates, specific language features, and also provides opportunities for students' to communicate in their home language (Heath, 1983; Williams, 2001).

Cummins et al. (2000), argue that the mainstream classroom should also promote the home language as the basis of all the students' prior academic knowledge. In order for ELLs to engage fully with academic content, the mainstream teacher should promote biliterate engagement with content. A non-threatening classroom environment also seeks to provide students with academic content in the home languages. Use of bilingual dictionaries, multicultural texts, culturally relevant materials, dual text assignments, and texts in the native languages are all ways to create a classroom environment which supports ELLs (Cummins et al., 2000, Wang et al., 2008; Williams, 2001).

These approaches towards languages can be expanded to establish a classroom environment which respects diversity. Karabenick and Noda (2004) warn against using only *quick fixes* such as festivals and food sharing. These sorts of activities offer only a

surface understanding of complex cultures and do not offer much in the ways of helping teachers understand the beliefs and values of students from other cultures. Instead, there should be investigations of the deeper issues in a culture such as child socialization, gender roles, loci of control, and norms and values. Colombo and Furbush (2009) support this in-depth understanding culture by suggesting that mainstream teachers begin by understanding their own culture by viewing it through Kluckhohn's and Strodtbeck's (1961) cultural orientations towards five constructs: human nature, relationships with nature and fate, time, social structure and activity. By using these orientations to understand culture, mainstream teachers may better recognize the norms and expectations which create the environment of the typical US classroom (Colombo & Furbush, 2009) and to understand the ways in which other orientations may generate differing values and norms.

Moll et al. (2001) encourages using funds of knowledge, which include the “strategic knowledge and related activities essential in a household's functioning” (p. 139) as a way to better understand the students' cultures and to make literacy connections in the classroom. For these researchers, understanding students' cultures, means understanding their family and community relationships. This in-depth understanding begins with establishing personal relationships with ELLs, and provides a construct for pedagogy which discusses and responds to cultural differences in a responsible way (Au, 2006; Cummins et al., 2000; Gay, 2000; Williams, 2001). The environment of the inclusive classroom is shaped by the ways in which the teacher positively or negatively addresses issues of culture.

Personal Relationships with ELLs

Perhaps the most important factor in establishing the environment of the inclusive classroom are the personal relationships between mainstream teachers and ELLs and between ELLs and their English proficient peers. Personal relationships between the teacher and ELLs are important to the success of secondary students within the mainstream. Through interviews, Derwing, DeCorby, Ichikawa and Jamieson (1999) established that high school ELLs identified a need for secondary teachers to build supportive and understanding relationships with them. Noddings (2005) bases these relationships between teachers and students on a genuine desire for the teacher to meet the needs of students in a respectful, non-judgmental way. This type of authentic caring is in direct contrast with the aesthetic caring of schools which centers on objective education that focuses on standards, goals, and curricula. Teachers who care authentically create and nurture positive and responsive personal relationships with students. Authentic caring often provides a basis for teaching a more aesthetic type of concern which is necessary for students to be successful in US schools. In her ethnographic case study Valenzuela (1999) discusses this type of authentic caring to be aligned with the Mexican idea of *educación* which refers to a persons' moral, social and personal responsibility in the social world and serves as a foundation for all other learning. For some students, particularly of Mexican origin, when teachers do not demonstrate a personal concern for students, these students respond by rejecting the aesthetic nature of schooling.

Mainstream teachers use a variety of techniques to establish personal relationships with ELLs. Some teachers travel into the homes and communities of students (Moll et.

al, 2002; Williams, 2001); while others create a space for the home and community values within the classroom (Cummins et al., 2000; Moll et. al, 2002; Wang et al., 2008; Williams, 2001). Other teachers have found success by using narrative writing (Carroll, Blake, Camalo & Messer, 1996; Harklau, 2000). However; establishing an orientation towards *teaching students* and not simply *teaching content* can be a struggle for many secondary teachers (Arkoudis, 2006; O'Brien et al., 1995). Inclusive mainstream classrooms where the teacher forms personal connections with the ELLs have an environment which supports academic success.

Finally, classrooms which are environmentally supportive to ELLs promote supportive peer relationships. These relationships can be promoted by consistently using peer interactions in which ELLs and proficient speakers can participate and feel confident about their contributions (Carroll et al., 1996; Williams, 2001). Helping ELLs and native speaker students to establish commonalities can also promote positive social interactions (Harklau, 1994). Most importantly, a classroom environment which respects and values individual differences, simultaneously evokes a feeling of responsibility among the members of the class for the success of all the members. This combination creates strong personal relationships among ELLs and proficient English speaking peers (Williams, 2001). Opportunities for productive cooperative learning can create a positive environment of the classroom.

School's Influence on Environment

The role of the school's influence on the individual classroom environment for ELLs cannot be overlooked. Major (2006) presents two vignettes which focus on the "process of planned intervention in which teachers and administrators act as cultural

brokers” (p. 29) between school culture and the home cultures of ELLs. These vignettes told the story of two school cultures. In one secondary school, the teachers, counselors, and administrators fostered pride in home culture, family heritage and bilingualism. ELLs were given sheltered instruction, and content area teachers made use of cooperative learning and scaffolding. In short, the entire school functioned as a support system for ELLs. In contrast, the second vignette demonstrated a school which did not serve as cultural mediators for ELLs. Consequently the ELLs in these schools were tracked into easy classes, never experienced content-based instruction, never allowed the use of the home language within the classrooms, and generally felt lost. In this case, the people in school seemed to feel no responsibility for educating the ELLs in a supportive way.

The classroom environment is often reflection of the district’s, county’s and local school’s priorities and policies towards students (Evans, 1996). This indicates that the way in which a school community responds to the concerns involved in educating English language learners is reflected in the individual classroom. Researchers assert that a school’s concern for these students is seen through its allocations of funding and resources, its opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development to improve their instruction of ELLs and its attempt to create a climate of academic success for ELLs (Batt, 2008; Karabenick & Noda, 2006; Major, 2006; Williams, 2001). Secondary schools are complex and are rooted in a divisive tradition, which often makes school wide initiatives such as academic literacy or best practices for ELLs difficult to enact (O’Brien et. al, 1995). Any research regarding the inclusive mainstream classroom, must consider the school’s influence on the classroom environment.

The research offers many recommendations regarding creating an inclusive classroom environment in which ELLs are successful including examples of situations in which these classroom environments have contributed to the academic success of the ELLs (Moll et. al, 2002; Williams, 2001). However, this body of research is built on the understanding that these non-threatening classroom environments are exceptions to the norm (Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006). In fact, this research centers on the role of the teacher or the role of the student in these environments, but they rarely consider the content, or the interactions between these four components. More importantly, this research rarely investigates the both the teacher and the ELLs experiences within this environments. In order to understand the inclusive classroom, we must have research which explores the experiences of the mainstream teacher and the ELLs, through their interactions with each other, the content and the environment.

Mainstream Teachers' Experiences with Inclusive Classrooms

Understanding inclusion education for ELLs requires an understanding the perspectives and experiences of both the mainstream teachers and the ELLs. This section of literature review begins with the understanding that mainstream teachers have developed perceptions of inclusive education for ELLs, through their experiences (Clair, 1995; Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). However, when exploring this body of research it is important to note that the research never explores the interactions that caused the perceptions, but instead focuses only on the resulting perceptions.

Perceptions of the Inclusive Classroom Context

Mainstream teachers perceive the inclusive classroom through a variety of factors. This first body of research indicates teachers' opinions towards having ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Overall, most mainstream teachers have agreed that the content area classroom is where ELLs belong (Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Reeves, 2006; Penfield, 1987). However, opinions regarding when ELLs should be included in these classrooms varied across participant responses. Some mainstream teachers felt that ELLs should enter the mainstream immediately as a way to prevent ELLs from being isolated from their peers, or to prevent the ELLs from missing needed content (Penfield, 1987) Others felt that ELLs should not enter the mainstream classroom until they were proficient in English and would not hinder the rest of the class (Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006). Though the research demonstrates that teachers self report a belief that ELLs should be in an inclusive setting, these teachers find the reality of inclusion problematic for a variety of reasons including the time and added work needed to make content accessible to these students and concerns regarding the pacing of the course (Penfield, 1987; Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Reeves, 2006).

The research also demonstrated that mainstream teachers' have experienced changes in classroom environment from the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. In the Penfield (1987) survey, mainstream teachers appreciated the inclusion of ELLs because of the multiculturalism the student introduced into the classroom setting. There was also appreciation for the determination and motivation of the ELLs and the collaborative response of the mainstream students to assist these students. However, the same respondents expressed concern over some of the negative response of

the native English speakers to the ELLs (Penfield, 1987). Remarkably, some of these teachers did not consider their influence as the teacher on the classroom environment. Penfield interpreted this self perceived role in classroom environment as a result of the teachers' understanding of their responsibility as a teacher. Mainstream teachers, who saw their job as academic, did not intervene in the responses of the native English speakers to the ELLs. Those who saw their job as teaching *more than subject matter* interceded and attempted to make a more inclusive classroom environment. These experiences also shaped the way in which the mainstream teachers respond to the further inclusion of ELLs in the classroom. Other mainstream teachers expressed concern that ELLs slow the pace of the class and impact the teacher's and the other students' ability to meet goals (Clair, 1995; Harper & deJong, 2004; Sharkey & Lazer, 2000). The research on the classroom environment is prevalent, but research fails to explore the experience of the mainstream teacher in trying to generate this internal environment in an inclusive classroom and how that environment is experienced by the ELLs.

Perceptions of the Inclusive Classroom Content

Making the content accessible to ELLs in the inclusive classroom often involves providing instructional accommodations. These accommodations allow ELLs access to the content curriculum that is currently mandated by the standards (Dong, 2004; Reeves, 2006; Williams, 2001). Many teachers feel unprepared to make these accommodations and others feel that it is a disservice to the English proficient students in the classroom because by using modifications for the ELLs, none of the students will be prepared for the high stakes tests. The experiences of the mainstream teachers, which shaped these perceptions, are of particular interest in this era of increased accountability. The ability

to teach and have students reflect their learning the content on the high stakes standardized tests is a primary concern of mainstream teacher. The inclusion of ELLs causes an increased level of accountability for the mainstream teacher regarding AYP (Echeverria et al.; 2006; Herrera & Murray, 2006). More importantly, with the pressures of increased accountability, teachers feel increasingly negative towards the inclusion of ELLs whose test scores may not reflect positively on the teacher.

Other mainstream teachers reject the idea of teaching both language and content (Penfield, 1987). They perceive their instructional role to be primarily content based. This perception may be from individual own experiences of schooling and the environment of the school (O'Brien et al., 1995). For secondary teachers, this distinction is very clear because many teachers of content define themselves through their knowledge of the content, while ELL instruction is seen as a practice and therefore secondary to the content (Arkoudis, 2006). This subjugation of language instruction permits the content teachers to see themselves as subject matter experts, without regard to this issue of whether they should be responsible for using an ELL inclusive instructional technique. The inclusion of the ELLs challenges the content area teachers' perception that content instruction has a higher value than language instruction (Arkoudis, 2006). The inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom challenges this belief by positioning academic literacy as a way to access and learn content. Though there is research on the mainstream teachers' opinions regarding academic literacy, and research about content area literacy entails, there is little exploration into how this content-based instruction is experienced by the teacher and the ELLs in the inclusive classroom.

Perceptions of the Inclusion of English Language Learners

The experiences and resulting perceptions of mainstream teachers regarding the inclusion of ELLs highlights the role of the teacher's ethnic and cultural understandings and prior personal experiences. Mainstream teachers with positive perceptions of ELLS had (a) knowledge of other cultures through general educational experiences, (b) training in teaching ELLs, (c) personal experiences with other cultures and (d) contact with ELLs (Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Karabenick and Noda (2004) also contribute quantitative data which supports the positive attitudes of teachers towards ELLs were correlated with teachers who had greater cultural awareness and knowledge of second language acquisition.

Others express their positive notions towards the inclusion of ELLs by critically reflecting on their school environment and policies. Findings from interviews demonstrated that mainstream teachers are concerned about the negative impact on student achievement because of the limited time secondary ELLs are given to complete high school, about the impact of the possible stigma given to students who are served in ESOL programs, and about recognizing a need for support in educating ELLs across the entire school (Derwing et al., 2000).

Some negative perceptions were also evidenced in the research. In Penfield's (1987) study, Asian students were seen as well behaved, while the Hispanic students were positioned as disruptive. Marx (2000) explored the role of biased assumptions towards ELLs by noting that in this study White teachers consistently maintained low expectations for the ELLs. Marx (2000) highlights the difficulty that these monolingual, middle class, white teachers had with connecting to the ELLs through personality and

experiences due to deficit assumptions about the families and lifestyles of the ELLs.

Both positive and negative perceptions of ELLs were evident in the literature; however, there was little exploration into how these perceptions were shaped by interactions with students, content and environment.

Perceptions of the Teacher in the Inclusive Classroom

The first concern for mainstream teachers is the impact that inclusion of ELL students will have on their work lives. Teachers expressed frustration with an increased workload caused by difficulty communicating with the ELLs and their families (Penfield, 1987) due to language differences, lack of time to address individual needs of the ELLs in the classrooms (Reeves, 2006) and feelings of professional inadequacy which came from identifying a need to change from the traditional teaching style but lacking the necessary training to do so (Dong, 2004; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno; 2007; Mantero & McVicker, 2006; Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). These frustrations were caused by previous experiences of these mainstream classroom teachers and often resulted in negative responses to the continued inclusion of ELLs. On the other hand, other research indicates that some mainstream teachers are confident in their abilities to instruct ELLs (Clair, 1995). For these educators, teaching all students is a component of good teaching and determining how to work with ELLs is simply part of a teachers' job. This confidence was not prevalent in the research on mainstream teachers of inclusive classes. In fact, mainstream teachers often expressed feelings of discontent with their level of preparation to instruct ELLs.

Teacher Preparation for Mainstream Teachers

The current professional development for mainstream in service teachers who work with ELLs varies from nonexistent to present but highly problematic. According to survey results, professional development centered on successful instruction of ELLs is the least likely topic offered by states and districts for in service teachers (National Center of Educational Statistics, 2001). Others suggest that a “lack of specific guidelines at federal and state level has contributed largely to the ad hoc initiatives taken by districts” (Varghese & Jenkins, 2005, p. 88). Another concern is the lack of participation in professional development. In fact, a survey by the National Center for Educational Statistics (2002) shows only 12.5% of the 41.2% of teachers who reported working with ELLs had more than 8 hours of professional development for working with linguistically diverse students in the past three years. Perhaps teachers do not participate in this professional development, because the topics or delivery is unsatisfactory to the teachers (Clair, 1995). Clair interviewed three teachers who all expressed differing reasons that professional development was insufficient. One teacher noted that the workshops were not helpful, even though there were several provided by the district. She indicated that she did not have time and that she wanted a goody bag that she could use. Another teacher never attended the professional development because he felt as if it was a waste of time; instead, indicating ELLs need materials that they can understand. Both of these teachers would prefer materials and support over training. This is a common request of mainstream teachers working with ELLs (Bhatt, 2008; Cho & Reich, 2008). Professional development of this nature was clearly not a priority for these three practicing mainstream teachers working with ELLs.

Though there are limited opportunities offered by systems for in service mainstream teachers to improve their instruction of these students, the literature offers examples of teachers who are making changes. For example, in a feminist action research project, Buck, Mast, Ehlers, and Franklin (2005) explore the process of a first year teacher who is trying to establish a mainstream science classroom which is conducive for ELLs. This research is important in two ways. One, this research centers on a mainstream teacher who is striving to use strategies to improve her instruction specifically for ELLs. Secondly, the findings indicated that though this teacher was working to make content accessible and the ELLs were increasing their content knowledge, their gains were not comparable to the mainstream students within the classroom.

Another study offers a different type of insight into the mainstream teacher's role in the inclusion of ELLs. Wang et al., (2008) present the findings from a case study of a ninth-grade social-studies teacher who was attempting to instruct the ELLs in his mainstream class. This mainstream teacher had the belief that ELLs should not fail because of language. Because of this belief, he provided a number of accommodations designed to improve comprehension for the ELLS. He included home language resources, visuals, and peer translations. He also offered limited content in a setting that always allowed for dictionaries and extended time. A unique component of this research is that it introduced the perceptions of the mainstream student within this setting. One English proficient student expressed that he did not feel challenged or engaged in the classroom, which introduces other considerations when studying inclusion education.

Understanding what the literature presents about the mainstream teacher is only a piece of this puzzle. This research is incomplete without investigating the experiences of the students in the mainstream classroom, and the role that environment, and content play in shaping these experiences. The final section of this literature review focuses on the experiences of the English language learners in the mainstream inclusive classroom.

English Language Learners' Experiences in the Mainstream Classroom

ELLs are such a diverse group of students that it is important to remember that these students are individuals who have distinct experiences within the mainstream environment. This results in a variety of foci within the literature. There is also a limited amount of literature which discusses the experiences of the ELLs within the mainstream classroom. Therefore, this section begins with a focus on broad issues which shape the environment of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. This is followed by the ELLs experiences in the mainstream. Noticeably absent from the research are the experiences and perceptions of ELLs regarding the content in these mainstream classrooms.

Language Policy and Language Loss

One focus of the literature regarding the environment of ELLs in the mainstream is tied to the role that language policies of schools may have on ELLs. These pieces criticize established ideas regarding language and its role in shaping culture, along with creating and maintaining power. This literature argues that the perspective towards multilingualism promoted by the American schools requires that students who enter the American school system speaking a different language must transition rapidly from the L1 into English, regardless of the consequence that this transition may have on the

heritage language (Wiley & Lukes, 1996) and the identity of the language learner. Not only do these students question which language to use, but there are also questions of which English to learn (Lippi-Green, 1997). School policy indicates an attitude that immigrants in the United States must speak accentless English, which uses correct punctuation and grammar and can be easily understood by all, in order to be embraced as Americans. The instructional models selected for the language education of English language learners reflects the accepted language policy of the system (Corson, 2001; Lippi Green, 1997). In short, many school systems including Georgia's system, use subtractive English only instructional models, forcing students into an either/or decision regarding English and the home language, which often contributes to the loss of heritage language (Aparicio, 2000; Fillmore, 1996).

Fishman (1998) writes of what we lose when a language is lost. He discusses the ties that language has with the essence of being human. Language is how we express our belief in the sacred; it is how we describe our emotions and it is how we describe ourselves. Without language, we have lost a piece of ourselves; we have lost our identity. Upon closer inspection, the English only policies of schools are contributing to the “countless American immigrant and native children and adults who have lost their ethnic languages in the process of becoming linguistically assimilated in to the English speaking school and society” (Fillmore, 1991, p.324). In Fillmore's survey research there is a clear correlation between the English only educational situation of the children and the language which these students use at home. Typically, when the parents do not speak English, the children will communicate in the home language with their parents, but in English with their siblings. Many of these children grow to be well developed in the

communicative form of the home language, but may or may not be able to read or write in it (Fillmore, 1991). In other writings by Fillmore (2000), she depicts a Chinese family and tells the story of the children and their attempts to assimilate in to the English school culture. One of the girls in the family assimilated quickly, while her older brother in the same class was subjected to teasing and struggled to assimilate. The young man eventually began to associate with a group of Asian immigrant children and rejected his home language of Cantonese. At the time of the study, none of the children were proficient in the home language. This response to assimilation created a divide in the parents' ability to communicate with their child and to fulfill the role of helping with the child's identity development.

Richard Rodriguez (1982), as an adult, offers a similar narrative within his autobiography *Hunger for Memory*. He discusses the void created in his home as he rejected his parent's language, Spanish, and assimilated into the English. His account is powerful, but it is important to hear this story from the students themselves. Gunderson's (2000) interviews of secondary ELLs reflected students who enthusiastically acquire the culture and language of the school and thusly, begin to reject outright their L1s and their cultures. Repeatedly, the minority language parents and communities are expressing concern over the inability of their children to speak and participate academically in the heritage language (Wright, 2004; Worthy & Rodriguez-Galindo, 2006).

Not Fitting In

ELLs also express their concerns about other social challenges. One of these challenges is discrimination. The students in Gunderson's (2000) study discuss issues of

discrimination that are brought into this country by other immigrants. He provides several examples of students discussing being the victims of bullying by other ELL students because of nationality. He also discusses instances of unintentional racism as schools attempt to become multicultural. Taylor (2006) chooses to investigate the role that discrimination plays in the lives of 30 secondary ELLs through a 3 day antidiscrimination leadership camp. Her study reveals that these ELLs had experienced racism, xenophobia and other discrimination particularly associated with their immigrant status, accent and nation of origin. These studies indicate that discrimination is a concern for ELLs.

ELLs are also concerned with the understanding that acquiring English is tied to their success as students. For many of these students, providing the children with a free, quality education is a reason for immigrating to the United States (Crawford, 1989). This familial responsibility is tied to the rapid acquisition of English for these students. Gunderson's (2000) research offers examples of students who are aware of their need to acquire English and who would like to practice speaking in the target language, that are unable to find opportunities for this type of engagement. This is sometimes caused by homogenous groups of speakers who choose to communicate in a language other than English. Harklau's (1994) ethnographic study of three ELLs offers a different opinion. In her research the students were keenly aware of being the outsider, especially in the mainstream classroom. These students expressed discomfort with having conversations with proficient English. Some of this was explained by a lack of common interests. Some of the ELLs did not find the past times of US born students to be engaging and so conversations were limited to classroom experiences. Duff's (2001) ethnographic

research within the mainstream classroom also found that ELLs felt marginalized, anxious and insecure as they functioned on the outside of the mainstream classroom discourse. These feelings make the ELLs value their friends, and the setting of the ESOL classroom because of the comfort gleaned from sharing common language learning experiences.

Student Experiences within the Mainstream Classroom

There is limited research on the ELLs experiences with in the mainstream. A majority of this research actually centers on the process involved in mainstreaming the ELL (Clegg, 1996). Generally, the results of the experience are also documented in research which discusses research-based recommendations for changing the instructional practices of mainstream teachers (Ballantyne et al.,2008; Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006, Harper & deJong, 2006; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Verplaeste, 1998; Williams, 2001) however, the experience itself is rarely documented. One study which seeks to document this experience is Harklau's (1994) ethnographic study which sought to compare the experiences of three ELLs within the mainstream and to their experiences within the ESOL classroom. Through classroom observations and interviews, this research offers a detailed account of the experiences that these students have within this inclusive setting. Harklau (1994) discusses ELLs and their response to the mainstream opportunities for verbal and written interactions. She discusses how the lack of ELL's verbal interactions in the mainstream classroom promoted disengagement from the instructional activity. She also notes that the mainstream classrooms value written English over the spoken component, and therefore

tend to have significant amounts of reading and writing assignments. She explored the ways in which the ELLs responded to the emphasis on reading and writing by engaging in the reading when it was linguistically possible and occasionally, making the writing tasks into fact finding exercises.

Other studies offer the perspective of the students regarding their experiences within the mainstream classroom. Duff (2001) performs a two year ethnographic study within two secondary social studies classes in order to determine what made ELLs successful within this context. However, the focus of the study remains of the challenges the students face within the classroom. The idea of instructional dynamic indicates that there is interaction between the four areas of content, context, teacher and student. The lack of exploration of the instructional dynamic leaves the reader wanting to understand the phenomenon of the inclusive classroom from the perspectives of the ELLs and the classroom teacher.

Overall, the research is limited in its exploration of the experiences of the ELL in the mainstream classroom (Duff, 2001). These experiences are implied in discussions of improving instructional practice, test scores and graduation rates (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006, Harper & deJong, 2006; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Verplaeste, 1998; Williams, 2001).

More importantly, research which explores the experiences of ELLs in the mainstream classroom fails to simultaneously explore the experiences of the mainstream teacher of that classroom. Finally, there is very little research that explores the inclusive

classroom through the experiences of the ELLs and the mainstream teachers as they are shaped through interactions with each other, the environment and the content.

This chapter has reviewed the literature regarding the phenomenon of the inclusive secondary mainstream classroom. The chapter began with background information which offered a description of ELLs as a group, the program models which are used to instruct these students and the current academic success of these students. It narrowed in its focus, by discussing ELLs in Georgia. Following this, the literature explored the content, the environment, the experiences of mainstream teacher and the experiences of ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Ball and Forzani's (2007) definition educational research, establishes a clear need to understand the phenomenon of the secondary inclusive classroom through the experiences of the mainstream teacher and the ELLs by exploring how the interactions between the mainstream teacher, the ELLs, the content and the environment shape these experiences.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter, I reviewed the national and local background to my study by describing English language learning students as a group and describing best practices for ELLs within secondary schools. I discussed the environment of ELLs by investigating the role of language policy in schools, the current academic successes of ELLs, and role of classroom environment in the instruction of ELLs based on the general and specific concerns which are generated by the literacy needs of English language learners. Finally, I explored the experiences of both the mainstream teachers in the mainstream classroom. From this review, I identified a need to investigate the phenomenon of the inclusive classroom by understanding the interactions of mainstream teacher, ELLs, content and environment. This chapter discusses the methodology used for this research.

Cresswell (2009) offers the term “worldview” to describe a researcher’s “general orientation about the world and the nature of research” (p.6). Adopting Cresswell’s terminology, I view myself as a social constructivist. My belief is that people attempt to make meaning from, or interpret their worlds and these interpretations are subjective because they are shaped by the context of both the situation and the individual’s past experiences and interactions with others (Cresswell, 2009; Crotty, 2008, Schwandt, 2000). As a result, there are multiple interpretations of a single event, or multiple

realities (Merriam, 2009). This fundamental understanding of reality's complexity leads me to conduct research in which I was the primary research instrument. I used qualitative research as a way of "understanding how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). Qualitative research allowed me as the researcher to use Denzin and Lincoln's (2004) *bricoleur* approach to this study, because it offered me the opportunity "to piece together a set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of this complex situation in an overlapping series of events" (p.4). This approach required understanding the participants' unique experiences combined with their constructed understandings of these experiences through naturalistic research of the individuals and their contextualized interactions, followed by presenting my findings using thick description to provide the experiences from the perspectives of the participants (Cresswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009, Stake, 2005). The findings of this study, must be as complex. As such they are presented using the idea of a montage, wherein the "images, sounds, and understandings are blending together, overlapping, forming a composite, new creation" as suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2004, p.4).

My worldview shaped my research questions which call for a single case study research design. A case study is a contemporary phenomenon that cannot be separated from its context (Merriam, 2008; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). In this case, separating the context of the inclusive classroom from the phenomenon of exploring the experiences of the mainstream teacher and the ELLs as they negotiate this phenomenon was impossible. Another element of this research, which met the criteria of a case study, is the bounded system of the secondary classroom (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2005, Yin, 2008). The boundaries of the case were clear. The class was a semester long secondary inclusive

classroom, taught by a mainstream teacher who has had no ESOL training. This case study strove to meet Merriam's (2009) three standards for a case study by being (1) particularistic because it focuses on the particular situation of the inclusive classroom and focused on the experiences of the mainstream teachers and ELLs who were in this inclusive classroom; (2) descriptive because the resulting product of this case study was a rich, complete, multi layered descriptive presentation of the experiences of the informants from this mainstream inclusive classroom; and finally, (3) heuristic because it sought to enhance the field's understanding of the educational experiences involved with including ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Perhaps even more importantly, my case study offered an understanding which resonates with our experience and allows readers to contextualize and interpret the research (Stake, 2005). Considering my worldview and the resulting research questions, single case study design is the most appropriate choice for me to conduct this research.

Focus of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand an ELL inclusive secondary mainstream classroom. This investigation was conducted using single intrinsic case study (Stake, 2005) of an ELL inclusive US Government course, taught by a mainstream teacher with no ESOL training. By investigating the experiences of the mainstream teacher and the ELLs as they interacted with each other and the content, the researcher sought to understand how the inclusive classroom is experienced and how these experiences are shaped by the teacher, the ELLs, the content and the environment.

Role of the Researcher

During this study, I had been a secondary ESOL teacher for nine years and I had taught in several schools across the years. In conducting this study, I found myself in a unique position. For the past two years and currently, I am the lead ESOL teacher in Local High school. Because of the responsibilities of this job, I fill a role as student advocate, testing coordinator, parent liaison and in general the *go to* person regarding issues with ELL students for the school. I also serve on the school leadership team and have a quasi supervisory position regarding the scheduling and instruction of ELLs. I have contact with all of the ELLs in the school and I develop accommodation plans and suggested modifications for each student. In fact, many people refer to me as the “ESL lady.” This position within the school ensures that I was an “insider” while conducting this research which was an asset as far as providing access to the participants and establishing the relationships needed to gather rich data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) However; this position of an insider also came with its own set of biases and subjectivities. With both the mainstream teacher and students, there may have been issues regarding power (Merriam, 2009). Because of these concerns, I repeatedly ensured the participants within the study that the information that they chose to share with me was confidential and did not influence their continued participation in any other classes. While the class was still meeting, the data collected from the students was not shared with the teacher and the data collected from the teacher, was not shared with the students. In this way, the informants felt less exposed. Stake (2005) cautions that “funding, scholarly intention, and Institutional Review Board authorization does not constitute license to invade the privacy of others” (p.459). Using this understanding, I only made

use of personal information that was provided to me by my informants regarding their prior schooling, time in ESOL and grades within courses. As such, I was confident that my access as the lead ESOL teacher was not the means by which I accessed personal information. Exposing these biases at the beginning of the study was important to help me establish credibility as a researcher (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2005).

Aside from my biases as the lead teacher, I also have biases regarding the instruction of ELLs in the mainstream. These biases are shaped by my own experiences as a mainstream teacher and by the stories of my students. As an ESOL teacher in the state of Georgia, my class size is limited to 18 and there is no standard curriculum for ESOL courses. This is very different from the instructional situation of the mainstream teacher. This year, a majority of these secondary teachers are teaching five classes a day with a minimum of thirty students per class and they are responsible for the using the Georgia Performance Standards to guide the curriculum. Aside from the state mandates, these teachers also operate with county and school wide initiatives which may include submitting daily lesson plans, incorporating technology, working in professional learning communities, parental outreach and test preparation. Of importance to me is not losing touch with understanding the mainstream secondary teacher and so, I have taught at least one mainstream English course for the past five years. This role as both a mainstream and ELL exclusive teacher offered me a unique perspective regarding the experiences of the mainstream teacher and a need to understand the experiences of the ELLs within the class.

A final bias that has shaped my research is my empathy for the language learner. My husband is an ELL and he continues to struggle in day to day communication within

his second language of English. When we married, he left his Spanish speaking community and household and entered into a world where English is the primary language of communication. He has repeatedly struggled to master the technological terms in English in order to pass the State Plumbing License exam. My husband has the content knowledge and lacks the literacy skills. I have the literacy skills; however, the discipline specific literacy skills for this exam stretch far beyond my reach. We both end up frustrated and disheartened. However, when the task requires the language specific to a content I understand, I can help him and we can celebrate our success. I cannot help to believe that this situation may be similar to what happens in a classroom.

Context of the Study

An essential element to understanding this study, involves understanding the context. Merriam (2008) and Stake (2005) agree that any inquiry into a case requires the researcher's attempts to understand the context. With this in mind, I applied Clegg's (1996) understanding of internal and external context as a means of discussing the environment. School policy and community attitudes towards language combine to constitute the external context. These include the features of the school and its setting (O'Brien et al., 1995), the language and educational policies of the local and state school systems (Corson, 1990; Lippi Green, 1999; Lo Bianco, 1996) and current national understandings of academic success (Mantero & McVicker, 2006). Each of these elements contributed to the environment in which interactions between the students and the teachers within this mainstream classroom occurred. The atmosphere, language input, interactional forms, contextual support for language development, task and task sequencing and content shaped the internal context of the classroom. Features included

elements such as the socioconstructivist classroom (Cummins et. al., 2000; Dong, 2004, Verplaeste, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978; Walqui, 2008, Williams, 2001) and student relationships with teachers (Carrasquillao & Rodriguez, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999). The internal context was also shaped by the by the perceptions, attitudes, and expectations of the teachers and the students (Penfield, 1987; Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Reeves, 2006).

External Elements

As stated earlier, Immigration policy and attitudes towards English as the national language are often intermingled within the educational policy enacted for serving ELLs in public schools and Georgia proves to be no exception. Therefore, to understand LHS's external context, it is imperative to have a sense of the attitude towards immigrants and English within this state and community. As this research was taking place, Georgia began to respond to the influx of immigrants moving into the state through legislation. Some of this legislation reflected a growing concern to the number of undocumented immigrants within the state. Passel and Chon (2009) estimate that in 2008, there were 475,000 undocumented immigrants within Georgia. As a response, Georgia legislators enacted laws to help stem this flow of immigrants. Along with business reform, the legislators began to debate language policy. During this research, the Georgia's General Assembly Senate adopted legislation SB 67 which amended the rules for obtaining a Georgia driver's license by requiring that driver's license exams to be issued in English (SB67; 2010). This legislation allowed properly documented persons, who needed to take the exam in another language, a temporary license for a period of no more than six years. Consequently, this measure discriminated against the US citizens of our state who did not use English as their primary language and highlighted the state's negative attitude

towards immigration and the use of languages other than English. One of the sponsors of this bill served as a representative of the district in which LHS is located. Though this English only and anti immigrant sentiment was not the only attitude within the county, its influence on educational decisions cannot be ignored.

Within the county, Local High School was considered a high performing school. In the 2008-2009 school year it received several awards for its academic performance. Because there are so few ELLs within the school, these students did not create a subgroup whose test data was disaggregated to determine the Annual Yearly Progress of the school as a whole. However, the difference in the test scores for the “mainstream” students and the ELL students is startling. In the 2009 -2010 school year, Table 2 indicates the content area test scores for ELLs in comparison the other mainstream students in the school.

Table 2

Local High School Failure Rates GHSGT 2009-2010

	Language Arts		Mathematics		Science		Social Studies	
	Tested	Failed	Tested	Failed	Tested	Failed	Tested	Failed
ELLs	18	5 (27%)	17	3 (17%)	17	7 (41%)	19	9 (47%)
Non ELLs	391	14 (4%)	390	10 (3%)	390	14 (4%)	390	25 (6%)

Though there is a large difference between the pass rates for ELLs and the pass rates for non ELLs, the small population of ELLs within the school may limit the number of professional development opportunities made available to mainstream teachers.

According to the School Improvement Plan, Local High school had 30 secondary ELLs and a total enrollment of 2150 students. The ethnic makeup of the school consisted of less than 1% of students who consider themselves Alaskan Native or Native American, less than 1% Asian and Pacific Islander, 6%, Hispanic, 6% African American, and 87% White, Non Hispanic. Twelve percent of students that attend this school qualified for free and reduced lunch. Within the ELL population of 30 students, 28 received free and reduced lunch.

The instruction of ELLs within LHS occurred through a variety of program models. In the 2009-2010 school year, 9th Literature, 10th Literature, 11th Literature, 12th Literature, Math 1, Geography, Current Issues, and US History were offered as ELL exclusive courses taught by a teacher with both content and ESOL certification. Environmental Science, Biology, US History, and 11th Literature were also offered in a push in model, in which there were both mainstream and ELL students and there were two teachers: a content area teacher and a teacher who held content area and ESOL certification. For the ELLs in the 12th grade, the only option for this graduation requirement of a government course was a mainstream classroom.

Government was a required senior level course and was taught by 4 teachers in the 2009-2010 school year. Two of these teachers, had over 15 years of teaching experience and had taught US Government for many years. These two teachers often made curricular decisions which guided the instructional decisions of every person

teaching the course. The mainstream teacher in this study began teaching Government for the first time in 2009-2010 school year. She and her trailer mate, who was also teaching Government for the first time, planned collaboratively for this course.

Internal Context

This study centered on a second semester US Government class, taught in a one of 16 trailers located in the rear of the school, behind a newly constructed gymnasium. Two social studies teachers shared the large white trailer, with their classrooms adjoined by a common wall dividing the center of the structure. The trailers were located on the opposite end of the school from the other social studies teachers. Mrs. GT and the teacher who shared her trailer requested to be next door to each other because they collaborate often.

A “snap shot” of this sixth period inclusive US Government course offers a clear understanding of the internal environment of the class. On a given day when the bell rang to end fifth period at LHS, the students in Mrs. GT’s sixth period class could be seen rushing to get to her class on time. For some of the students, especially those who were in a fifth period class located in the front of the school, getting to the class (which is located almost ½ a mile away in the trailers at the back of the school) in under 6 minutes can be a challenge. Mrs. GT did not tolerate students who are tardy to class, and they could not enter her room without a pass or a tardy detention slip. Upon entering the classroom, the students in the sixth period government class moved quickly and quietly to their seats, pulled out their notebooks and pens, and looked to the board so they can begin copying their daily bell work, which was a warm up exercise reviewing content from the

day before. On the right side of the board, Mrs. GT had three columns drawn on the board. Each column was labeled by subject area and contained three rows: one for an Essential Question, one for Board Work and one for announcements like review or upcoming tests. Occasionally, particularly as the weather became more spring like and graduation approaches, the students had to be reminded to complete their bell work, but it was clear by the time my observations began that this was a well established procedure in the classroom.

Physically, the classroom was one of two which shared the space of a large white trailer. There were three wooden steps which took students to the metal door of the classroom. Outside, there was a sign which indicated that this was Mrs. GT's classroom and her teaching schedule for the year. There was a small window located at the top to allow people to peer in or out. Upon first entering the classroom, my eyes sought out the teacher's desk which was the back of the room, in a corner next to the door which adjoins with the other classrooms. Around her desk, Mrs. GT had two filing cabinets, book shelves and a mini refrigerator. On a book shelf outside her desk space was a series of clearly labeled three ring binders which held the notes and handouts from each unit. The students knew to find any work that they have missed in these binders. Along this same wall were three computers which had internet access and that the students used for classroom projects. Stretching across the front of the room was a long whiteboard and in front of it was a cart with a laptop which was most often connected to the mounted LCD projector in the classroom. Across the room was a large grey cabinet which held teaching supplies and next to it were three large white sheets of sticky paper hanging on the wall. These three pages, one for each subject Mrs. GT teaches, listed, by date, the

assignments which should have been filed in the students' notebooks. These pages were updated throughout the unit and were written in colored markers so the students were able to see the title of each assignment which needed to be filed in the notebook. For both students and observers, these charts were helpful by providing a day by day view of the course. Finishing out this wall was a poster of Rosie the Riveter. Along the back wall were other posters including a picture of the Abraham Lincoln statue at the Lincoln Memorial and Martin Luther King, Jr., along with a small, blind covered, rectangular window. Student work, including mobiles from her Geography students and presidential election campaign signs from her first semester Government students also decorated the classroom. Down the center of the room was a single strand of white Christmas lights. I was struck by the oddity of these lights, until I realized that they were used to provide enough light for the students to take notes, with the overhead lights turned off from the information projected onto the board during lecture. Thirty desks filled the classroom. The desks were in three groups creating a pathway for Mrs. GT to move easily around the room.

Twenty eight students, 16 males and 12 females, were in this sixth period government course and they filled almost all of the desks in the room. In the center of the room was a group of 10 desks, arranged into three rows of three, with the extra desk sitting alone on the front row. Four of the ELLs in this case study sat in this group of desks creating a small square. The young ladies sat next to each other and two of the boys sat behind them. This seating arrangement was selected by the students and sanctioned by Mrs. GT, who did not implement a seating chart unless the students "needed" one. To the right, there were another twelve desks arranged into four rows of

three. Along the back of the room there were eight other desks lined in four rows of two. A fifth ELL joined the class later in the semester and he sat in a desk in the back of the room closest to the teacher's desk. It was one of the only desks available in the classroom when he enrolled in the class.

Generally, the atmosphere of this class seemed industrious. The students came into the class and knew that they would be expected to stay focused on the material from bell to bell. A majority of the class followed a consistent pattern. When the students came into the classroom, they were expected to be seated, get quiet and begin copying the bell work from the board. Mrs. GT waited at the door for about a minute or two after the bell and then she moved to the computer and quickly took attendance. She then moved to the front of the room and more often than not sat on the table and began by asking the students the bell work questions. The students would respond to the question, which was always a review of content from the prior lesson. After discussing the bell work, Mrs. GT would lay out the day's schedule. If it was a typical day, the students would take notes from lecture for twenty or twenty five minutes and then they would have a "reinforcement activity" to complete for the remainder of the period. If the lesson for the day was going to differ from the normal pattern of the class, then Mrs. GT reminded the students of the plan for the day. She also used this time to remind students of upcoming tests, upcoming projects that were due and the importance of completing assignments. The content portion of the class then began and the students worked until the afternoon announcements came on over the intercom. When the announcements began, the students packed up their books and prepared to go home for the day. The students often

talked during the announcements, and were admonished by Mrs. GT for this behavior. Most days, this class was predominately teacher centered and structured.

Along with an understanding of the atmosphere of the mainstream classroom, it is fundamental to envision the participants within this study. In the following section, I will introduce the participants as they presented themselves in interviews.

Participants

Mainstream Teacher

The mainstream teacher in this inclusive classroom was purposefully selected because she sought help instructing the ELLs in her government course during the first semester of the school year. During this study, ELLs within mainstream social studies classrooms was a unique situation within the school and made her classroom a unique case and worthy of investigation (Merriam, 2009). Mrs. GT also positioned herself as a mainstream teacher who was concerned with helping ELLs be successful in her mainstream class. She initiated professional communication with the other ESOL teacher, who works with the senior ELLs, and sought assistance in better learning about the ELLs in her government classes. Consequently, this two way professional communication influenced my selection of this classroom as the focus of my study for two reasons. First, an established relationship between the mainstream teacher and the ESOL teacher indicated a mainstream teacher who was well intentioned, reflective on her practice, and potentially interested in interacting with the ELLs and the content of the classroom. Secondly, the established relationship with the other ESOL teacher gave me the opportunity to approach this study with more balance between my role of observer and

participant. For me, this was an important because this study was conducted in “*my own backyard*” and I needed to establish ways of seeing the data that were new and different (Bogdan & Biklen, 2008; Cresswell, 2009). One way of helping me see data in a new light was to begin the study as more of an outsider than an insider, understanding that as the semester progressed I would become more of a participant in the study.

I entered this case study with very little knowledge about Mrs. GT, beyond knowing that she had no formal training in working with ELLs. Upon Internal Review Board approval, I met with this teacher to discuss the study. I explained to her the purpose this single case study is to explore the phenomenon of the inclusive mainstream classroom, by examining the experiences of the teacher and the ELLs within this classroom environment as they participate in interactions with each other and with the content. I clarified that from this study I hoped to offer recommendations regarding the inclusive education of ELLs. I answered the questions she had and she agreed to participate in my study. I let her know that she could end her participation in this research at any time. I discussed her role in reviewing the data and in determining what would and would not be used. She signed a letter of consent, which was filed among the other data for this research and kept in a secure location.

The English language learning students within this inclusive mainstream classroom were of particular interest to this case study. The participants in this study differed demographically including: age; country of origin; native language; level of English proficiency; and length of time in US schools. Table 3 below shows these demographic data of the students.

Table 3

English Language Learners' Demographic Data

Name	Age	Country of Origin	Primary Language	English Proficiency Level	Time within US Schools
Chris	19	El Salvador	Spanish	Beginner	4 months
Maria	17	Colombia	Spanish	Advanced	6 months
Keith	17	Haiti	Haitian Creole	Advanced	3
Beth	18	Honduras	Spanish	Intermediate	5 years
William	18	USA/Haiti	Haitian Creole	Intermediate	2.5 years

When planning for the study began, there were 4 ELLs enrolled in the US Government course. After I secured the participation of these students, a new ELL entered Local High School and enrolled in the government course. He was also asked to participate in the study. These students display varying demographic characteristics, language proficiencies, and academic histories. I began by approaching the students and asking if they would be willing to participate in my study. Prior to my conversation with each student, I asked them if they would like to use English, or if they wanted me to have a translator present as we went through the study. Every student chose to have the conversation in English. I sat with each student individually and explained the purpose of the study. I explained the ways in which I planned to collect data: through observation,

interview, individual reflection and document analysis. I explained their role in the research and emphasized that they did not have to participate in this research as it was in no way tied to their grades. I also explained that no information regarding their comments during interviews or reflections would be shared with Mrs. GT, until after the course was completed and final grades had been posted. I clarified that each individual was allowed to stop participating in this research at anytime and that there was no consequence to this choice.

Finally, I used forms which reiterated the points above and were written in Spanish and English, to ask for both parental consent and student assent form (if the student was under the age of 18) or student informed consent forms (for students over 18). The forms for the Haitian students were translated into Haitian Creole or French, because both students requested English forms and their guardians also spoke English. Both forms were used for two reasons. The trustworthiness of the data collected in this study was dependent on student participation. For this reason, it was important that the students fully understand the research purpose and process. Both the student informed consent form and student assent form offered the student the opportunity to express their agreement to participate in the study. I had three participants over the age of 18 and two who were 17. None of the parents or guardians wanted to meet and discuss concerns regarding the research.

Data Sources and Data Collection

Data sources for this study were selectively transcribed interviews, field notes from classroom observations, participants' and researcher's reflective journals and

document analysis of other classroom artifacts which include, but were not limited to lesson plans, classroom assignments, seating charts, and student work samples. These varied data sources will be used as a means of informing the continued data collection and will also serve as a means of triangulating the data.

Observations

This study consisted of 26 one hour classroom observations. These observations, in the US Government Course, took place on average two or three times a week across the 14 week time period from January 29, 2010 through May 14, 2010. In these observations, I functioned in both the role of “observer as participant” and a “participant as observer” as defined by Merriam (2009, p.127). On my first day of observation, Mrs. GT introduced me to the class and explained that I was going to be observing the class over the semester. I was asked twice by students within the class, who were not participants in the study, to explain my presence in the classroom. I responded to these questions explaining that I was observing the classroom to see what it was like for the teachers and students in this mainstream government classroom and that I was doing this study as my dissertation research. For a majority of my time in the mainstream classroom, I was an observer. On occasion, I would become an active participant, but only if approached by the students for clarification of an assignment or if they needed to ask a question unrelated to government regarding the page number or the time. I fulfilled this role for participants and non participants alike.

During my time in the classroom, I tried to be unobtrusive. I minimized my own presence in the classroom to get a sample of the day to day customs of this case (Bogdan

& Bilken, 2008). This approach provided limitations as I conducted research in my own school and means of checking my own power in the relationships with the ELLs. I also acknowledge that to some degree, by my very presence in the classroom, I was participant. During the observations, I focused using my field notes to record classroom events, event sequence, length of activities and discourse examples (Merriam, 2009). Following each classroom observation, I generally used two hours to review and add any additional observer comments to my field notes. The twenty six observations left me feeling confident that I had an informed understanding of the interactions occurring within this mainstream government classroom.

Interviews

Along with conducting classroom observations, I used both extensive and mini interviews with informants as a way of collecting data which focuses particularly on information which cannot be observed. Table 4 shows the number and types of interviews conducted with each participant.

Table 4

Types of Interviews

Participants	Extensive	Mini	Reflections
Mrs. GT	2	8	4
Chris	2	7	6
Beth	2	4	4
Keith	2	6	5

Maria	2	8	5
William	2	4	4

My research questions focused on the experiences of the informants within the case, and interviews were the best way of allowing the participants to share their ways of making meaning of their involvement in the inclusive classroom (Merriam, 2009). There were extensive interviews at the beginning and the end of the study. These semi structured interviews lasted from 25 -50 minutes and were audio recorded. Prior to the extensive interviews, I generated interview guides which served as a guide for these conversations with the informants. Because the extensive interviews were semi structured, the primary purpose of these guides was to elicit basic information from each of the participants. Neither the “exact wording, nor the order of the questions will be determined before” (Merriam, 2009, p.90) the interview. In the interviews I used questions from a framework offered by Strauss, Schatzman, Bucher, and Sabshin (1981). This framework offered four categories of questions: hypothetical, devil’s advocate, ideal position and interpretive questions. These questions assisted me in keeping my questions open ended in a way that yielded descriptive data (Merriam, 2009). Some questions used in the interviews can be found in the Appendixes. I began by interviewing all five informants as a way of establishing rapport, finding our personal information and gathering background information about past experiences with schooling. Four of these interviews were conducted afterschool and one was conducted before school. After the initial interviews, I used data from my observations, the students’ reflective journals and information collected in the document analysis to generate questions for my mini interviews. The mini-interviews were often conducted during study hall at school and

they were audio recorded or electronically entered after the study. Because my study was particularly interested in interactions and the ways in which these interactions shape the experience of the inclusive classroom, then I mentioned specific events for the informants to reflect upon in the mini-interviews. These interviews lasted from five to 15 minutes and were quickly transcribed post interview or recorded.

To further expand the information garnered in my interviews, I often probed for more information during the interviews. I consistently focused on establishing a comfortable environment and a positive interaction between myself and the participant by “being respectful, nonjudgmental, and nonthreatening” (Merriam, 2009, p.107). I conducted a final interview with my participants as a way of reflecting on the course as a whole. This course ended a week before school was out, so I was able to interview all of the participants within the last week of school. This interview served a dual purpose, gathering data and allowing the participants to member check the data interpretations which I had made thus far. All interviews were audio recorded or electronically recorded with the permission of the participants and then selectively transcribed. These transcriptions were then coded thematically.

Reflective Journals

Another form of data collection for my research was the reflective journals which were kept by the participants in my study. I asked the participants to record entries within electronic journals throughout the length of the semester. Each student was given a jump drive and created a power point presentation. By using a headset/microphone combination participants recorded an oral response to their weekly experiences in the

classroom. These reflections were recorded on a power point slide with the corresponding date. Students were given a prompts, found in the Appendices, to help guide them in these reflections. The original intention was for the responses to happen weekly. In reality, the informants provided audio reflections weekly in the beginning, but eventually just came to talk with me as needed when they had something to say about the class. I began to electronically record these comments and include them in the mini interview category. Mrs. GT rejected the idea of audio reflections and instead e-mailed reflections, or spoke to me after a classroom observation. The written reflections I included in the category of reflection and the after class comments I included in the mini interview category. I asked the students to choose an interaction from the class that they found memorable and to reflect on it. I also asked them to describe the interaction in detail and then to explore their thoughts and feelings about these events. These first person documents provided a “snapshot” of what the participants’ believed was important or meaningful (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). These journals were highly subjective and offered the individual’s experience (Merriam, 2009). These journals displayed multiple perspectives on the same events offering me a multifaceted understanding of my participants’ experiences in the inclusive classroom. When the participant chose not to keep a reflective journal, I would follow up. Most of the time participants indicated that they had been too busy to reflect. In these instances, I conducted a mini-interview which would allow them to reflect briefly on classroom events.

Classroom Artifacts

I collected a variety of classroom artifacts as data sources for this case study. These artifacts included US Government Georgia Performance Standards, course syllabi,

teacher generated assignment sheets, student work samples, grade reports, and items posted in the classroom. These items were analyzed to better understand the goals and decisions of the participants which were not completely revealed through observation or interviews. Classroom interactions, particularly with content, often happen in ways that are non-verbal. Documents such as these provided me with opportunities for observing these interactions and the role that they played in shaping the experiences of inclusive classroom. My responsibility as the researcher was to determine the authenticity and accuracy of these artifacts and interpret their role in the classroom interactions (Merriam, 2009). These documents were also coded for themes. Because of the potential nature of incomplete information available from the documents alone, I used these documents as tools to solicit information in interviews and as points of focus in an observation as a means of understanding how the documents were used.

Researcher's Journal

During this research process, I kept an electronic journal in which I recorded the dates of data collection and my reflections on this process. I recorded questions which occurred while examining the data and my personal responses to events which arose during the research. This journal was helpful for me because it provided a space to record emerging themes and ideas throughout the data collection and analysis process.

Data Management and Analysis

For the purposes of this study, I used my home office as the location in which all data will be stored. Participant data was stored electronically on a password protected jump drive which will be stored in a locking cabinet in my home. This data was backed

up on two additional jump drives and an external hard drive in case of technological difficulties. Participant data was filed electronically under pseudonyms. Each participant had file in which digital audio recordings of interviews, selective interview transcription, scanned copies of classroom artifacts, and digital journal entries were stored. All names on documents were changed to pseudonyms. Within these files, I also kept scanned copies of field notes, typed expanded field notes and observer comments, along with copies of classroom artifacts. Upon completion of this research, these data will be stored for the next five years and then they will be destroyed.

Data analysis was inductive and continual throughout the data collection process (Merriam, 2009). The primary means of analyzing data was coding themes as they were revealed in the data. The actual act of coding of data was done electronically. The folder containing the data and the backup jump drives, were stored in my home office filing cabinet. Data codes and their definitions were entered on electronic spreadsheets which were kept on file. The definitions and codes shifted throughout the data collection process. With each analysis, I saved a new spreadsheet indicating the revision date. As I analyzed the data from the various sources, I used the themes as a means of refining other opportunities for data collection (Merriam, 2009).

As each piece of data was collected it was first analyzed using open coding and then followed by a process of axial coding (Merriam, 2009). To begin, I coded the data using the four interactional categories of teacher, student, content or environment. Because the focus of this research centered on interactions, I began by focusing on the data points which received two categorical codes; such as teacher and content. From there I used the data sets to generate a master list of topics which appeared in these obviously

interactional data sets. I then reviewed the data and began coding other pieces of data that stood out. Eventually, I began to use codes as I revised the next data set. As I continually reworked my list of topics, I eventually created categories which were mutually exclusive and exhaustive. From this list, I revisited the data and begin axial coding (Merriam, 2009). I sought patterns in data sets for experiences resulting from points of interaction between teacher, ELL, content and environment. Of course this process was recursive and often messy, so I worked to manage my data in a way which provided organization to this process. As I collected data and established codes, I checked with my peer reviewer as a way of helping me clarify that my coding was appropriate for the collected data. My peer reviewer for this study is a colleague who is currently an ESOL secondary teacher and a fellow graduate student. She was chosen because she has familiarity with secondary ELLs, mainstream teachers, the social studies content and components influencing the classroom environment. We met three times during the data collection process and analysis process.

Within each data file, there was an Excel spreadsheet which served as a summary sheet for data as it was collected and coded. The spreadsheet included columns which indicate the interactional code, categories, the data source, and sample from the data. This type of data synthesis sheet allowed for sorting of information in a variety of ways. From these synthesis spreadsheets, I generated a master spread sheet, which combined the information across all of the data sources, and allowed me to sort the data in a variety of ways. These spreadsheets provided a visual aide for me in order to make sense of the phenomenon (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). I continued this recursive process of data

collection and analysis throughout the time of my study. Table 5 below provides the timeline of data collection and analysis.

Table 5

Timeline of Research Process

Dates	Activities
January 2010	Complete IRB and invite participants Set up initial electronic data collection files Begin observations
February 2010	Continue classroom observations and record fieldnotes Begin collection of documents Begin initial interviews and selective transcriptions Begin Reflections
March 2010	Continue classroom observations and record field notes Continue interviewing informants and selective transcriptions Continue collection of documents Continue reflections Continue data analysis
April 2010	Continue classroom observations and record field notes Continue interviewing informants and selective transcriptions Continue collection of documents Collect reflective journals Continue data analysis Meet with peer for verification of process and themes
May 2010	Continue final classroom observations and record field notes Conclude with closing interviews and selective transcriptions Conduct final collection of documents Continue data analysis Member check of themes
June 2010	Conduct final classroom observations and record field notes Meet with peer reviewer for verification on themes

July 2010	Continue Data Analysis Begin Drafting Dissertation
August 2010	Continue Data Analysis Continue Drafting Dissertation
September 2010	Continue Drafting Meet with peer reviewer
October 2010	Continue Drafting Dissertation
November 2010	Revising Dissertation
December 2010	Defending Dissertation

Trustworthiness

Research which intervenes in individuals' lives should be considered trustworthy. There are concepts of validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity which are used to measure the trustworthiness of a study. Because qualitative research is generated from a different paradigm, trustworthiness is assured through the rigor with which a study was conducted. Merriam (2009) discusses credibility, consistency and transferability. Using these constructs, I explain the rigor of my case study.

Credibility

The credibility of a study focuses on the extent that the research findings match reality. However; since qualitative research deals with people's perceptions of reality, there is no single answer to this question. Instead, qualitative researchers establish credibility through triangulation (Merriam, 2009). One example of triangulation seeks to ensure trustworthiness by checking findings from one multiple data sources with other

data sources. In my case study, findings are triangulated across observations, interviews, reflections and data from document analysis. Member checks were also used as means of establishing credibility. Participants in the study reviewed my preliminary analysis and they confirmed that they recognized their experience within my interpretation (Merriam, 2009). I engaged with data until both the data and themes begin to repeat themselves as a way of ensuring credibility and I participated in peer review as a way of checking both my data collection process and analysis. Finally, I remained continually aware of my role as researcher, stated my biases, and addressed the limitations to this research. These steps allow the reader to understand how and why I have interpreted the data in the particular ways delineated.

Consistency

The extent to which research findings can be replicated is considered consistency. Most qualitative researchers reject the idea of replication, because it requires intentional manipulation as a means of causing events. Qualitative researchers seek to understand phenomenon as they happen, naturally. For this case study then, consistency refers to the idea that the findings of my study are consistent with the data that I have collected (Merriam, 2009). In order to ensure consistency, I used many of the same methods which help ensure credibility. Member checking, triangulation, and clarification of my role as researcher are all ways I established consistency. Along with this, I established an audit trail in my researcher's journal. In this way, I had a running record of my process of data collection and data analysis. This allows readers to authenticate my findings by following my process (Merriam, 2009).

Transferability

The extent to which findings from one study can be applied to other studies is often important in research, however; qualitative researchers leave the transferring of findings from one study to another situation up to the readers. Therefore, it is my responsibility as the researcher to ensure that if a reader chooses to transfer understandings gained from my study to another situation that the research is presented in a way that would make this possible. In order to do this, I present my data using full, thick description of participants, setting, and findings of the study (Merriam, 2009).

Summary

In summary, this single case study is designed to understand the ways in which both the mainstream teacher and the ELLs experience the secondary inclusive mainstream classroom. In the following chapter, I will present the findings of this study through the use of five vignettes as a means of illustrating the experiences of the participants. These vignettes offer a glimpse into the events of the classroom and help the reader better understand the three themes (1) returning to the past; (2) navigating the expectations of the classroom and (3) preparing for the future.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

By analyzing activities and events, which are points of interactions between the teacher, students, content and environment, this study sought to understand the experiences of the mainstream teacher and the secondary ELL students as they participated in a mainstream US Government course. The constructionist theoretical frame work guiding this study substantiates that experiences are uniquely shaped by the people who are having the experience and as such, cannot be discussed separately from the individual. With this in mind, this chapter of findings begins with a detailed introduction of the participants

Meet the Participants

Mrs. GT

“Absolutely the last thing in the world that I was going to do was become a teacher. Not going to become a teacher. Never gonna be a teacher,” Joan laughingly begins her story. The irony does not escape either of us as we sit across from each other in her classroom. Her smile and sarcasm are palpable as she explains her journey of becoming the high school history teacher she is. Initially, Joan intended to earn a PhD in History, but instead, she left college after receiving her BA in history. Late in college, she worked as a camp counselor and realized that she might be interested in teaching, but

she was so close to graduation and felt pressure to finish school and be out on her own, so instead she began to work. She describes her first job as, “sitting in a cubicle and calling people and asking them, ‘Are you going to pay this bill?’ and it was awful. It was absolutely awful.” In fact, after about 15 minutes in the cubicle she realized that she needed to do something different. Her fiancé was accepted into law school and they relocated. She continued working, using the 75 mile, one way commute as a time to consider teaching social studies. Eventually, after working in retail sales, she began working as a substitute teacher at the high school closest to her house. She actually became a long term substitute during this time and decided that she had to start teaching. At the end of the school year, the school had no social studies positions. She knew that she was going to have to complete an alternative teaching certification program, in which she could simultaneously work and attain her certification.

Her first teaching position was teaching ninth-grade mathematics at this same high school. She began the job, obtaining her teaching certification while teaching a scripted program of mathematics (out of field) to ninth-grade repeaters on a block schedule. She knew “if she could survive that year, she could survive anything.” She moved into a social studies teaching position the next year and she also began the school newspaper. She continued teaching in the same high school until her husband completed law school and then they relocated. Again, she began as a substitute teacher, and eventually was offered a full time position because she was able to both coach basketball and teach social studies (in that order). She began her teaching career at Local High School three years ago. In that time, she has become a certified teacher of talented and gifted students and she no longer coaches basketball. Instead, in this her sixth year of

teaching, she finds herself teaching three different courses: two sections of honors Geography (a ninth grade course), two sections of US History (an eleventh grade course) and one section of US Government (a twelfth grade course).

Chris

Chris, wore a pair of faded blue jeans and a grey t-shirt and looked slightly nervous as he sat across from me at a table in the back of my classroom. I had asked him several times, prior to the conversation, if he wanted to have a translator for this interview and he told me “No, I need to practice my English.” This motivation to learn English by using it consistently reappears throughout Chris’s participation in the study. As a nineteen-year-old El Salvadorian, Chris was the oldest student in the study. He had been in the US for a little over nine months, though he did not enroll at Local High School until August of 2009. Chris was also a student in my ESOL American Literature Course. When Chris enrolled in school, he was given an exam to measure his English proficiency, which placed him at a beginner level of English language development. According to the assessment tool, this level indicated that he was prepared to understand and produce phrases or short sentences; however phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors might impede meaning of the communication even when given visual or contextual support. This level of English proficiency can often lead to struggles with mainstream coursework, particularly if the teacher is making no accommodations which help to lessen the linguistic load. These students often require extensive scaffolding in order to be successful within the mainstream classroom (Colombo & Furbush, 2009; Cummins, 1984). Linguistically, it seemed Chris would be challenged in a mainstream government classroom.

On the other hand, Chris had the benefit of almost completing high school in his home country. While in El Salvador, Chris was studying nursing at a technical school and was one semester shy from receiving his diploma. In this program, he was in school from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. He studied 15 subjects during the week and he had several teachers. Each morning he would join his fellow students in the gym and sing the national anthem. There would be a short motivational speech and then he would attend courses. He would take his first three classes and then take a break for twenty minutes. He would then go to his next three courses and then have a break for lunch. After lunch he had his nursing course work which included a study of theory, sciences, and a practical component. Chris loved the practical component of his school in El Salvador, where he worked in hospitals dealing with both pediatrics and obstetrics. Having come quite close to completing high school in El Salvador meant that Chris had developed prior knowledge of both concepts and academic behaviors which would benefit him in his mainstream US Government course. In short, Chris's cognitive development had provided him a knowledge base for this course.

Chris came to the United States to live with his mother, stepfather and sister. Chris's mother left for the United States first, leaving his sister to live with a grandmother while he lived with his father. The situation with his father was physically and emotionally abusive. He left this situation and moved in with his paternal grandmother. He determined that his grandmother was not spending the money sent from his mother on him and he moved to live with his maternal grandmother. During this time, he and his sister began receiving threats from gangs, and they fled to the United States. Chris entered the country without inspection and was anxious to learn English and to complete

high school. As we began the study, Chris was on track with course credits, for graduation; however, he had only passed his GHSGT in the area of mathematics. He spoke of his goal of graduating from high school and continuing on to technical college to study nursing.

Beth

As we sat in the back of my classroom, Beth looked at me with large brown eyes, emphasized by a golden colored eye shadow. Her long, black hair was pulled back from her carefully made up face, and she smiled as she spoke. As did the other participants, Beth chose to do her interviews in English. Beth, now 17, came from Honduras to the United States, approximately five years ago. When asked about her previous experience with school, Beth chose to discuss her experience in a nearby county. She does not mention Honduras. She explains that her schooling in the United States began in a nearby, metro area school which had a much larger population of ELLs. In her first school, she was in ESOL classes for five of her six classes a day. When she talks about her first year in the US school system she remembers it as “hard, because I didn’t understand anything in English. Nothing.” In order to survive, she befriended the other Spanish speaking students in her class and they helped her to know what she was supposed to be doing in order to be successful in the classes. She did not begin attending mainstreamed content classes until she transferred to LHS.

Initially, it seems that Beth was cognitively prepared for her entry into a mainstream US Government course. Beth had attended four prior years of high school in the United States which meant she had successfully completed a series of social studies

courses in English including: Geography, Current Issues, World History and US History. However, even after five years in US schools, her language proficiency was still in the intermediate stage. This level of language development indicated that she would have only some of the specific language with this content area and that she was able to produce both orally and in writing a variety of sentence lengths and complexities. Beth's language level indicated that she would still need scaffolding in order to be successful in the mainstream government course.

Beth considers herself a "good student." She speaks of how she studies for her classes everyday and how she would like to be a cosmetologist when she finishes LHS. She was also on track for graduation regarding course credits. At the time the study began, she had passed only the writing section of the GHSGT. As she entered into her last semester of high school, she was feeling pressure to pass her courses and her exit exams so that she would graduate.

Maria

Maria met with me for the first time in the early morning. She was dressed in jeans and a black shirt, with her long brown hair tucked behind one ear. Maria wore a small amount of make-up, and was attentive as we began the interview. She also chose to do the interview in English and I was struck by how confident she was as she spoke. She introduced herself as a 17-year-old Colombian and explained that she has been in the US since September. Maria came to the US with a student visa, and moved to live with her aunt in order to learn how the "American school system works." Maria plans to

attend college in the US and explains that she misses her family and friends, but she is focused on completing high school in the US.

Maria describes herself as a quick learner and a “really good student.” She explains that she often understood concepts more quickly than her friends in Colombia and often would help her friends by re-teaching the material to them after class. When Maria entered LHS, she enrolled as an eleventh grader; however, she received no credit for her first semester of course work because she did not meet the state’s required amount of “seat time.” With the help of her AP Calculus teacher and the counseling office, we created a second semester schedule which allowed her to recover a majority of her first semester coursework, so that she would remain on track to graduate in 2011. Her enrollment in the government course was simply to create more space in her schedule for other Advanced Placement classes during her senior year. Cognitively, Maria seemed to have developed a variety of academic skills which allowed her to be a strong student evidenced by her success in advanced level courses. She previously studied history and government in Colombia, which created a foundation of content knowledge which she could draw upon in her study of US Government. Maria had passed the writing section of the GHSGT in September after two months in the United States, which indicated that her academic English was well developed. She also explained that she had studied English in Colombia for at least seven years. Her competency in English was seen as she was labeled as an advanced speaker indicating that she needed only limited linguistic scaffolding to be successful in the US government course.

William

Wearing a t-shirt and carefully matched pants, William sat across from me with a smile playing on his lips. We have known each other for some time now, and he was comfortable with the idea of having a conversation with me. William was an 18-year-old ELL who was born in New York. His family returned to Haiti when he was an infant, but he had spent several summers with his family in Georgia before making the move more permanent 2 ½ years before. When asked about his history as a student, William depicts himself as “mostly a B plus student in Haiti because my parents told me that I cannot go to a good college if my grades go below that.” However, he continues by explaining that he is “not a B student here in the US.” He related this to the fact that he lived with his aunt and “not having my parents here to force me to do what I am supposed to do has kinda changed everything.” William indicated that he was struggling with completing his assignments without his parents reminding.

Linguistically, William had an intermediate, but almost advanced level of English proficiency. English was the language most often spoken in his home and until the arrival of Keith, he had limited opportunities to use his native language in school. As expected from this information, William had strong communicative skills in English and his academic English was slightly less advanced. Linguistically, he would also need so degree of scaffolding to help him attain academic proficiency in English. Cognitively, William had successfully completed US History in LHS the year before. He did not mention any study of government in his schooling in Haiti, but did indicate that both social studies and science were his areas of difficulty. At the time of the research, William was on track for graduation. His course load consisted of Algebra 3, ESOL 4,

Government and three elective courses. William had successfully passed all sections of the graduation tests, though he did not complete social studies or science on his first attempt. William was excited about graduation and had taken his senior portraits and was preparing a large celebration for his graduation.

Keith

My first interview with Keith took place after school. Keith, a 17-year-old senior, enrolled at LHS in late February. He sat across from me in a plain white t-shirt and blue jeans with his hands crossed in front of him and an almost expectant smile. He was a soft spoken young man, polite and direct in his responses. He chose to conduct the interview in English and explained that he was born and raised in Haiti, and had arrived in Georgia as a result of the destructive earthquake which struck Haiti in January. His school was partially destroyed and he did not want to lose any time in his education as he was due to graduate at the end of that year. He explained that he and his sister had moved here to live with cousins as soon as the commercial airlines began running and they were able to leave Haiti. His parents had remained in Haiti and visited the United States once during the course of this research.

When asked to describe himself as a student, Keith indicated “when I wanted to, I had pretty good grades. I was a B student, and there were some classes that I couldn’t stand, like science classes.” Within his first week of enrollment, he was required to take the high school graduation writing test and the English language proficiency battery exam. According to his English proficiency exam, Keith was also an advanced English speaker when he began the research. This language proficiency level indicated that Keith

would need minimal support in the US government classes. His score indicated that he was approaching a native like fluency in both communicative and academic English. Linguistically, his support would need to consist mostly of identifying the meanings of words with which he was unfamiliar and exposure to colloquial phrases and idiomatic expressions.

Cognitively, Keith seemed to be prepared for the content. He brought several history credits with him for Haiti, though none of them were specifically named government. As he entered the study, it was difficult to know how much prior knowledge Keith had regarding government as the content area, but his academic skills were apparent. He was well organized and attentive and he passed the US government midterm using the study guide, after only a week in the course. With the credits which he brought from Haiti and his current course load, Keith was on track for graduation; however, he had not taken the subject area graduation exams and had only one chance, before the graduation ceremony in May, to take and pass these high stakes exams.

Understanding Participant Experiences

The participants each came to this study as individuals. In order to best tell the story of the classroom through the experiences of the participants, the findings are grouped into three large categories (a) Returning to the Past; (b) Navigating the Expectations of the Classroom; and (c) Preparing for the Future. These categories seek to explain the experiences of the participants by looking at classroom events and instructional decisions and exploring the influences that shaped them. The first category, returning to the past is composed of classroom events or instruction decisions that are

shaped directly by the past experiences of the participants. Following, is the second category, navigating the expectations of the classroom, is composed of activities and decisions which the participants used to navigate the expectations of the class. The final category, preparing for the future, is composed of experiences which are defined as preparing for the future. Figure 1 displays the findings from this case study by displaying the influences which shaped the experience of the mainstream US Government classroom for the teacher and the ELLs.

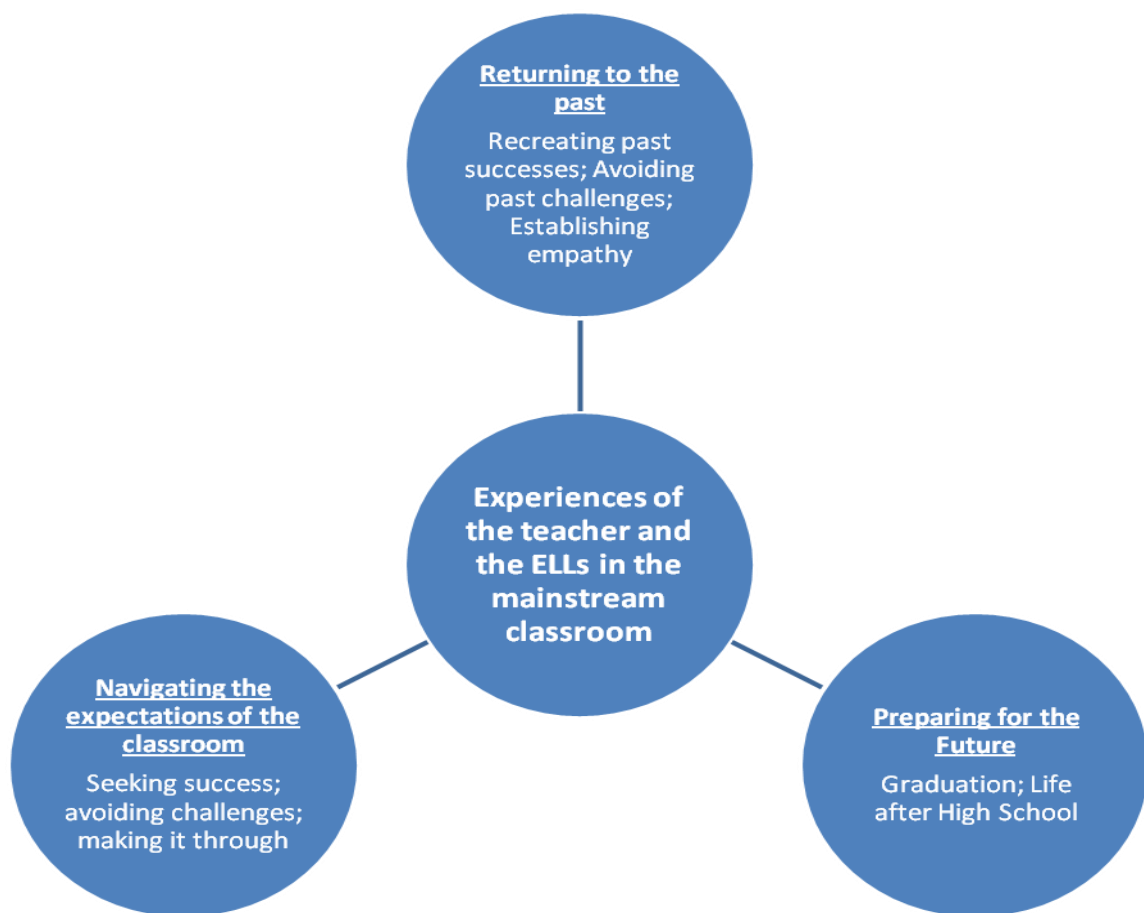


Figure 1 Findings of Common Experiences

Returning to the Past

This section begins by presenting a vignette which illustrates a series of interactions between the mainstream teacher, students, content and environment within this mainstream inclusive classroom. Vignette 1 is not a directly transcribed single classroom observation, but instead it is a compilation of classroom events interwoven to depict a typical day in this classroom. The events included: such as bell work, use of EQ's, distribution of cloze notes, length of lecture and follow up classroom activities are patterned from the same events occurring in at least 16 of the 26 observations. As a result, the happenings within this mainstream classroom are depicted within this vignette as a single classroom moment as a means of preserving the sense of the participants' experiences. Following Vignette 1 is a discussion of the themes found within this category: Returning to the Past.

Vignette 1

When the bell rings to begin sixth period, the students are already seated and looking at the board and preparing to copy the information needed for today into their spiral notebooks. Today, the board reads EQ: What is the separation of powers in the US government? Bell Work: Explain extradition; Announcements: Unit 2 test on Friday. The students copy the Bell Work from the board into notebooks, which are turned in at the end of each unit. These spiral notebooks contain only the bell work, which is valued at 5 points per day, which make the notebooks vary in point value depending on the amount of bell work in each unit. After about three minutes have passed, it seems that the students have copied and answered the bell work and they sit ready and waiting for Mrs. GT to begin the lesson for the day. She moves to the front of the room and quickly

takes attendance on the computer. She casually sits on the table in the front of the room and begins class by reminding the students of the upcoming test on Friday. She follows up with a reminder that the study guide, which she passed out on Monday, would need to be completed for a grade by tomorrow (Thursday). She also reminds the students to check the large white sheet of sticky paper hanging on the wall as a way of making sure they have completed all the class assignments. These pages have been updated throughout the unit and provide a dated list of class activities which need to be placed into the student's assignment notebooks.

She continues by asking if anyone has any questions about yesterday's lesson on the separation of powers. No one responds so she moves on to bell work. She directs the question, "What is extradition?" towards the class. The students remain quiet and she says, "Come on folks. This was your bell work. What is extradition?" A student in the middle of the classroom asks her to explain extradition. She responds by saying "Extradition is when you return the fugitive to the place in which the crime was committed. Ok, so let's say that you committed a felony in Georgia and you run off to Alabama trying not to get caught. Ok? There are laws that say Alabama has to send you back to Georgia for your trial." As she speaks, many students are writing furiously in their notebook pages, seemingly trying to copy the correct answer on their page. Other students sit quietly, looking forward, but do not write anything. After discussing the bell work and reminding students of the upcoming test, she moves over to the room, turns out the light and says "Ok then. Let's get started. What is the point of separation of powers?" A string of white Christmas lights illuminates the center of the room, generating enough

light for the students to take notes. A female voice answers saying that it ensures one branch does not get too much power within the government.

While waiting for an answer, Mrs. GT had moved over to her lap top and she now projects a completed chart up on the board. The chart has two columns labeled separation of powers (people and purpose) and checks and balances. There are also three columns, labeled judicial, executive and legislative. She then moves around the room and hands out a blank chart to all of the students. For today's lesson, the students are copying the information regarding the three branches of government onto their individual copy of the chart. As the students copy, Mrs. GT narrates the information on the chart using a combination of questions and anecdotes to explain the information. She begins her lecture with a preview, "Ok, what we are going to talk about today is the separation of powers and checks and balances within the executive branch. This is the final section on your constitution study guide." She glances at the notes within the chart projected in the front of the room. She discusses a section of the chart and then she asks the students a question, "What is Hillary Clinton's job?" A student responds and she says, "It is a little more than that." Another student responds and she says, "Exactly. That is exactly her job, foreign relations. Her job is to make sure that relationships between the United States and other countries are good. What is an example of something that she has been working a lot within the past couple of weeks?" She follows this with a question, "What is something that Clinton is working on now?" The students answer and she prompts them until someone responds correctly. "Are there any questions about the Executive branch before we move on?" The class remains silent and when it seems that that section of the chart has been completed and the eyes of the students are looking up to the room, she

changes the projection to the next row on the chart, the legislative branch. “Ok, now we are going to move on to the legislative branch.” The lecture continues following the same pattern until the chart for all three branches of government has been completed. She ends this portion of the lecture by asking, “Are there any questions? Dividing jobs into three branches? Checks and Balances? Any questions? Ok then once you guys are finished with this you are going to need a sheet of paper on the desk please.” Without any talking, the students put their charts into their binders and to take out paper.

Moving to the next phase of her lesson, Mrs. GT comments, “Yeah we’ve got some notes today, sorry,” as she walks around handing out a set of cloze notes to the ELLs. She changes the projection on the screen to a typed page of notes and then begins her lecture. During the lecture, Mrs. GT generally looks at the screen and then summarizes or rephrases the information that she has in the notes. She also asks questions to the class, though she rarely gets an answer. She introduces the next section of lecture, “What we need to learn about today is a federal system of government.” She then reviews what a federal system of government is and discusses the historical events which led up to the United States deciding to follow a system of government which allows states to control local matters and the national government to control national issues. A majority of the students are copying the notes as quickly as they can, trying to get all of the projected information into their notebooks. Mrs. GT asks the students “Am I going too fast?” Many of them nod yes, without taking their eyes off of the notes projected in front of them. During lecture, the ELLs are responding in different ways. The cloze notes that each ELL has received, is a copy of a majority of the lecture, with certain words or phrases omitted. The ELLs are responsible for listening along with the

lecture and filling in the blanks with the omitted words. Beth is looking at the notes on the screen and back at the notes in front of her, seemingly filling in the blanks. She seems to be focusing more on finding the missing words from the cloze notes, than actively listening to Mrs. GT's conversation. William, who had come into the room with a late pass, is not writing anything on his paper. His head is resting on his crossed arms and he seems to be struggling to stay awake. He does smile and laugh at a joke that Mrs. GT includes in her lecture, but he does not ever write anything on to his blanks on his cloze notes handout. Marie is actively making notes from the projected notes onto her paper. She alternates between focusing on the projected notes, Mrs. GT and the page in front of her. Upon closer inspection, Marie has not used the cloze notes and she is copying the notes from the projector into her notebook. Chris and Kevin are both looking at the projected notes and actively listening to Mrs. GT. Both students clearly have the cloze notes on the desk in front of them, and are only writing down brief words or phrases. They are focused in on Mrs. GT and look only at the projected notes every once in awhile. During the lecture, Mrs. GT will ask the students about the definition of a specific word. Generally another student will offer the definition of that word, and Mrs. GT will rephrase or offer a synonym for this word. This focus on vocabulary is not explicitly emphasized to the students and none of ELLs make any notes on their pages during these exchanges. The lecture continues for about twenty minutes, and when they reach the end of the notes, the students collectively sigh with relief.

For the remaining fifteen minutes in class, the students are given an assignment entitled "What does the Constitution say about Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances". This assignment involves reading ten statements and "deciding if the

statement describes a situation which agrees with the words of the US Constitution.” The students then had to indicate if the statement agreed or not and “identify the Article, Section and Clause to the Constitution which supports [their] answer.” Mrs. GT stands at the front of the room and summarizes the directions for the assignment and reminds the students that they will have to return their copies of the Constitution at the end of the period. The room is relatively quiet as the students begin their work. Mrs. GT circulates the room and returns quizzes to the students. She stops by William’s desk and pats him on the shoulder, telling him “good job” after she gives him his quiz. After about four minutes, students begin quietly talking to each other, presumably asking for answers on the assignment. For example, Chris moves closer to Beth and whispers a question to her in Spanish, while pointing to a question on his worksheet. Beth looks at the same question on her worksheet and then responds to him in Spanish. The three Spanish speaking ELLs are having quick conversations with each other in Spanish. William and Kevin are also conversing in Haitian-Creole, but do not sit next to each other so the communication is not as easy. Mrs. GT is also circulating the room and specifically stops at the desk of each ELL to ask them, “Are you doing OK on this assignment?” Each ELL responds affirmatively and continues to work. William asks Mrs. GT if he can take a copy of the Constitution home and Mrs. GT allows him to do so, with the instructions that he must return it before first period tomorrow. The conversation continues and Mrs. GT provides William with a copy of the Constitution in French. Eventually, Chris looks up at the clock and begins to gather his stuff. This move is followed by the rustle of students looking at the clock and gathering their belongings too. A loud beeping noise comes from the intercom and the afternoon announcements begin. This is a signal to all

of the students that the day is almost over and there is no talking, but the students move around the room returning their copies of the constitution and closing notebooks. The students put on their backpacks and lean into their desks, half sitting, and wait for the bell to ring signaling the end of class and the end of the day. Mrs. GT reminds the students one last time, “Review Sheets, for the test on Friday, are due tomorrow.” She then indicates that after the test, they are going to be watching Dave as an introduction to next unit which focuses on the Executive branch. The bell sounds and the students move out of the room.

Understanding the Subcategories in Vignette 1

The past experiences of the participants in this study clearly shaped the current experiences of the inclusive classroom. Within the overarching category of returning to the past, the experiences of both the students and the teacher are divided into three subcategories. Through interview, document analysis, reflection and observation the participants’ experiences which influenced the current actions in the mainstream classroom are divided into three subcategories (a) recreating past successes, (b) avoiding past challenges and (c) establishing empathy. Table 6 illustrates the subcategories within the overarching category of Returning to the Past.

Table 6

Sub-categories within Returning to the Past

	Recreating Past Successes	Avoiding Past Challenges	Establishing Empathy
Teacher	Approach to grading; choice of instructional activities	Responding to negative evaluation; overwhelmed by grading	Language learning student in college
Students	Familiarity with the content; use of cognates	Responding to past failure in social studies	

Recreating Past Successes

Each participant in the study made decisions during their participation in the inclusive mainstream government class which attempted to recreate a successful educational experience from the past. For example, Mrs. GT attempts to recreate her past academic successes through her approach to grading. Her course syllabus explained her grading policy as follows:

Grading Method: In each unit, students will be responsible for completing all reading assignments, study guides, classroom, and group assignments.
Grades will be earned on a total points basis:

5 points each – Bellwork activities (warm-up activities at the beginning of class)

10 points each – classwork including but not limited to group assignments,
notebook checks, notes, and homework

50 points each – quizzes

100 points each – tests

100-300 points each – comprehensive projects

Above grades will count 90% of the student's grade. The other 10% will be made up of the final exam.

Though this description does help students understand the grading policy, it does not tell the entire story of how and why Mrs. GT grades as she does. A clear understanding comes from investigating grade distribution across a unit of study. Each unit of study in the course generates a range of 100 to 150 points worth of class work, 50 points worth of bell work activities, 50 to 100 points from quizzes, approximately 150 points from projects and culminates with a single test worth 100 points. In the vignette above, the students are preparing for a Constitution test, which is 100 point assignment. Throughout this unit, the students have completed bell work, class work assignments such as the constitutional activity, and a study guide. These activities combine to total 180 points. It is worth almost double the cumulative exam grade. Even if the student does poorly on the test, a majority of the grade comes from the class work. This decision is intentional and creates a point system which weights the notebooks and the projects more than tests. Weighting grades in this manner, is an instructional decision which connects to her own past experiences as a student. She says, “When I was in school, I was never a really good test taker, but I did every assignment, and that is what saved me.” Mrs. GTs’ instructional decision in this government classroom is an attempt to recreate, for her students, her own academic success.

Mrs. GT also repeats the use of certain instructional activities because of their successful use in the past. In the vignette, she references one of two films she shows during the semester, *Dave*. *Dave* is a film in which the main character, Dave, bears a striking physical resemblance to the President of the United States. The Secret Service contacts Dave and asks him to act as a decoy for the President at an appearance and Dave

does this successfully. Later that evening, the President suffers a stroke while in bed with a mistress. In order to keep the scandal a secret, two advisors ask Dave to impersonate the President until the President's health improves.

Dave was a film Mrs. GT began showing during her student teaching experience and the positive response from her students caused her to continue using the film in her government classes. She enjoyed the success of the lesson, and has continued recreating that success within this mainstream classroom. Interestingly enough, the justification for showing the film *Dave* is limited. Mrs. GT explains that "it allows the students to see what the President actually does." The ELLs in the class also enjoyed watching this film. K remarked that this film was one of his favorite activities within the class. He explained, "I learned that the US government was corrupt too. Before I watched *Dave*, I thought that there was only corruption in the Haitian government." Other instructional decisions in the class also came from success in the previous semester. One example of this is "The Presidential Campaign Project", which was so successful in the first semester government course, that she was certain to include it this course of study also.

Mrs. GT designed her classroom lectures around her successful experiences as a history student too. When asked about her approach to teaching, Mrs. GT reflected on her own experience as a successful student by sharing "I liked teachers who told a story and tried to make it come alive; throw in the interesting bits, not just the "this and this" - so I try to do that." One example of her attempt to recreate this success is evidenced in the vignette when Mrs. GT asks the class about the current Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, and the current types of diplomatic relationships between the US and Haiti following the earthquake. Mrs. GT attempts to recreate a successful classroom

experience by emulating the teaching style which she liked by add interesting pieces of information to her instruction. Mrs. GT makes clear connections between her current pedagogical decisions and her successful experiences as a student. For Mrs. GT, many of her instructional decisions were influenced by her attempts to recreate successful past experiences within this classroom.

The ELLs were also interested in recreating positive experiences as students. In the vignette, the students are given a Constitution assignment which many found very difficult. The assignment required reading the Constitution and determining what article and section supported or rejected a statement on the worksheet. Maria had no difficulty with the assignment, and she expresses that her prior successful experiences with government made this assignment easy for her. Through her interview, Maria explains that her study of government began when she was a young child and she learned the national anthem of Colombia. She adds that she studied the national symbols such as the flag and the national flower. She continues by saying:

M: In high school they teach you the constitution. The Constitution in my country is longer than here. You have to buy the book that has the Constitution of Colombia. They sell the book everywhere. So you have to have the book. Then they put you to do work about some of the articles in the constitution. You have to *know* the Constitution.

A: So what about here. How does that experience compare to your study of government here?

M: I think that it is not so different because in my country you have different departments, like here you have the states and then you have the cities which are like the counties here. It is no different. A lot of division here. You know the nation has its own constitution, but then each state has its own rules too, you know its own constitution. I think that is better because in my country each department has to follow the national constitution because the cities don't have constitutions.

Maria indicates that she is very familiar with the topic of Colombian government, and she clearly makes connections between her prior successful experiences with the Colombian Constitution as the reason for her success with this U.S. Constitution assignment. This activity was extremely difficult for most of the ELLs however, for Maria it was relatively simple due to the fact that she had done activities similar to it in Colombia.

For Chris, the successful classroom experiences in the government class were linked to his success with learning academic vocabulary in Spanish. In the vignette, Mrs. GT uses a content specific vocabulary word *extradition*. As seen in the vignette, words like extradition are key vocabulary terms for government, and often emphasized on exams and in lecture. In the vignette, Mrs. GT emphasizes this in her focus of the word for bell work and in her definition and real word example of the word. She offers a definition to the students because this word is important for the students to know. Extradición is the Spanish equivalent to extradition. Chris discusses in his interview that his prior knowledge of words like these are the key to his current success in this US Government course. He is confident in his conceptual knowledge because he was

successful learning the meaning of advanced words such as democracy and justice in his native language.

Finally, all of the ELLs indicated that part of their success in the class was tied to their prior success with a teaching style which consistently uses lecture and notetaking. In an interview, Keith discusses that the style of lecture and note taking is familiar and similar to his educational experiences in Haiti. In fact, he compliments Mrs. GT's ability to engage students during lecture when he says, "She explains pretty well...I had some teachers in Haiti who could not explain the information very well." He also compliments her use of technology during lectures because it feels more modern than the standard lecture he was accustomed to in Haiti. Maria also favors this teaching style because it aligns with her past experiences taking notes. She explains:

Taking notes. We began doing it in elementary school. In elementary, the teacher writes on the board and you copy it into the notebook. When you are in middle school, they start reading, they stop and you copy. In high school, they just explain and you have to take notes just like when you are in college.

William, Beth and Chris all felt very comfortable with this lecture and note taking teaching method because it was familiar. Neither William nor Chris expressed a preference for this style of teaching, but they did remark that they understood the lecture teaching style and felt comfortable with it.

Avoiding Past Difficulties

Many of Mrs. GT's procedures were created as a means avoiding past challenges in the classroom. She readily admits that she is "by nature a very organized person.

Sometimes to the point that it makes my husband crazy.” Though her natural inclinations towards organization are evident in the classroom, she explains that many of her procedures are remedies for past difficulties. As seen in the vignette above, Mrs. GT has the students copy bell work from the board into a notebook and she grades this work. This instructional choice is a result of a past challenge. In her interview she explains, “as far as everything (referring to the board work, essential question and announcements) being on the board- I got marked down in my first year of teaching for that and they have been on the board ever since.” Though she indicates that the technique of providing the students with work from the beginning of the class is supported in training for teaching talented and gifted students, it is evident that the consistency with this activity is more a result of being negatively evaluated, than as a way to engage the students. For Mrs. GT, writing all the information on the board is an assurance that she can avoid past difficulties on evaluations.

The notebooks were also born from her past difficulties as a teacher. In the vignette, Mrs. GT emphasizes the importance of the notebook for the students. However, the notebook also has significance for Mrs. GT as it is a tool to help her avoid past difficulties with grading. Mrs. GT recounts “My first year of teaching social studies, we went home for Thanksgiving break and I am not kidding, I had a stack like this (gesture of enormous height). It took me almost the entire break to grade it, so I was like this cannot continue to happen. So that is where the notebook system comes from and it has gotten more structured as I have gone.” In response, she created the notebooks in which the students keep up with their own assignments until she collects the notebooks at the end of the unit. For Mrs. GT, the notebooks provide her an opportunity to grade

assignments more quickly as all of the class work is ordered and grouped in one location, and can be scanned for both completion and accuracy. As she says, notebooks were “born out of necessity.” This procedure also forces her to grade class work on a regular schedule, preventing the work from building up and becoming overwhelming. In this way, she has made an instructional decision to avoid her past difficulties.

The decisions of the ELLs in the class were also influenced by a need to avoid prior difficulties. At the beginning of the research, Chris did not start the semester off feeling confident about government course, due to his prior experiences with social studies. He explained that in El Salvador, “when the teacher would talk about the constitution, I would just fall asleep.” He made poor grades in those courses and often was sent out of the class for sleeping. He struggled with the subject matter which he found boring. As seen in the vignette 1, Chris focused on remaining attentive during class. He used his cloze notes as a means of helping him follow the lecture and he also asked questions of his peers and the teacher whenever he did not understand the assignment.

Establishing Empathy

Along with her design of the course, Mrs. GT makes several instructional decisions based on her understandings of language learners. In fact, Mrs. GT had empathy for language learners, which was born from her own past experiences. In a reflection, Mrs. GT shares:

I have a minor in French. As a part of earning that minor, I studied abroad at the Universite Laval in Quebec City, Canada for a summer. It was a French

immersion program – there were actual consequences if we were caught speaking English. Because of that experience, I understand exactly what it is like to be sitting in a classroom and be unsure of what is happening. I know what it's like to have someone ask you a question and then spend a long time translating in your head into your language, then forming your response and translating it (trying hard to make sure the verb sentences and word arrangement is correct!). I also remember what it was like to be in some French classes at UGA where there was so much pressure to do the work perfectly that it took away some of my love for studying the language. I try to keep my language experience in mind when dealing with the ELLs.

This experience is her basis for establishing empathy for the students learning English in her classroom. In the vignette, Mrs. GT provides specific accommodations for the ELLs in the class by giving them cloze notes and extended time. In most of our discussions about the ELLs and their involvement in class or their accommodations, she refers back to her personal experience learning French and uses it to reflect on the tasks that she is asking the ELLs to complete. Her personal experience as a student functions as a barometer for the difficulty that the students may experience with an assignment.

This use of her personal experience can also be seen when she is discussing modifications on exams. Mrs. GT 's exams usually contain a writing segment of two to three paragraphs; however, she modified this portion of the test for the ELLs in her class and changed that portion of the exam for the ELLs into a component that is less writing intensive. She explained that she often used leading questions or graphic organizers for the ELLs, so that the students would have less pressure to produce the response. When I

questioned her about making those changes, she referred back to her own past experiences by saying, “If I had to sit down and answer those essay questions in French right now, it would take me a long time. That’s why we changed that portion of the exam.” She often makes reference to her experience, when discussing the ELLs and her instructional decisions. When I discuss with her the grading for these students, she mentions her own experience again. She indicates that she does not grade the ELLs on the grammar or mechanics of their writing. She acknowledges “that a person learning a language is going to make mistakes.” In short, Mrs. GT’s prior experience as a foreign exchange student and has created empathy which influences both her instructional approach and decision making in this class.

As illustrated and explained above, the participants within this inquiry often interacted within this classroom by returning to their past experiences as a way of (1) recreating past successes; (2) avoiding past challenges and (3) establishing empathy. Revisiting the past in this way not only informed the policies and procedures of the classroom, but also the means by which the teacher and the students performed within the class. The classroom interactions and understandings of these interactions were not limited to returning to the past. The informants in this case study intentionally employed strategies designed to help them be successful in navigating the expectations of the classroom.

Navigating the Expectations of the Classroom

Within this section is an exploration of the experiences of the participants as they navigated the expectations of the mainstream classroom. These experiences are

presented through intentional acts in which the participants were actively involved in situations as a means of achieving certain goals. These experiences are grouped into three sub categories: (1) seeking success; (2) avoiding challenges and (3) making it through. Each subcategory is introduced with a vignette which seeks to illustrate the participants' experiences within the mainstream classroom.

Seeking Success

Prior to understanding the subcategory of seeking success within this mainstream classroom, it is necessary to understanding how the participants within this study defined success. Accordingly, this section begins with a section which explores the definition of success for the participants. It is then followed by vignette 2, which illustrates the subcategory of seeking success within this mainstream classroom. This subcategory discusses four specific strategies used by the participants to seek success in this classroom. These four strategies (1) effectively preparing for exams; (2) changing strategy; (3) providing and using accommodations and (4) collaborating are introduced in vignette 2 and then followed by the understandings gained through this subcategory..

Defining Success

Each participant in the study has an individual definition of success. For Mrs. GT, winning the game meant that she covered all of the course content and a majority of her students passed. Mrs. GT's felt very strongly about using of standards to guide her teaching. There are 23 Georgia Performance Standards for American Government and Mrs. GT used the standards in planning the government course. She explains:

We sat down one day last summer and we planned it out. These are our units and these are the standards we are going to cover in each unit. And then from there, I find if you are using the standards, they tend to lend themselves pretty easily to lessons and so we would just basically use them to find out lecture topic for the day and then go in a fill in the activities. I find if you stick to the standards you can get through everything. You just can't wonder off and get lost. You can't go on tangents and that kind of stuff.

For Mrs. GT, teaching all of the course standards was a measure of success in the course. In each of her extended interviews, she mentioned the importance of the standards and of aligning classroom assignments to the standards. This use of standards was an essential component in a more universal understanding of success, which was held by all of the participants.

Passing the course was essential for each participant in the course. Beth, William and Chris defined their "success" as passing the course. William went on to explain that passing the course was not his whole understanding of success, and that success also included learning. He shows this in the interview:

A: "Is passing the same as success for you?"

W: No – even if you pass a class with a 90. As long as you didn't learn from that class, that doesn't mean you learned something. A student who passes with a 70 or 75, but learned something, that is success. You will have something in your mind. You will know it for your whole life.

In contrast, Keith and Maria defined their success as a achieving an “A” in the course. The numerical grade was very important to both of these participants. For Mrs. GT, designing a course in which the students passed was also very important. She explains that all but one of the students in this mainstream government class “did what they had to do and passed the course.” She was especially pleased because she was also able to say, “I did get all of the material covered, stayed on schedule which is always important to me because I made sure that I got through all the standards. So I feel good that I taught them all the information, you know I did what I was supposed to do.” Both the teacher and the ELLs shared a common definition of success within this mainstream classroom

Introducing Vignette 2.

Vignette 2, which is used to introduce the category of seeking success reflects a single classroom event in which the students are preparing for an exam using a review game. Across my observations, the students took four exams and the preparation for the exams all followed the same pattern: (1) turning in notebook; (2) discussion and grading of the study guide; and (3) collaborative review game. Using this pattern, this vignette is constructed to depict a typical moment of seeking success in the mainstream inclusive classroom. Quotations included are from actual classroom events.

Vignette 2.

“Hey, What did you put down for number 8?” one student says. Another responds, “I am still looking for number 27.” The classroom resonates with whispers as the students complete their bell work and their study guides for the Unit 4 exam. Mrs.

GT stands at the front of the room and announces, “When you complete your bell work, please make sure your notebook is together. There are 16 assignments in this notebook, making it worth 160 points. While you are getting your notebook together, I will be coming around to check your review sheet.” It is the day before the Unit 4 test in US Government and following a pattern she developed at the beginning of the course, this day will be spent reviewing for tomorrow’s exam. Mrs. GT takes out a grade sheet and begins to circulate the room. She walks to the desk of each student and checks the review sheets for completion. The students keep up a quiet, but steady flow of conversation. Like some other students in the room, William is frantically looking around searching for someone to help him complete the answers to a few questions on his study guide. Maria sits quietly, as she has completed her study guide and is simply waiting for Mrs. GT to make it to the front of the room. Chris and Beth are having a conversation in Spanish and it seems to include some discussion of a blank question on both students’ study guides. It takes about seven minutes for Mrs. GT to circulate the room and record every student’s review sheet grade. A student crosses to the front of the room and asks for a pass to the restroom. She looks at him and says, “Why did you wait until the last minute? We are about to start reviewing now.” She explains to another student that she was hoping that they would soon figure out that between today’s notebook at 160 points, and tomorrow’s test at 100 points, the work of two days is almost equal to the scrapbook. She then tells the student, “Of course, if you don’t do the scrapbook, you better go home tonight and plan to tell your mother why you won’t be graduating from high school.”

Mrs. GT then moves to the front of the room, takes a seat on the table in front of the room, and begins the review. “We need to begin our review by making sure

everyone has the list of government officials correct. It is assignment number seven in your notebook. You can expect to see this as some kind of matching section on your test tomorrow.” She then reviews the positions of the state government of Georgia. She begins with the Governor and then has the students list the Lt. Governor, State Secretary of Education, State Senator, the mayor of two local cities, and Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court. She then moves the students onto the second portion of the review which is when she takes questions directly from the review sheet. During this portion of the review the ELLs do not ask any questions, but seem to listen attentively to the questions from their classmates. A voice asks, “What about number three?” Mrs. GT glances at her copy of the review sheet and then reads the questions aloud. “Ok, Three items that the governor is responsible for.” She then directs the questions to the class and asks the students what they have written down. Students volunteer answers until she has a list of five items. She then combines the five items into a single response and looks back at the student who asked the question and repeats the response. As she responds, both Beth and Chris are writing something also. As the students progress through the review asking individual questions from the review packet, Mrs. GT continually asks the individual question to the members of the class. Students respond and then Mrs. GT restates or supplements the response. This sort of review continues for about 25 minutes, leaving about 20 minutes in the class period. It continues until Mrs. GT asks the class, “any questions?” and no one in the class responds. Seeking student confirmation, Mrs. GT asks, “No one has any blanks on that review sheet right?” Before the question and answer session comes to a close, Mrs. GT reminds the students of the chart that they completed which explains the offices of state government and how each office has beside

it a description of duties and responsibilities. She points out to the students that they need to be familiar enough with that chart to fill in any information that may be missing if they saw another copy of the chart on the test. After she points out this chart, there is one more individual question. Mrs. GT repeats her pattern and asks the question to the class and then monitors the response. “You guys need to be ready for this test. The grades have not been as high as I had hoped on exams and I want you guys to do well. I have been thinking of a way to help you do better and we can discuss it after I see the grades on this test.” The students have closed the review packets and are waiting to find out the next set of instructions. As they transition from one activity or the other, Mrs. GT reminds the students, “Bell work is due today and you need to make sure that your notebook makes it into the basket.” Maria and Chris move to turn in their bell work quickly, slipping into the bin underneath the table in the front of the room. Beth follows with her notebook soon after. “

“All right then, we have fifteen minutes. I am trying to decide if that is enough time to play a review game.” A voice suggests, “Basketball.” Mrs. GT agrees and moves towards her cabinet. She walks to her cabinet in the front of the room and brings out a container which will serve as the basket and a beanbag which will serve as the ball. She divides the class into three teams, based on where the students are sitting. Team one is in the side desks, team two in the back section, and team three in the front set of seats. Because she split the room by seating arrangements, four of the ELLs are on team one and Kevin is on team two. She then reviews the rules of the game. “In one second I am going to ask each team to select a number between one and thirty and the team who chooses the closest number will go first. I am then going to ask your team a question. If

the team responds correctly to the question, they will choose a person to shoot the basketball. A two pointer is here and a three pointer is back against the table. Now if you happen to have the highest score on the basketball team for shots right now, you cannot go more than one time. Are there any questions?” Many of the students are smiling and whispering among themselves, as the basket ball player, who holds the record for most points in a game, smiles a little bit at being recognized by Mrs. GT. She then moves to the front of the room, and asks each team to choose a number. The number she selected was seventeen and team 2, guessing 16, gets to go first. She begins with team two, which responds correctly to the first question. Mrs. GT then reminds everyone that the first answer she hears is the answer, so they should be very careful and to make sure that the answer they say is right. A student from team two moves to the front of the room to throw and makes the shot. Mrs. GT awards the team a point and then moves on to team three. She asks the question and a student reads the answer directly from the study guide. She then follows up by asking the student to explain what “retroactive,” which was a part of his response, means. He says back, “that was not part of the question.” She smiles and the students around him laugh. Mrs. GT then explains, “I am just trying to make sure everyone knows what retroactive means. What does it mean? So what does the word retroactive mean?” the student responds saying, “I don’t know”. She then explains with a situation. “Let’s say that the Local High School Board decides today that you now need thirty credits to graduate high school, which of course means that none of you guys planning to graduate have enough credits. They cannot start a new rule and then backdate it. So if they are going to make a new rule, they have to start it from today.” Team three sends a student up to shoot and he makes the basket. When team one gets the

question, Maria smiles as she knows the answer. She softly offers the answer, and Mrs. GT hears her and asks her to say it louder. Team one, thanks to Maria, answers correctly and scores a point for a making a basket. Team two gets the next question, and the game continues on. There are many smiles and jokes said during the game. The ELLs are smiling at some of the jokes and seem to be following along with the game. Eventually, in the last few minutes of the game, team one receives another question in which they answer correctly. William is selected by his team to make the shot. He moves to the front of the room a little slowly, with a smile on his face. He shoots and scores, making the smile on his face widen. Right after his score, the afternoon announcements come on signaling the end of class. Mrs. GT quickly reminds the students to be prepared for tomorrow.

Understanding Seeking Success in Vignette 2. In order to meet their individualized definitions of success, the participants in this study had clear strategies which they used to actively seek success. These four strategies included (1) successfully preparing for exams; (2) changing approach; (3) providing and using accommodations and (4) grouping students for collaborative projects. Vignette 2 centers on effectively preparing for exams, which introduces the first of these strategies. Table 7 demonstrates the 4 strategies which the participants used as they active sought success within the classroom.

Table 7

Strategies for Seeking Success

	Teacher	Student
Preparing for Exams	Review games; study guide	Occasional participation;

		use of study guide
Changing Approach	Retaking of exams; projects for grade replacement	Student change of behavior and attitude
Providing and Using Accommodations	Cloze notes; modified tests; native language texts	Universal approach to individual needs; recognized and appreciated
Grouping Students	Various means used for grouping; student choice towards end of course	Students seek interaction in target language with native speakers

Exams were one of the most frequently mentioned assignments in the course reflecting each participant's understandings of the importance of doing well on the exams within this course. An important part of finding success on these exams was directly linked to the way and the extent to which the students studied. Mrs. GT created an atmosphere of importance to these exams and also provided test preparation materials for the students within this class. Very intentionally, Mrs. GT constructed each unit so that the students would receive a study guide at least 3 days before the exam. She motivated the students to complete the study guide, a full day before the exam, by grading the guide for completion the day before the exam and then having the students use the guide during a review session. The day before the exam, Mrs. GT would devote the entire class period to answering questions from the study guide and then playing a review game such as review basketball or jeopardy. During the review games some of the participants were quiet. From my observations, neither Chris nor Beth never verbally participated in the game by offering answers to their group members. However, both students would look at their study guides when the question was asked, and were often seen adding information to the study guide as the answers were given. Maria and William would actively

participate in the games. Maria explains her participation by saying “In the games, I say something, but I don’t feel confident. I say it quietly. Honestly, I know the answers for many of the questions, but I always sit there and wait for someone else.” Her

participation was supported during one observation of a review game when she shared her answers with her teammates, but rarely acted as the spokesperson of the group.

William’s participation in the basketball review game was different. His team members provided the correct response and then chose William to move to the front of the

classroom and shoot for extra points, which he made. Both of these participants also

seemed to follow along with their study guides during the review sessions. The

participants understood that the material in the review sessions was closely linked to the

exams. Keith and Marie determined quickly how to be successful on the tests. Both Maria

and Keith emphasized the connection between the study guide and the tests. Maria

explained that “I really don’t study, but I do well on the tests. “ She followed by

explaining that the information on the study guide was an exact match to the information

on the tests. Keith also understood the connection between the study guides and the

exams. In an initial interview, he noted, “she [Mrs. GT] also gives a study guide before

each exam, which makes it easy to study. They don’t do that in Haiti.” In later

interviews, he explained his success on the exams as a result of studying and using the

study guide. He used the study guide and answered the questions with the notes for the

class. Then, he simply memorized the study guide.

Beth worked very hard too. For Beth, exams continued to be elusive throughout

the semester. During an early interview, Beth explains her use of the study guide as she

prepared for tests, “I studied my study guide. First you answer the questions – sometimes

you find the answers fast, but the other ones no. I just read the study guide over and over again. Sometimes I read it and write down the answers that I know.”

As the semester progressed she explains that each test in the government class was an exercise in trying to find what works. Beth explained her struggles, in reflections, as she sought new ways to study. She attempts to explain her lack of success by identifying the problem. She says, “Some of the questions are not on the study guide but they are in the notes. That’s why I failed the test.” During the interview Beth explained that she felt bad about not passing any tests. She explained that the study guide was not as helpful to her as she hoped because she felt if “sometimes I know everything, but when I am taking the test I feel like I know nothing.” Eventually, Beth explained “Tests are tricky- she changes the words from a study guide to the test.” As the semester progressed, Beth began to shift away from seeking success on tests. Instead, she began to accept her inability to be successful on these tests. During one interview, I asked:

A: Are you nervous about getting your test grades back?

B: Not really, I am already adapted to that.

A: To what?

B: To getting low grades. On everything.

This attitude of acceptance became even more clear at the end of the semester when Beth explains that she participated in the credit recovery option by creating the poster, but not retaking the tests. She knew that she was not going to pass the test anyway, so she did not even consider retaking any of the quizzes or tests. Finally, her shift in attitude is

apparent when she explains that she is not is not nervous about the upcoming final exam.

In her perception, she no longer needed to worry about passing the class. I ask:

A: Have you passed any tests?

B:No.

A: How do you feel about that?

B: I feel bad about it. I know that it is my fault for not studying. I mean I study,
but not enough.

A: How long does it take to really study for one of these tests-

B: 3 hours.

A: Are you nervous about the upcoming final?

B: No Because I know that I will pass.

A: how did you pass the class without passing any tests?

B: I pass the class because of the notebook checks, and because I did the poster. I
passed some of the quizzes.

Beth accepted that she was going to pass the class, without ever passing an exam in the class.

The exams were also frustrating for Mrs. GT. She felt that the students did not as well on the tests as they should. Mrs. GT understood for some students the study guides

and review sessions were a bridge to success on the exams, and for others Mrs. GT needed to provide another means for being successful.

After the students returned from spring break, Mrs. GT began her class by handing out new progress reports with all the grades figured in. At this point several students realized that they were badly failing the class. William was one of those students. William realized that his success in the class required a change in his approach. This shift was most evidenced in an interview with William as he reflects:

A: If you had the opportunity to redo anything from the class, what would you do differently?

W: I would start some stuff. I would start studying from the beginning because at the beginning I was kind of too laid back and don't take everything too seriously, so at one point I was failing badly. At that point I started studying and paying attention and trying to understand some things. I tried to ask questions and stuff like that. I would start that stuff from the beginning.

A: What would you continue to do in the same way?

W: This same stuff, this stuff I have been doing for the last three weeks.

A: So you have only been doing that for the last three weeks?

W: Yeah, only when I realized that I was failing badly that I actually tried. I am not saying that I just put the book away and never went back to it. I just didn't do as much as I should have.

William realized that in order to be successful in this class, he was going to have to change his strategy. Mrs. GT welcomed William's change in strategy and reinforced it with the recovery project. She describes her opinion:

I at least appreciate that he took the initiative to come in after school and say I need help, what can I do? Um I think the we are going to let them come in a do a packet and then retake some tests I told them before they left, I want you to go, I want you to enjoy your spring break, but when you come back here I want you to be ready to work because some of you are not going to graduate if you do not come back here ready to work. I like a kid that takes initiative to say I want to pass this class. What can I do to make it happen.

After this conversation, Mrs. GT created a recovery opportunity when she realized that 1/3 of her students were failing or were in danger of failing the course. One component of the recovery process was allowing the students an opportunity to come before or after school and re-take any test or quiz. Along with this, Mrs. GT offered a project which involved researching a Supreme Court justice and creating a display. Mrs. GT explains:

Of the ELLs, only William took advantage of retaking the tests. Maria and Keith didn't need to. For whatever reason, Chris and Beth did not. However, all the ELLs except Maria took advantage of the credit recovery project that replaced their lowest test grade.

The recovery opportunity came in late April, with one month remaining in the course. In the interview, Beth explained that she did not retake any tests because she did not know

how to prepare for them and had not done well all semester. She did not believe that she would do any better and so, did not sign up to retake any tests. Chris also felt that he would be unable to do any better on his tests. However, both Chris and Beth were appreciative of the opportunity to complete the project. Chris mentioned this opportunity in his final interview. He shared, “She tries to help everyone. A few weeks ago we made a recovery project. It is not in the program but she did it because she doesn’t want anyone not to graduate.” Mrs. GT created this recovery opportunity as a way to help the students in her class pass and therefore, meet the definition of a success.

Vignette 2 also features another means in which Mrs. GT supported her students be successful: accommodations. The notes the students used to complete the study guides were generated from a series of classroom lectures. With each of these lectures, Mrs. GT provided the students with cloze notes, which were mentioned most often interviews. Within this class, the cloze notes consisted of an incomplete copy of the notes normally projected on the board during the lecture. The important terms or phrases had been removed from the notes and the students were responsible for completing the notes by listening and looking for the missing words. Each ELL was provided a copy of the cloze notes prior to each classroom lecture. Mrs. GT hoped that this accommodation provided the students with an opportunity to attain a copy of the information given to the students in lecture form. Mrs. GT began this accommodation in her first semester of teaching ELLs because it was suggested by another teacher. She described her use of these notes by saying “I’m afraid this isn’t a very scientific process. I usually choose the words that are most key to the lecture. Essentially, if they haven’t paid attention to fill in the notes, the fill in the blank copy won’t do any good.”

Each of the ELLs recognized the cloze notes as an attempt for Mrs. GT to help them seek success in the course. Each student acknowledged this accommodation and recognized it as a way that Mrs. GT tried to help. For some of the students, the notes were helpful. Keith comments, “They then could follow along with the lecture, and fill in the words or phrases that were missing. In fact, the cloze notes made the course “easy” for Keith. He further clarifies by explaining:

Some of the students struggle to keep up with the pace of the class and that would be me too. Without the notes I would not be listening to what she says, and when I got home I would have to read back through all of my notes so I can get it. It’s nice to have the notes so that I can concentrate on what she says.

Chris explains that he felt that Mrs. GT was a nice teacher who was interested in helping the students because of these notes. He explains that she understands that they do not have time to copy all of the information. He says, “She gives us the notes. We don’t have time and it helps.” William agrees with this point, he appreciates the notes and the gesture. For him, the notes are “helpful in a way.” However, William and Mayra express other concerns about the notes. William is also concerned that the cloze notes are perhaps too easy for him. He explains, “I want to go forward from being an ESOL student. I want to catch up and learn more English. I am probably not going to have an ESOL class in college and I want to be able to do it.” Marie expressed a similar appreciation for the gesture of the cloze notes, but she explains concern when she says:

I don’t like that, personally. In Colombia you have to take a lot of notes and it prepares you better for college. That’s different from here where they give you

everything. I would prefer to take notes. I think that it is better for me and better for my English. And with the paper, I think that I don't read it when I am filling it in, but when you are taking notes you have to read when you are doing it so you can't get lost. When you take notes, you understand better, so personally I don't like it.

When prompted to explain why she used the notes if she did not like them, Marie explained that she felt that she had to use them. She voiced:

I have to [use them]. She gave me that. Ok I don't have to, but she gave me that and you know when someone gives you something that makes things easier, if you don't use it they are going to take it away. So I use it.

Beth also indicated that the gesture of giving them the notes was "nice" and she recognized it as a way that Mrs. GT was trying to help, but for her the notes created a different concern. "Sometimes I feel so special and I don't like it. It makes me feel uncomfortable." From our conversation, Beth indicated that the notes were helpful and made it possible for her to keep up with the class lecture, but she was concerned with being identified by other members of the class as "needing" those notes. The distribution of the notes in class was often quick and seemed unobtrusive during the observations. In one instance, she distributed cloze notes to every child in the room and many of the mainstream students voiced appreciation. Prior to my observations, Mrs. GT had also provided translations of materials into the native language of the participants. William indicated "She [Mrs. GT] asked me if I wanted the Constitution in French and it really helped me to do that homework."

Mrs. GT made many accommodations for the students which they never named in reflections or interviews. It is still unclear if they realize that the essay questions on their tests were different from the rest of the class or that the length of many of their projects had been reduced. However, the participants did recognize the attempts to make sure that they were able to understand and complete the assignments. Mrs. GT was constantly confirming that the ELLs understood the assignment and checking to see if they had any questions. During classroom observation, Mrs. Consistently moved around the room and individually privately asked each ELL if he or she had any questions about the assignment. During the class activity, she would make these progress checks with many students. Though she was constantly circulating in the classroom to monitor progress, she made a special effort to check on the ELLs. Her concern for the students did not go unnoticed. Each participant identified Mrs. GT as a good teacher. When further probed regarding what made her good, the participants responded that she was concerned about their success in the class. As William explained, “She really tries to help us. She is doing a great job of helping us.” He further explained that he would advise other students in this class: “Don’t be shy and don’t be scared of asking questions. Your teacher [Mrs. GT] is willing to answer your questions. She is actually been doing a great job at answering questions.”

A final way in which Mrs. GT helped students in her class be successful was thorough her use of grouping strategies. She used several strategies for grouping the students on projects. Within Vignette 2, she did a quick grouping of students based on convenience. Each of these strategies was explained as means of supporting the students and helping them find success. There were several instances in the class where the

participants were grouped together for an assignment. During one early observation, the ELL students were working on a project which involved the planning of an imaginary city. The assignment asked the students to generate the plan for a city by deciding on the location of various components including the landfill, the housing, green space and industry. In order to complete this activity, the students had to engage in detailed discussion which included suggesting ideas and forming consensus. For this assignment, the ELLs were grouped together. The three Spanish speaking students, Maria, Beth and Chris, moved together quickly and began speaking to each other. William, a Haitian-Creole speaker, moved more slowly to join the group. Maria begins by reading the directions aloud to the group. The students worked diligently on this assignment. Each member of the group contributed ideas and suggestions and the students used English as the language of communication. When necessary, both girls would translate any important information for Chris. Each group member participated in different ways: Maria led the discussion by asking questions, Chris collected the supplies they needed to complete the assignment, and Beth and William took turns coloring in the grid. The students actively participated in this assignment and there was joking and laughing among the group members. Mrs. GT circled the room several times and stood to the side observing each group without comment. She then moved to each group and asked the students how they were doing. She stopped at the group of ELLs twice, each time monitoring progress and checking for comprehension. When the bell rang, the project was not quite finished. Marie took the project home to finish it. In an early reflection, Chris shared that this type of group work was most comfortable for him. He said, "I just can't talk, but I can talk more with the other ELLs students." In an early interview, Beth

also agreed that there was comfort in being partnered with the ELLs. She explains, “When we are together we can speak Spanish to each other.” Later in the semester, both Chris and Beth made a different comment regarding groups. Beth expressed a preference for being grouped with native speakers because it improved her English and Chris stated, “I think that she is trying to protect us, like making groups of all ESOL. I think that can help us, but maybe it is not good. If we are in a different group, where no one can speak Spanish, you have to speak English.” In other situations, the ELLs were assigned to groups. In these situations, Mrs. GT made intentional choices about all of the students in the class and determined who should be grouped with whom. She considered factors such as ability level and personality when creating these groups. Chris shared that he rarely participated in the groups that were formed in this way. He describes his experience as:

We make little groups and do things. I don't participate. Other students do all of the work. We didn't do anything as a group and that was pretty bad. I would like to try to do something, but if they don't understand me, I will get mad. I prefer to say nothing.

Several of the other participants expressed different opinions about working in groups with the native speakers. Keith and William both indicated that they enjoyed working on projects in which they were grouped in with native speakers, because it was group work. Keith reflected that the group work gave him the opportunity to “know other students.” He was proud that in his group, his bill was the one that his committee presented. Maria expresses the same enjoyment of working in groups with the native speakers. She describes a group project where she comments:

I really like to have conversation with American people because I am living here so I need to be in their world. I don't need to keep in my world. Colombia is in Colombia, but this is America. I need to talk with the people, so in that project I could speak with them and I feel fine because I spoke with my partner a lot and it was fine. I would like to have more American friends. It is their world and I want to learn how it works so that I can be more comfortable here.

Maria was not alone in her need to interact with native speakers. Beth, later in the semester, voiced a need to work in groups with native speakers. She explained that group work gave her the opportunity to practice speaking. Beth states "I prefer to work with native speakers. Sometimes we get confused and when we are in a group together. We are not going to learn how to speak English or get involved with the other kids.

Interestingly enough, in my observations of group work in which Beth was mixed with native speakers, she did not actually engage in conversation. Due to this I followed up asking her more about her group work with native speakers. She explained:

A: "Why is it important for you to be with NS?"

B: I am learning and I like it. I need to learn to speak English. They don't have to teach me and talk. I listen and learn new vocabulary.

In other projects the students were allowed to select their own groups. In the final project of the year, Mrs. GT created lists for six groups on the board and created five available slots under each group. The students were then asked one by one which group they preferred. As the students signed up for groups they had the ability to sign up with

the students they preferred to work with or to start a new group. Many students made strategic choices and the ELLs explained their choices to me. William and Chris ended up working in the same group. Chris chose his group early and later explained that he intentionally chose a group without Beth or Marie, so that he would be forced to speak English. He explained:

We made groups and I participated with my group you know. I choose to not be in the group with Beth or Marie because I want to try to be in a group without anyone who speaks Spanish and I did well.

William also enjoyed projects in which he was grouped with native speakers. He enjoyed this opportunity because he was friends with several of the students within the class and group work gave him the opportunity to work with his friends. He explains that working on that project was “fun” because he was with his friends. Mrs. GT often provided opportunities for structured group work within her mainstream classroom. This group work helped the ELLs find success in the class. Seeking success was an intentional activity within this mainstream classroom, by both the teacher and the ELLs and the participants employed a very specific set of strategies towards meeting this goal. Interestingly, there were also intentional strategies used to avoid challenges within this mainstream classroom.

Avoiding Challenges

This section introduces the subcategory of avoiding challenges. Within this subcategory the participants are pretending to be team players while actively rebelling against the intentions of the assignment. The subcategory begins with vignette 3.

Vignette 3 seeks to share observations regarding a class assignment. The beginning of the Vignette comes from field notes of classroom observation during the US government course. The remainder of the vignette is a result of observing the ELLs as they attempted to complete the project the day in which the project was due. By combining these observations and interactions, the reader can clearly see the experiences of the teacher and ELLs within this classroom.

Vignette 3.

The first time I observed a conversation regarding the scrapbook assignment was right before winter break. Mrs. GT announced that the students were to use two days prior to the February break for working on their scrapbooks. She reminded the students, “Now remember tomorrow and Friday, you are to bring your scrapbook materials to class and you will have the entire class period to work on your scrapbooks. The scrapbook is due soon after we return from Winter Break and it is worth 300 points. Don’t wait until the last minute to get this done.” A student in the class asks, “What happens if we just don’t turn one in?” Mrs. GT responds by saying, “then you better start planning how you are going to explain to your mother why your name is not going to be called, so you can walk across that stage at graduation.” On the morning of the first work day, Mayra came into my ESOL classroom and asked if she could borrow a glue stick. She got the container of glue sticks from the back of the room and brought all of her supplies to a table in the front of the classroom. She brought out a folder, opened it and began to pull out articles which had been cut from newspapers or printed from the internet. She sat her items on the table in my classroom, and quickly and meticulously began gluing her articles to pieces of blue construction paper. She worked quietly until right before the

bell rang that morning and then asked if she could borrow the glue and scissors until Friday since she would need them for the government class.

The week that scrapbooks were due in Government, my ESOL classroom became a very busy place. The scrapbook was due on a Wednesday and would be accepted no later than Friday. Chris spoke with me on Monday during fourth period. He expressed a concern that he was still struggling to find articles for his scrapbook, and asked if I would be able to help. He then turned around and saw that William and Beth were in the using laptops and pulling articles for their scrapbooks, so he moved to the back of the room to join them. During fourth period lunch and study hall, both Tuesday and Wednesday, all the ELLs with the exception of Mayra, spent their time searching for articles. Using the ESOL laptop cart, the students would find articles and print them out. Though the students would ask for permission to use the computers or scissors, no one asked directly for help with the articles until Tuesday during study hall. William asked his ESOL teacher, Mrs. ELA, if she would help him summarize an article. Mrs. ELA began reading the article and William walked to the back of the room and began printing another piece of information from the computer. Mrs. ELA told him, "If you want my help, you need to come back up here and let me help you. I am not going to *do* this for you." He returned to Mrs. ELA's desk and they began to look at the article together. She worked with him for a few moments, asking him questions to make sure he understood the article. She clarified any information he did not understand and then they discussed which information from the article was important and needed to be included in the summary. William said, "Thank you," and quickly moved back to his laptop. Both Beth and Chris worked individually. On Friday morning, William came into my classroom asking to

borrow scissors and glue sticks. He sat in my classroom until the morning bell, working to put his scrapbook together. That same day, during fourth period, he begged his ESOL teacher for permission to work on his scrapbook through his lunch and study hall. Beth, who was in the same ESOL class, listened for Mrs. ELA's affirmative response. Mrs. ELA reminded her class that they were having a work day in class, and were supposed to be writing their own version of a tale which was in the style of Canterbury tales. She followed that reminder with the statement, "What you choose to do in class today is your decision. However, remember, my project is due on Monday, no exceptions. At this comment, Beth pulled out her own materials for working on the scrapbook and William continued typing. Eventually, Chris made his way into the classroom and asked Mrs. ELA if he could come in and finish his scrapbook also. He was given permission, entered the room and began working on his scrapbook. When the bell rang, releasing students from fourth to fifth period, Beth and Chris gathered up their materials and moved quickly out of the room. William begged to stay. He was told that he could not stay and that he needed to move on to his next class. He then asked to borrow the scissors and glue sticks he needed to finish his scrapbook. He walked out of the classroom and headed towards fifth period. That was the last that I heard of scrapbooks until about four weeks later, the Monday after spring break. Mrs. GT brings her lecture to a close as the students sigh with relief. It is the first day back from spring break and most of the faces within the class look tired as they reach the end of the school day. She reminds the students of a conversation that they had before break which was, "I want you to go and enjoy your break. When you come back here, you need to be ready to work. Some of you need to really be prepared to work if you expect to be there on May 28th for graduation. She

makes the announcement to the students that the Scrapbooks are graded, and have been in the computer since before break. She then begins circling the room and returning rubrics to the students. There is a collective hum of conversation. Most of the people in the class seem anxious and there are comments among the students, ranging from “Oh my god” to “Yes!” When, Maria receives her rubric, she looks at the paper, sees that she received 291 out of 300 points, which is 97% and a small smile forms on her face. She quickly puts her paper away. Beth and Chris receive their grade sheets back to back. Beth flips the page over and quickly looks at her grade, which was 183 out of 300 points or 59%. Her face shows little expression as she puts the grade sheet into her folder. Chris looks carefully at his grade sheet. Seeing that his grade is 188 out of 300 points, or 63%, he gives a small visible shrug of his shoulders, and places his grading sheet into his notebook. The last student to receive his grade sheet is William. As he glances at his grade, his face forms a small sad smile. His grade, 211 out of 300, or a 69%, was a mixture of surprise and sadness. He takes his paper and slowly puts it in his notebook. He then moves towards Mrs. GT and has a private discussion asking if he can stay with her a few moments after school. Mrs. GT reminds the class that she was serious when she told them that everyone needed to be ready to work. She emphasizes, “There are only five weeks left of this class and if some of you continue on the same path, you should really be concerned about your place in line at graduation.”

Understanding avoiding challenges in Vignette 3. The participants in this study shared a common defensive response, designed to avoid challenges. Within this classroom, when the participants perceived a difficult or uncomfortable situation, they all responded with a defensive move which consisted of pretending to engage in an activity

and appearing as a full participant, as a means of as a means of avoiding confrontation or embarrassment. In contrast to actively seeking success as emphasized in the section above, these situations are instances of strategic participation as a means of avoidance. None of the participants chose to negotiate challenges through directly confronting the challenger or through refusing to participate, but instead, these members covertly avoided the challenge while simultaneously rebelling against their participation. The participants seemed to silently devalue the activity by limiting the participation. In short, they seemed to be full participants on the surface, but in reality their participation was actually minimal and used to avoid confrontation. One instance of this is seen through Mrs. GT's use of the scrapbook assignment, which is a project that she does not like. She assigns this project because she wants to appear to be a team player. The second is seen in as the ELLs discuss their involvement in a project which has the outward appearance of full participation, but the intention is to avoid embarrassment. The teacher and the ELLs ways of avoiding challenges are summarized on table 8 below.

Table 8

Ways of Participating to Avoid Challenges

	Activity	Concern	Participation	Rebellion
Teacher	Scrapbook Project	Confrontation with peers; not being viewed as a team player; non instructive	Assign scrapbook project	Re-teaching the material through other projects
Student	Trial	Speaking English in	Members of	Choosing the role which

Simulation	front of peers	the jury	requires no speaking
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A clear instance of avoidance is seen in Mrs. GT's decision to assign the scrapbook project. The scrapbook is a project which is assigned the second week of the semester. It was given to the class on January 6 and due on March 8. The assignment sheet explains that the scrapbook must:

Must include original articles (No Xerox copies) from magazines or newspapers and/or Internet articles on the topics listed below. Only 50% of articles can come from the INTERNET and must be from online newspaper sources.

Articles must be dated October 2009 to the present. For every article (No Xerox copies) you need to attach it to a sheet of paper and provide a 3-4 sentence summary, written in complete sentences. In addition, each article must have the source (name of the newspaper, magazine, internet source, etc.) and date of publication.

For Political Cartoons analyze, interpret and explain what the cartoon is "poking fun" at, any symbols used and your interpretation. ONE political cartoon must be a hand-drawn original that you created.

Scrapbook must consist of a total of 50 articles (One article per page). May use front and back of sheet.

Within each category, the students are given a specific number of articles to complete. Mrs. GT modified the assignment for the ELLs in the class as seen on Table 9.

Table 9

Assignment Modifications for Scrapbook

Category	Number of Articles	
	Standard Assignment	Modified Assignment
Countries and Governments	7	4
National and State Leaders	8	4
2010 Georgia General Assembly	10	5
City and County Governments	10	5
State Judicial System	6	0
Political Cartoons	5	5
Role of the Media (editorials, opinion polls, tabloids)	5	5

Though she assigned the scrapbook, Mrs. GT did not like the project. Her discomfort with the project and the context of the assignment was visible as she was hesitant to discuss her true opinion regarding the scrapbook. This interview was conducted in her classroom and it was soon after the scrapbook grades had been returned to the students.

A: Let's talk about the scrapbook. What can you tell me about the scrapbook?

In response to my question, Mrs. GT visibly hesitates and looks around. She is obviously nervous. Her voice noticeably drops to a whisper and she begins.

GT: I think the scrapbook is a 1980s project that has outlived its usefulness. To be honest it is one of the reasons that I did not want to teach government. It was created by some of the teachers who teach government who say this is how we are going to teach this. To be honest, I don't think that the kids get much out of it. They just do this and get it done and turn in a bunch of garbage.

A: What is the actual assignment?

GT: The regular assignment is 50 articles and summaries. They are given information on what each article is supposed to be about. Then they are to put it all together in a scrapbook. Which really doesn't have to be anything more than a three ring binder and paper, but of course some of them go all out and spend money they don't have on making this scrapbook beautiful. Honestly that doesn't really do anything, but give them extra credit. You could get a one hundred just by leaving everything plain. The problem is of course that they have eight weeks to do it, but they wait until the end. They don't believe us when we tell them that it is going to take 8 weeks to do it. This is how we end up getting the garbage.

[She walks over to get the scrapbook grades out of the cabinet].

A: Are the kids surprised by their grades?

GT: Oh yeah. Just to tell you how bad it was, I had one kid get a two.

A: A two?

GT: A two. He turned it in one day late, most of it was completely off topic, unrelated, some of it was copied word for word straight from the article. And then they say, “What are you talking about? I thought I did great on that.” Then you start looking at the grades. 140 out of 300, 123 out of 300, 142 out of 300, 102 out of 300...I mean . And a lot of these...and what I do is do a printout and I start with the kids with the very lowest grades and I work my way up to the top. It takes about 30 minutes per scrapbook to grade them and it is just painful, I mean painful. For us and for them. In fact, we’ve got people who have said they have 8 weeks to do it we should have 8 weeks to grade it. Ok so by that logic, that’s the beginning to the middle of May and all of the sudden we are just going to spring it on them that this has just dropped their grade by 8 points. That’s not happening, so I busted my hump to get them graded before spring break which means that I didn’t get anything else done which means that I am all stacked up.

A: What do you think that the purpose is behind the assignment?

GT: I think the original idea was to connect the principles of government with what is going on today. What I am discovering, which is very shocking to me is that I don’t think that these kids today are familiar enough with newspapers to understand the difference in the types of articles. I mean to understand the difference between an editorial and an article. I mean to me that is very obvious. To understand the difference between a wall post and a newspaper article. I mean they just don’t seem to understand it. I know that there are teachers that still believe that this assignment has a lot of value, and I just don’t agree with that.

In a follow up interview, I ask Mrs. GT:

A: Why do you feel like you have to do the scrapbook?

Mrs. GT explains that there are 4 government teachers and everyone is expected to teach the same thing.

A: In your department is it standard for everyone to do the same thing. So if I take one government class it is just like taking the same class with another teacher?

GT: No Government is the only subject where there is this pressure for everyone to be doing the same thing. That has been kind of our argument. Why is this the only class where we all ought to be doing exactly the same thing?

A: Have they answered? Has anyone answered that to your satisfaction?

GT: Never. We never even got that far in the conversation. It just exploded in the first minute we were sitting there. I am a team player though.

Although, Mrs. GT believes that the assignment is dated, and does not fulfill its intended purpose, she includes the scrapbook assignment because she wants to avoid the consequences of not acting as a team player. By doing this, she avoids the complicated discussions and possible remonstrations because she openly chose to teach differently.

However; Mrs. GT had ideas for replacing the scrapbook and she incorporated each of those ideas into the curriculum of the class. She explained:

Amy and I have talked a lot about this and we have ideas. We haven't been able to share them but we have ideas. One of the projects that we do at the end of the

semester is a Presidential Election Project. The kids love it. They get to form their own political parties and then they get to have a presidential nominee and vice presidential nominee. So there are a lot of requirements with these projects and the signs that you see hanging around here those are from this project last semester. They have to come up with a slogan and give away items. They have to have a commercial that they film and secrets about the other parties. It's a lot of fun, they really enjoy it and they do a good job. So our idea is to expand on that and do a project with legislative branch and judicial branch. So last semester we did like a little mini-congress and this semester we just expanded on it. We assigned each of them one representative, so that had an actual person that they had to go in and research. They had to come in with things like how they tend to vote (on issues within Congress) and a bill and then they were assigned to a committee. Basically, what we did was simulate the committee process in Congress. Within their committee they had to discuss their bills and then as a committee they voted on one bill to present to the entire Congress. Then they also wrote their own bills, which was something last semester that they really wanted to do, so we went through and we did that and the ones who did the work did fine, but you wouldn't believe how many of them didn't do the first part of the assignment, which kind of meant that they really couldn't do the second part and the third part of the assignment. If you can't do your work, I really don't know what to do for you. So this time we are also going to do and we did this a little bit of this last semester, but we are going to do a mock trial. So right now, this is really kind of a mini thing, but if we were to get rid of the scrapbook, we would

expand on this project. The cases are very simple. There is a script, they divide up and they are lawyers and witnesses, a judge, a bailiff. I set my laptop up and we have a court reporter and the rest of the kids are jurors. We found this on the internet but what I like about it is that there are activities for the jurors to do also. I think that by doing this kind of activity, this generation of learners they want, they need the hands on stuff. If they can do the hands on stuff they can digitalize it a little bit more than a newspaper article which is kind of what the old project does.

Mrs. GT had ideas for projects which could replace the scrapbook and a sense of why these projects were better for learners. Though, she did the scrapbook, she also had her classes do the alternative projects which she found more appropriate for learning about the branches of government. In this way, Mrs. GT was able to avoid confrontation by being involved in the project, while devaluing her participation in the scrapbook project by creating assignments to re teach the curricular intentions of the scrapbook. Mrs. GT was not the only participant whose need to avoid uncomfortable situations involved participation in activities she did not enjoy. Each of the ELLs actively made defensive decisions which would help them avoid embarrassment in the classroom. One example of the participants using active avoidance strategies was seen the students were assigned to role play in a Mock Trial. Within this mock trial there were several roles: the judge, one of four prosecution attorneys, one of four defense attorneys, a member of the jury, a representative of the media (sketch artist, or reporter), the bailiff, and a witness for the prosecution or a witness for the defense. Mrs. GT allowed the students to volunteer for the roles of this simulation activity. William, who had recently informed me that he

planned to study and do well in this class, volunteered to participate in the simulation activity as a defense attorney. As one of four defense attorneys in the case, William had to stand in the front of the room and question a witness. As a means of actively avoiding embarrassment, William wants to make sure that his English is clear. To do this, on the day of the trial, William finds me and asks me if I will read through his questions and make sure that they are correct. I looked through the questions and helped him to reword them for clarity. When I asked him to tell me about speaking in front of the class, he explained, "I feel like a whole different person. I am usually a talkative person and not afraid, but when I get up there I am afraid. I'm not sure if it's because I don't know some of the people in the class so I am afraid of messing up." Although William participated in the activity, he did actively engage in preparing for the activity as a means of avoiding embarrassment.

Within the same activity, another instance of involvement as a means of avoidance is clear. Maria, Chris, Keith and Beth all selected to play roles of members of the jury. Within this simulation, the jury members created an imaginary profile, sat and listened to the testimony, discussed the guilt or innocence of the defendant and rendered a decision. Of all of the roles in the simulation, a member of the jury had minimal discussion with others and no role playing in front of the class. All four of the ELLs selected this role to avoid speaking in front of the class. Both Chris and Maria informed me that they were not comfortable enough in the class to play any of the other roles in English. Maria said:

M: I am comfortable in my ESOL class. If we were doing it in that class, or in Colombia, then I would have played the role of the judge

A: Why?

M: You know when I speak with one person my English is better than when I speak in front of a group of people. When I speak in front of a group, my English gets worse and I don't know why! So if that happens, I will feel dumb. I don't like to feel dumb, so I just prefer to stay quiet. In my ESOL class, there are people who are learning how to speak English and if you make a mistake they are not going to judge you and they are not going to laugh at you.

Chris offered a similar comment when he said, "I can't speak in there [the government class]. If we were in El Salvador, I would have been a lawyer." Keith indicated that he did not have the "aptitude" to participate; however his concerns were not related to his ability to speak English and more closely aligned to his dislike of public speaking. The students chose of role of member of the jury to avoid speaking in front of the class. The need to avoid speaking in English, and the influence it had in the classroom, became even more apparent when in his closing interview Chris explained some of his internal avoidance decisions. He said:

C: I got mad during the trials. This guy changed the verdict because he changed the opinion of the group. If it was El Salvador – I would have stood up and said "Wait a minute. That is not what everyone put and I don't understand why you changed our opinion." I would start an argument.

A: Why didn't you do it?

C: I don't speak too much English. I have friends who ask me why I am so quiet. I am not quiet. It's the language. I don't speak too much. I have to be like that.

Chris's need to avoid speaking English and embarrassment prevented him from fully participating in class. Chris further discusses his internal decisions to avoid speaking English as he describes making the decision to not involve himself in classroom conversation, even though he generally enjoys participating in classroom discussion. He says:

I always try to explain what I think or to ask questions in class. This is one of the things that I cannot do in class and that really makes me mad. I don't know enough English. In government, I know I have the answer and I think, "should I say that or not?" I decide, "No, don't say it." I am always worried that if I answer it then people will make fun of me.

For all of the participants within this study, avoiding discomfort was important. The common technique of pretending to be a team player, while actively rebelling against the intentions of the assignment was enacted by both the mainstream teacher and the ELLs. However, in some situations within the classroom neither the active seeking of success or avoidance techniques were options. In these circumstances, the participants simply focused on making it through the assignment.

Making It Through

This subcategory consists of events in which the strategies used to actively seek success or to avoid challenges were unused. These events combine to create the final subcategory of experiences which demonstrate navigating the expectations of the classroom. This data encompasses moments in which the participants in the study were interested in making it through the assignment. The section is introduced by vignette 4,

which depicts the preparation for and the participation in a single classroom event.

Vignette 4 is followed by a discussion of the final sub category: Making it Through.

Vignette 4.

One particular instance in the mainstream government class stands out in the data collection because the participants had such mixed feelings about the assignment that their strategies became focused on survival. The students were given a simulation assignment which involved becoming members of the president's cabinet and delivering a brief presentation, in front of the class, which explains why your department should continue receiving funding from the president.

This project made all of the ELLs very nervous. Each student had been assigned to a separate department, and they had one 24 hour period to prepare to speak to the class. During the day, before the sixth period presentation, the students made their way to my classroom so that I could proof read their paragraphs. Each ELL was very nervous about this assignment, but none of them let the fear of public speaking prevent them from completing the assignment. When we arrived in sixth period, Mrs. GT began the class by saying, "Today we are going to have our cabinet meeting. So all of my cabinet secretaries, that means you guys, are going to be called one by one to give your information." She circles the room passing out a graphic organizer for the students to use as they are listening to the proposals. She continues with, "All right ladies and gentlemen, here is what we are going to do. I am going to sit over here and I am going to call you up there. There should be probably two of you per department. You guys are to explain, briefly, what your department does and you are going to write that under

proposal. Each of you are supposed to have come with what you feel is the most important issue facing your department and you are supposed to write that on the chart. Just write the issue. When you are finished, please give me your paragraph or your power point slide. Just hand it in to me, I will be over there; and that will be your homework grade. OK? Any questions? Here we go.” As the first two departments were called, the students moved to the front of the room. I was nervous for the ELLs as they sat and waited for their departments to be called. Mrs. GT sat listening in the corner of the room and found that she was having to summarize and restate the information from the students to the class as a whole, as the class was not able to keep up with the students as they presented. After five groups, the Department of the Interior was called to the front of the classroom. Chris stood up and made his way to the front of the room. He read the responsibilities of the department of defense. As he read his paragraph, he was very soft spoken and difficult to understand. He did not make eye contact with anyone in the class while he read and he was obviously very nervous. He made several grammatical errors, particularly in word choice and usage. Mrs. GT shifted in her seat as if she was concentrating on understanding exactly what he was saying. The other students in the class began to shift in their seats as he read, turning around and asking their neighbors if anyone understood. Chris was seemingly oblivious to the fact that he was difficult to understand. When Chris was finished reading, several students looked at Mrs. GT to indicate that they struggled to understand what Chris said. Mrs. GT asked Chris to repeat the function one more time. Chris explained that the function was “to protect the natural resources and cultural and tribal communities.” Mrs. GT then restates,

“They protect the interior, they deal with Indian affairs, and issues of energy. Right?”

Chris responds “Yes” and takes his seat.

Understanding the making it through in Vignette 4. This assignment was frequently referenced by the ELLs in the study. Each student emphasizes how they were taken out of their comfort zone when they were made to speak in front of the class. From the interviews following this classroom activity, it was clear that everyone was simply concerned with making it through the assignment. First, while speaking, each student was highly aware of his or her individual discomfort, causing a defensive response. Secondly, after witnessing the other ELLs speak, the students became empathetic to the listeners and the other students, convoluting the line between defense and offense. Third, though some participants viewed this as loss, others viewed it as a win. To begin with, Beth explains her individual feelings about this project in an interview. She says:

B: When I was sitting at my desk and preparing to read in front of the class, it was good, but when I stood up there I was nervous and I confused with the words. I was embarrassed.

A: How do you think that your audience was responding to that situation?

B: I don't care what they think I am just learning. But yeah I think that they were laughing at the way I was pronouncing that word...explor..explo..

A: Exploitation?

B: Yeah that word. Exploitation.

After discussing her own struggles, she then focuses on the struggles of her peers.

A: What did you think about the other ELL speakers? Were they hard to understand?

B: Yeah – they were hard to understand.

William explains a concern about his own speaking, which was compounded by listening to Chris:

W: When one of the ELLs was talking it was kind of hard to understand. Everyone was looking around and at each other trying to understand.

A: How did that make you feel?

W: Well it made me feel kind of bad because I am also an ELL student and it made me think do I sound like him too when I am speaking?

Maria also explains how the assignment affected her. She began by discussing her anger regarding the responses of the other student in the class to Chris's reading.

M: In one of the projects where we had to read something aloud, one of the guys who doesn't speak English well was reading and somebody laughed at him for that and I don't like that so.

A: Did you say something to the person who laughed?

M: No I didn't. I just looked. I wasn't nervous that day, but when I saw the guy and he was laughing at the other guy [Chris]; then, I started to get nervous.

A: Yes, when I was in there that day, I observed some of the same things too. I was uncomfortable.

M: I was uncomfortable too. He [mainstream student] was like, “ I didn’t understand what you said. Can you repeat it?” and he [Chris] started to read it again and he [mainstream student] still did not understand what he said and then the teacher, she had to explain it. Another thing that I did not like was when another girl in there, she is from Colombia too, she is like laughing at us. And I just think to myself, “Hey you speak Spanish too. Why are you laughing at us? One day you had to learn to speak English too. Maybe you made a mistake that day, so why are you laughing about us?” That made me really angry, because she had to learn one day, so why is she laughing at us?

I probed further to determine how she felt about the way that the situation was handled. Her response shows how she confused she is about the situation when her normal coping strategies are not working.

A: When the teacher corrected that, did you feel like she handled it well? Should she have done something else?

M: No I think that she did OK. I mean maybe if she had done or said something else, like don’t laugh, maybe it would have been more embarrassing for the person. So I think that did it as well as she could have. Everyone had started talking, so I think that she did well.

A: How would you prefer the mainstream students respond to you when they can’t understand you.

M: Honestly, I don’t know. I know that if they were in Colombia and speaking Spanish for the same type of assignment, I would be doing the same thing.

I can understand that because it is hard sometimes to understand. I only don't like it when the people laugh. You can turn and ask, "I don't understand. What are they saying?" Only don't laugh, because when you laugh, it is rude.

A: Do you think that [Chris] knew?

M: No because today when you asked him how it went, he said it was pretty good.

On the other hand, Mrs. GT thought that the assignment went well. The ELLs all received full credit for the assignment and she explained:

I knew that they were very nervous about speaking and they were difficult. I am really proud of them for doing the work and trying. I know how that feels when you are standing up there and you are speaking another language and you know that your accent makes you hard to understand, and you know that your grammar is probably not right. I know how unnerving that could be, but I also remember teachers making us do it for practice. So what, I tried to do- and I tried to do this with all of the kids so they weren't singled out. I tried to sort of summarize what they had said at the end of each branch or department so that the ELLs wouldn't feel less comfortable.

Both Beth and Chris agreed that the assignment was a success. Beth emphasized that even though she did not like the assignment, that it was important for her to practice speaking English in front of a group. Chris explained his complicated feeling about the project. He said:

C: I was nervous all of the day. I was afraid that I was going to say something wrong and I think that I did because I saw one girl who asked three times “What did I say?” I get mad.

A: Tell me about that. What made you get mad?

C: Because I was trying and I am scared and she was the only one who said that.

A: How was the situation handled? What happened after she asked?

C: I don't know, I just feel burn my face and I think that I was just sad.

A: So how did you feel when this situation was over?

C: I don't know, I think that I did good. I was like...ooohhh god...relief. I just relaxed when I finished it.

For the participants in the study, this assignment represents a moment in which the individual and his or her perception defines the moment. Each participant was concerned with making it through the assignment with minimal embarrassment for themselves and for the other ELLs. Maria, Beth and William all expressed concern for Chris, yet seemed to value the assignment. Both Chris and Mrs. GT acknowledged the difficulty of the assignment and the pride of simply having gotten up in front of the class and spoken in English.

The participants actively sought to navigate the expectations of the classroom, through seeking success, avoiding challenges and occasionally, making it through the assignment. Regardless of the technique used, the participants navigated the expectations of the classroom through action. Their navigations were intentional, and active with the

particular goal of passing the course in mind. This goal of passing is directly linked to the final category of data, preparing for the future.

Preparing for the Future

The final section of this chapter centers on the ways in which the experiences of the mainstream were shaped by the concept of “preparing for future”. This section begins with vignette 5 which demonstrates the influence of preparing for the future within this classroom. This vignette is composed from classroom observation and teacher reflection in which Mrs. GT wrote out the “coffee cup” speech. Within this the mainstream US Government classroom, the “future” was defined as the immediate future event of graduation, and the less clear concept of life after high school. Graduation and the way in which it was consistently referred to in this class and used as a way of motivating students to complete their assignments and preparing for life beyond high school are the focuses in this category of data. The section begins with vignette and followed by a discussion of both graduation and life after high school.

Vignette 5.

Mrs. GT is lecturing to the students about the powers of the federal government which are identified in the constitution. As she prepares to move the screen to a new set of notes, a student in the front of the room nods his head, indicating for her not to move the screen. She asks, “Was that too fast for you?” No eyes meet hers, but several heads are nodding yes. None of the students take their eyes off of the screen in front of them as the students are copying diligently from the notes projected on the board in the front of the room. Mrs. GT replies, “I’m sorry” and then reminds the students “Try to work on

your short hand ok? You write all of these words out and you are never going to have enough time.” A few students in the front continue to comment, “I can’t even see the words on the bottom.” Mrs. GT walks over to the student’s desk and looks at his notes. “Work on your short hand. You guys have all heard my coffee cup speech.”

Next year, your professor is going to come in with his coffee cup. He is going to set it down and he is going to start talking. When it is time for class to end, he is going to pick his coffee cup up and he is going to leave. So you have to get it down because your professor in college is not going to repeat things over and over and over for you, you have to be able to get it. So here is an example. If I am going to write this down, I would not write *express*, I would write *exp* period. I would abbreviate *powers* as *pwrs*. *Constitution* is *cont*. *National government* is n. *govt*. So just make it short and simple. So each of you are going to have to develop your own sense of shorthand. What makes sense to me might not make sense to you, so you have got to figure out what makes sense to you, OK? You guys know how to text message, right? Students answer “No.” Mrs. GT repeats, tongue in cheek, “No. You guys never text message. Think about what you do when you text message. You don’t write out all the words, right? Do you write out everything you want to say?” Several students respond boisterously, with a variety of responses. One clearly says, “I don’t write LOL. I write laugh out loud.” This comment gets a laugh from some classmates. Mrs. GT says, “Ok. But most of ya’ll don’t do that. Ok think about how you shorten things when you text message. Do that when you are writing your notes. Ok. Because that is something that obviously makes sense to you or you wouldn’t be able to send texts. Of course everyone has that friend who shortens too

much, and you are like what is this. Ok? So think about that when you are abbreviating. Think about that. Use that.”

Understanding Graduation and Life after High School in Vignette 5. Mrs. GT constantly referred to graduation as a means of motivating the seniors in her class. In 22 of the 26 classroom observations, she made references to the students needing to work hard so that they would be sure to be at graduation. When I asked her about using graduation as a motivator, she explained:

It’s more effective later in the semester once the reality started setting in a little bit. Especially the ones who had been passing before and are not passing now. Once they realized that if I say something I mean it, I’m not kidding around. I am not going to make exceptions for you and I am not going to help you when you don’t deserve it. So it is about the only way that I can think about to motivate seniors is to hold up that little carrot.

This carrot was particularly appealing to the senior ELLs: Beth, William, Keith and Chris. As graduation neared, the concerns of graduation began to influence the experiences of all of the seniors. For William, the constant discussion of graduation was a motivator because his grade had slipped to a 62. He needed the reminder that graduation was nearby and that the only element separating him from his diploma was the government class. For the others, the motivation of graduation was more complicated because they were concerned not only with passing the government course, but also passing the GHS GT. Beth, Chris and Keith spent the last half of their second semester awaiting the results of this gatekeeper test. At the last testing administration in late

March, Beth had only passed the writing test and none of the core subject areas. Chris had passed the tests in Language Arts and Mathematics, but was still waiting for his results in Social Studies, Science and Writing. Keith, who took the exams during his first week in school, was anxiously awaiting the results for all sections of the test. Graduation was very important to all of these students, and they were definitely motivated by the references to it in class. Keith reiterated this point when he said, "Government is pretty easy if you study. I have an 85 in there. I need it to graduate so I am taking it and doing what I need to pass it." For Maria, an 11th grader, graduation is not an effective motivator. She explained, "I just laugh because that doesn't work for me. I mean even if I were a senior, it wouldn't work for me. I know me and I know I wouldn't fail that class because really that class is not hard; it is easy." The consistent use of graduation as a motivator is connected to the other way in which these participants were actively preparing for the future.

The coffee cup speech at the beginning of this section was a common occurrence in Mrs. GT's government class. It is a clear example of how she uses the concept of life beyond high school to help instruct her students in skills, such as note taking, which she believes will better prepare them for the future. Mrs. GT is clear that she is preparing the students for the future. She explained these intentions as she said:

Most of them are going to try to go off next year and try to do something. One of the reasons that I get frustrated about here at the high school level is when we baby and hand hold. They just need to understand that the culture outside of school is not like that. Like with college or a boss, if you don't have it today, they are not going to take it or they are going to fire you if you don't do your job. So

one of the things I want to teach them is responsibility. You know, to take responsibility for your actions and doing what is expected of you.

She also made her beliefs about what her students need to be prepared for the future in a discussion of the purpose of government. She explained these intentions in an interview:

A: What do you think that the kids should get from government when they leave your class?

GT: I would like for them to have a sense of how the government works and in some sense I would like for them to be better prepared to make decisions as voters. Because I often find in discussions that they have a strong opinion about things, they haven't a clue about what they are talking about. They haven't a clue, not a clue, they don't understand basics about how things work. They are just getting whatever they are getting off of TV and they are spouting it back and they don't understand how things work, and that really bothers me. I am fine with you having whatever you want to have as a political opinion as long as you can back that opinion up. I think if you are going to be a productive citizen you need to have a basic understanding of how government works. Honestly, we don't really have the time for much more than that. I mean just a basic understanding.

The ELLs also had ideas about life beyond high school. These ideas helped to motivate them within the class and were essential to helping them understand the purpose for government. Table 10 explains the future plans of the ELLs.

Table 10

ELLs and Their Future Plans

Participant	Life after high school	Become US citizen
Beth	Go to work and raise money to study cosmetology	No
Chris	Go to work, but would like to pursue a career in Nursing	Yes; but not possible
Keith	Attend university in the US to study mechanical engineering	Yes
Maria	Attend university in the US to study biochemistry	Yes
William	Attend Local University	Is Currently

The ELLs had opinions about the purpose of learning US government which were linked directly to their plans for life after high school. Keith struggled to understand how learning about the US government would benefit him in the future. He stated:

A: Why do you think that government is a required class for graduation?

K: I have no idea. I mean I don't see what is the point for foreign students to study American government. I really don't.

A: What about a Haitian government class? What would be the point.

K: To see how the government works, I mean I know that. It just seems that this seems like it is more for people who are interested in being in politics. I mean I want to do mechanical engineering and American government has nothing to do with that.

Keith struggled to see a connection between his future plans and American government. His opinion did not change throughout the course of this study. William had a different opinion of studying US Government. He linked his need to know about US Government directly to the fact that he was a citizen. He said:

W: First of all, I am a citizen and as a citizen I should know everything that there is to know about the US government.

A: What about for students who are not citizens?

W: As long as they stay they should understand what is happening in the US government. Mrs. GT would say the same thing that I did. I think that she is trying to make us better citizens, so that the mistakes that were made in the founding of this country, from our beginning, would not happen again. So we will all know the mistakes, so that we all know what to do and what not to do, that's what she wants for us.

William seems to be aligned with Mrs. GT's understanding of the purpose of government. Maria has a different opinion of government and its role in her future. Maria sees government as serving both practical functions and theoretical functions. For her government is useful for when "you leave school and you want to vote or if you have a trial or something maybe it can help you be a little bit aware of how that works." She also sees her knowledge of government as simply knowledge for the sake of knowledge. She stated, "I mean maybe there is nothing that I can use, but there is knowledge. There is information that I need, something I can take and do something with it. I just have knowledge of that. It makes me feel good." For Maria, the knowledge of how the US

Government functioned was useful, but having that knowledge was not what motivated her. She explained her motivation:

I want to go to college here and I want to study in a difficult field. I want to apply for scholarships so I need good grades. So maybe in five years, when I graduate from college and I go to take my citizenship test, I will remember what I learned here and that will be better.

Mrs. GT also hoped that the study of US Government could provide the ELLs with information which they could use on the citizenship test.

For Beth and Chris the purpose of government was not limited to its usefulness as content knowledge because it was also an opportunity to learn English. For both of these students, the acquisition of English was linked to having a successful future. Beth explained that her government class was an opportunity to interact with native speakers and it forced her to work harder and use her English more often than she would in an ESOL class. She explained:

A: Do you wish your government class were an ESOL class?

B: No- because I can learn more that – I can learn more English. It forces me to study harder than in the ESOL classes. I like to work with other kids. You know, meet them and learn more English. It would be less beneficial if the class was an ESOL class because I am not going to learn any English. I would only get the content.

She further explained that having a high school diploma from the United States was an added benefit for people seeking employment in her home country of Honduras. Chris reiterated the importance of learning English in the government class by explaining that for him it was essential to be in this course because it was his only non ESOL exclusive content class. For him the government class served a dual purpose, it provided him with the content of US government and it gave him an opportunity to interact in English.

This chapter presents the findings from this exploration of the experiences of the teacher and the ELLs as they participated in a secondary mainstream US Government course. The chapter grouped the experiences into three broad categories: experiences which were shaped by (a) returning to the past, (b) navigating the classroom and (d) preparing for the future.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This final chapter discusses the findings of this single case study of a secondary inclusive mainstream classroom through the interactions between a mainstream teacher, 5 English language learners (ELLs), content and context. By exploring the experiences of the mainstream teacher and the ELLs within this classroom, data revealed that their common experiences involved (1) returning to the past, (2) navigating the expectations of the classroom and (3) preparing for the future. Analysis of this data across categories resulted in highlighting five common assumptions held by both the mainstream teacher and the ELLs. These assumptions clearly shaped and defined the experience of the mainstream classroom for both the teacher and the students. This chapter begins by acknowledging the limitations to the study, reflecting of important aspects within the study, identifying and discussing each of the five assumptions and finally, closes by summarizing the importance of these findings regarding knowledge of the current educational experiences of secondary mainstream teachers and high school ELLs.

Limitations

Prior to discussing the implications of this study, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research. First, the setting for this study contributed to several possible limitations. The case for this research was a senior level, mainstream US Government course, taught in a suburban secondary school. As a senior level course, the

students within this study ranged from seventeen to nineteen years of age and as such, were arguably more mature than other students within school. As upperclassmen, it was understood that the students within this study had displayed some degree of academic competency prior to the study simply because of their continued enrollment and progress in school. Both the maturity and academic competency surely influenced the degree to which the students' were able to access and apply prior academic knowledge and reflect their own experiences as students.

Another component of the setting which possibly limits the transferability of the findings was the small, and therefore less demographically diverse, population of the ELLs within the study. In a school, with over 2134 students, only 34 were identified and given ESOL services. This small ELL population created a phenomenon of shared experience among the ELLs. The students identified each other as a group because of this shared experience as language learners. The students also shared heritage languages, which also contributed to a sense of the shared experience. Within the study, these common language backgrounds provided opportunities for communication, using heritage languages, which might not be possible with a more diverse group of ELLs and certainly shaped the experience of the mainstream classroom for these students. That being said, each ELL in this study was an individual. The student participants originated from different countries and educational backgrounds, demonstrated varied English proficiency levels, and offered unique perspectives of the mainstream classroom. This case study was not conducted in order to generalize the results across all secondary settings in which ELLs are mainstreamed. Instead, by using detailed description to share the findings of this study, readers have the opportunity to transfer these findings to other

unique settings. The purpose of this study was to explore and better understand the experiences of both the teacher and the ELLs within the mainstream classroom. I hope that from this study, others will research the events unfolding in other mainstream classrooms as a means of better understanding this experiences and what they indicate for teachers, students and instruction.

My own involvement within the school also serves as a limitation to this research. As discussed earlier in my subjectivities, I was and continue to be an ESOL instructor within the school. The lens used to collect and analyze data within this classroom was shaped by my roles as ESOL instructor and my opinions regarding instruction for ELLs. Along with this, each of the ELLs within the study were also currently in an ESOL language arts class with me or they had been taught by me in a previous year. This position connected me to these students in ways which impacted the nature of the data which I collected. In my position, I also provide instructional coaching for mainstream teachers who are learning to work with ELLs. Though I had not given specific instructional feedback to the teacher participant during this study, she was well aware of my role in the school. My position within the school the focus of this study could have altered the participant's classroom decisions and behaviors. By its very nature, observation alters the situation which is being observed. However, repeated observation over the length of the class created a sense of regularity, until the definition of normalcy in the class shifted to include me. At the same time, my need to remain in a strong working relationship with this teacher also may have shaped both my observations and analysis. As a means of remaining aware of my own subjectivities, I used member checking, in which I shared my findings with the participants for feedback or

reinterpretation and a process of peer review, which helped me to see alternate interpretations and solidified my interpretations through the process of questioning and restating my themes. I also used a variety of data sources, collected across time as a means of triangulating my data and providing trustworthiness to my findings. In my final report, I offered reliable depictions of the participants and classroom events. The use of vignettes and rich description provide the reader with an illustration of the classroom and the participants within it. Fully acknowledging the limitations of this study, the findings still offer a clear and different understanding of the mainstream classroom through the experiences of the mainstream teacher and the ELLs as they interacted with the content, the context and each other.

Reflections on this Study

The discussion of this case study would be incomplete without illuminating the role of sociocultural learning theory within the findings, analyzing the instructional events within the classroom, relating the limited emphasis on government as a content, and considering the events of the classroom as unwritten educational policy.

Sociocultural Learning Theory in the Findings

The findings of this study echo tenets of sociocultural learning theory. The three major categories of findings within this study: (1) returning to the past; (2) navigating the expectations of the mainstream and (3) preparation for the future correspond with three major ideas of sociocultural learning theory: (a) role of prior knowledge in present learning, (b) functioning within the zone of proximal development and (c) the idea that learning precedes development. The first category, returning to the past offers the reader

a detailed example of the ways in which prior knowledge is a fundamental component of how people create new knowledge. Vygotsky (1978) indicated that from birth, children began social interactions which shaped their development. He was well aware that the cultural background of children shaped the interactions which they would have and as such, shaped the ideas and processes which would be internalized by that child. Within this study, the role of internalized knowledge from past experience cannot be denied. As sociocultural learning theory asserts, the past experiences of the participants created the foundation, or actual development level, from which they would begin their operations within this mainstream classroom. Regardless of whether the participants attempted to recreate success, avoid challenges, or simply develop empathy for others, the past learning most certainly shaped the present learning within the study.

Secondly, the participant's negotiations of the present demonstrate learners operating within Vygotsky's (1978) *zone of proximal development*. As the ELLs and Mrs. GT worked to be successful, to avoid challenges and simply to make it through the expectations of the mainstream classroom, they were defining and redefining the complex area between what they already knew how to do and what they were only able to do with the assistance of others. Within this category, Mrs. GT provided scaffolding to the ELLs in order to help them function within their ZPD and eventually internalize this knowledge. However, in working with the ELLs, and seeking to support them in the classroom, Mrs. GT did not often move into her own *zone of proximal development* as she sought ways of changing her practice to benefit these students. Instead, she used her past experiences as a language learner and occasionally consulted with the other ESOL teacher in the school. Intentionally moving teachers like Mrs. GT into the zone of

proximal development though professional development and co teaching models is an important to improve instruction for ELLs (Carasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2010;Echeverria et al., 2006; Harklau,1994; Karabenik & Noda, 2004; Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006).

Finally, sociocultural learning theory emphasizes that learning precedes development. Vygotsky (1978) explained development as the internalization of socially shared processes and understood that learning had to occur before new understandings could be internalized. The third category of findings within this study illustrates this idea as it focuses on the understandings of both Mrs. GT and the ELLs that the government classroom acted as preparation for future development. The participants in the study understood that learning within this US government course played a role in helping to further develop general knowledge, understand US government, or increase knowledge of English language skills for the students. The importance of sociocultural learning theory is evident in the framing, implementation and findings of this study.

Analysis of Instruction in the Classroom

As illustrated across the vignettes, the instructional events in Mrs. GTs classroom were specifically beneficial to the ELLs in the course. Table 5.1 summarizes the types of support which were evident in Mrs. GT's classroom and how those types of scaffolding seemed to benefit the ELLs in this study.

Table 11

Summary of Classroom Events and Benefits for ELLs

Type of Support	Classroom Event	Benefit for ELLs
Visual	Projecting notes on the board during lecture	Limits pressure to attain all important information from listening
	Use of graphic organizers	Provides a visual means of organizing information
	Incorporating Film	Provides context and examples for ideas presented in class
Procedural	Use of organizational tools such as notebooks	Students are able to organize assignments and review class work for the unit
	Use of board work and essential questions	Summarized and introduced important concepts
	Create patterned classroom	Provided a clear procedure which did not require knowledge of English
Vocabulary Development	Simplified definitions of words offered during lecture	Provided definitions of words using examples and synonyms without students having to ask
Teacher and Student Interaction	Provided students with accommodations without other students being aware	Provided the ELLs with academic support without making them “not fit in” and made students feel cared for
	Provided one on one assistance as needed	Provided students with a chance to approach her in a less threatening environment

	Provided opportunities for recovery of test grades and course grades	Demonstrates a true concern for the success for each student
	Provide a majority of course information through lecture	Students have prior knowledge of skills for lecture and note taking
Student to Student Interaction	Teacher provides opportunities for collaboration in teacher made ELL exclusive groups	Students feel comfortable working with ELL peers and using native language
	Teacher provides opportunities for collaboration in teacher made non ELL exclusive groups	Students seek opportunities to communicate in English with Native Speakers
	Teacher provides collaboration in student selected groups	Students are allowed to choose

Mrs. GT's mainstream classroom included many elements which were beneficial to the ELLs in the classroom. One of these elements was her use of visual support such as film and pictures to help illustrate concepts. Research suggests that this use of visuals is helpful in the instruction of ELLs and continues by suggesting that Mrs. GT could improve her instruction by incorporating more non linguistic forms of representation in her instruction including the use of manipulatives or realia. For the ELLs in the classroom these representations can help to create context and to activate prior knowledge (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987; Brinton & Snow, 1997; Walqui, 2008). Mrs. GT also used graphic organizers in her instruction. Though graphic organizers are a means of helping students visually organized information; Mrs. GT could further support the ELLs in her classroom by expanding her use of tools, such as the graphic organizer, as a means of helping ELLs learn cognitive strategies which would help them be successful in academics (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Cruz & Thornton, 2010; Walqui, 2008).

For example, in her classroom, she spends a great deal of time lecturing and having the students take notes. She provides the students with a projected copy of the notes and often assists the students in developing shorthand and cueing them to key information. Though this skill will benefit the students who will continue on to attend post secondary institutions, research also indicates the importance of secondary teachers and students understanding the disciplinary literacy skills needed to be a successful student within a content area classroom (Lee & Spratley, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). With this in mind, Mrs. GT could include instruction of skills, which could benefit the ELLs in her class such as identifying and using textual features, such as charts and graphs, which are commonly found in social studies (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Cruz & Thornton, 2010). One possible way to include these strategies could be in classroom readings. Though Mrs. GT did not require her students to use a textbook in her class, she did issue assignments which required the reading of primary documents. This use of primary documents, like the Constitution, created a sense of authenticity and immediacy to the curriculum (Cruz & Thornton, 2010). However; for many ELLs, the language of primary documents is particularly inaccessible. These assignments could be used as opportunities to provide social studies specific reading strategies such as analysis of the source and the use of various linguistic structures such as passive voice (Cruz & Thornton, 2010).

Along with her use of visuals, Mrs. GT's use of classroom procedures was also very beneficial to the ELLs. The students responded well to her use of the notebook and the organizational features she used in her classroom, which allowed the students to know what was expected of them in the upcoming lesson and throughout the week. Curran's

(2003) research suggest that ELLs benefit from classroom procedures, such as Mrs. GT's board work and essential questions which are used in the same way every day, because they help to reduce the stress of trying to determine what events might be happening in the classroom each day. The procedures, which require minimal linguistic skill in order to follow, helped to create a truly inclusive environment for the ELLs.

Though there was some evidence of vocabulary instruction within this mainstream classroom, research suggests that the ELLs would benefit from a much more rigorous and direct form of vocabulary instruction (Cruz & Thornton, 2010; Garcia & Garcia, 2010; Harper & deJong, 2006; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Though Mrs. GT would often identify and define words during the lecture, pre teaching vocabulary would help the ELLs prepare for the content of the lecture and begin to activate prior knowledge and build context.

A great strength of Mrs. GT classroom was the use of multiple opportunities for teacher to student and student to student interactions. These interactions served a variety of purposes and created multiple opportunities for the ELLs to interact within the target language which tremendously benefits their English language development (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Cruz & Thornton, 2010; Hill & Bjork, 2006; Long, 1996; Walqui, 2008). During her instruction, Mrs. GT met many of the suggestions offered by Carrasquillo & Rodriguez (2002) including: speaking clearly and avoiding slang, providing guide sheets for the lecture, making sure everyone had time to copy the notes, and using examples to demonstrate major concepts. She also provided written instructions for major projects so that the ELLs could review and determine that they understood all of the directions. Mrs. GT also had positive interactions with the ELLs

because she provided them with accommodations and the ELLs perceived these accommodations as authentic caring (Noddings, 2005; Valenzuela; 1999). Though she demonstrated many pedagogical strengths in her interactions with students, they often followed an Initiate- Respond- Evaluation format. This format limits the responses of the student and therefore limits the opportunities which the student have to interact in the target language (Cazden, 1988) to Mrs. GT could improve her instruction of ELLs by shifting away from this traditional format of discussion and into a more open ended discussion format which would provide more opportunities for interaction. Mrs. GT also provided excellent opportunities for student to student interaction within her classroom. She gave the ELLs a variety of contexts in which to interact using both the native language and English, which helps them to develop both cognitively and linguistically (Cruz & Thornton, 2010; Cummins, 2000). She structured the collaboration so that the students were in ELL exclusive groups at the beginning of the semester, but that they had branched out into mixed groups and student selected groups by the end of the semester. This allowed the ELLs opportunities to interact, but kept them comfortable and open to the interactions with Native English Speakers.

Overall, Mrs. GT provided many forms of scaffolding which were beneficial to the ELLs within the classroom. As she progresses in developing instruction for ELLs, the next stage of development should include a more student specific form of instruction. Though she provided accommodations for all of the ELLs, the varying language levels indicate that some of the students needed extensive scaffolding, while others did not. Her approach to the ELLs was still a group differentiation, instead of a variation based on student specific needs. Mrs. GT could benefit from increased professional development,

through course work or additional research into social studies instruction for ELLs, or the use of a co teaching model in which an ESOL specialist was also within the classroom and could assist the teacher with tailoring language instruction to the language levels and needs of the ELL students. These supports could help to scaffold her, creating a zone of proximal development, in which she would better learn how understand and accommodate specific language levels within her mainstream social studies classroom. .

Limited Emphasis on Government as Content

Interestingly, within this study of a secondary US Government classroom, the importance of government as a content area was diminished. Across the data sources (observations, interviews, and document analysis) there was minimal discussion of the actual content of the course. In the interviews, when I would specifically ask about content, the students often deflected the question and went on to speak on another topic. Often times, discussion of a content area such as the concept of “checks and balances” would be equated to the grade made on the notebook or exam for that unit. When asked about the content of the course, Mrs. GT explained that the most difficult content of the course, the philosophical underpinnings guiding the structure of the US Government were taught during the first three weeks of the semester and before the study began. When my observations began, the students were focusing on the US Constitution; however, following that unit the course focused mostly on the function of the three branches of government.

The course work of the US Government class in this case study consistently centered on the content of US Government. Throughout my observations, my each

assignment or teacher led discussion focused on this topic. This being said, at the end of the study, there was still a sense that although learning the content was a focus of the classroom, perhaps it was not the primary concern of the participants. This is an interesting phenomenon as the research created the expectation that learning the content would be the focus of this secondary classroom and of this mainstream teacher (O'Brien, Stewart & Moje, 1995). For the teacher and the ELLs participating in the study, it seemed that the mastering a content was simply a component of passing the course. The primary focus of the participants in the study was ensuring that everyone passed the course. This focus was followed by the students' concerns with interacting and improving English, and Mrs. GTs need to "cover all of the standards" and desire to help students learn responsibility. It is possible that one reason for this diminished emphasis on content was the approach by the participants to the course. As a second semester senior level course, perhaps US Government was not perceived as a content area needed to help students understand and be successful in the following year, but instead; the content was viewed as a task to be temporarily mastered in order to graduate. Though Mrs. GT spoke of wanting students to develop their own understanding of how the government worked, the ELLs did not reflect this understanding in their interviews. Another reason that the content may have become less important in this study is that the content of this course was not assessed by any standardized high stakes testing. As a result, perhaps some of the pressure to master the content in order to pass these high stakes tests (Mantero & McVicker; 2006) may have been reduced, making the content seem less important. Finally, some of the ELLs could not identify a need for the course beyond graduation. For example, Keith and Chris found the content of the US

Government course as not very useful in life beyond high school. Though the participants spoke of immediacy and relevancy of the learning the content of US Government, the actuality and specifics of that content did not seem to resonate within this study.

Rejecting a Return to Sink or Swim

Overall the experiences of the mainstream teacher and the ELLs within this US Government classroom seemed to have been positive. Mrs. GT and ELLs felt that they had sought and achieved success since the ELLs passed the class and Mrs. GT was able to cover the standards. This being said, it is important that the mostly positive findings of this research do not overshadow the concern that the sink or swim approach towards education still drives the policy decisions of today.

By considering the elements of this case study more closely, it is evident that Mrs. GT and the ELLs were engaged in teaching and learning shaped by a sink or swim approach to inclusive education. The practice of enrolling ELLs in a course in which the mainstream teacher, like Ms. GT, is underprepared to provide instruction of content, language and academic literacy in courses, leaves the ELLs and the mainstream teacher in a position of determining how to teach and learn without support. This practice is often justified by districts and states claiming limited funding or a lack of appropriate staffing (Batt, 2008). The sink or swim mentality places responsibility for success on the individual regardless of the circumstances surrounding the situation. For ELLs it means learning English and being a successful student, regardless of the instruction within the classroom (Brisk, 2006). For the mainstream teacher, it means a sense of isolation while trying to understand how to scaffold content, language acquisition and academic

literacy (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Echeverria et al., 2000; Lee & Spratley, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Wineberg, 1991) and leaning to use means which accommodate instruction for ELLs (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Cruz & Thornton, 2010; Colombo & Furbush, 2009; Dong, 2000; Harper & deJong, 2004; Hill & Bjork, 2008; Walqui, 2000).

Though this study did not find overt examples of isolation as the participants experienced the mainstream classroom, there were moments which had overtones of a belief in the sink or swim policy. For example, the ELLs within this study had a sense of what they were trying to achieve from the course and what sort of scaffolding would help them achieve, however they did not communicate these needs to Mrs. GT. Instead, the students seemed to accept the idea that any support was better than nothing. The ELLs in this study, and others, who are successful in mainstream classrooms with underprepared teachers are simultaneously subjected to and perpetrators of a sink or swim educational policy. Mrs. GT, like other mainstream teachers, struggled to determine when and how much scaffolding to provide (Clair, 1995; Reeves, 2006). . As she explained in her interview, she was consciously providing accommodations, such as cloze notes and modified tests as a means of reducing the linguistic load, without the awareness of which ELLs students needed this level of support. As a first time teacher of ELLs with no prior training in providing modifications, Mrs GT was underprepared to instruct these students. She too, was both perpetuated and fell victim to this sink or swim policy.

This return to the sink or swim policy forces mainstream teachers into a situation where they and their schools are far more accountable for the success or failure of these students (Mantero & McVicker, 2006; NCLB, 2001) and yet the system remains tacit in

assuring that mainstream teachers become competent teachers for ELLs. This entire study reflects the experiences of a group of people who found themselves in a inclusive mainstream setting because no one challenged the readiness of teacher or language learners preparedness to be placed in this setting. Even I, as a researcher, perpetuated the sink or swim policy by making researching this situation.

For the over thirty years, research has consistently demonstrated that mainstream teachers are underprepared to effectively instruct ELLs (Clair, 2005; Cruz & Thornton, 2010; Colombo & Furbush, 2009; Dong, 2004; Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006). Regardless of this type of research which demonstrates ELLs have not benefitted the highest quality of instruction, schools continue to enroll students in these mainstream courses and simultaneously fail to educate the teachers of these students. This creates an educational situation in which ELLs are left to determine how to be successful in the mainstream classroom. In response to this educational dilemma, studies have sought explain the struggles of the ELL within the mainstream setting by exploring the experiences and perceptions of the mainstream teacher (Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006; Sharkey & Lazer, 2006) and the experiences of the ELL in the inclusive setting (Gunderson, 2000; Harkalu, 1994). Along with these studies, researchers have generated texts which are designed to help mainstream teachers learn how provide effective instructional accommodations to ELLs through models such as content-based instructional programs (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Echeverria et al., 2000), teaching discipline literacy skills (Lee & Spratley, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Wineberg, 1991), general and content specific instructional accommodations (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Cruz & Thornton, 2010; Colombo & Furbush, 2009; Dong, 2000;

Harper & deJong, 2004; Hill & Bjork, 2008; Walqui, 2008). Though the findings from these studies are informative, the problem of helping mainstream teachers provide a quality education for ELLs will not be magically solved through research alone. Research which does not inform practice loses its potency and purpose. Instead, we must use this educational research as a catalyst for action which seeks to provide ELLs and mainstream teachers to the education they both deserve. .

The sink or swim mentality still guides the education of ELLs and can potentially damage ELLs and mainstream teachers. Consequently, we cannot afford to continue allowing a sink or swim policy to determine the quality of education which ELLs receive, We also cannot risk allowing mainstream teachers who are underprepared prepared to teach ELLs, while others are not. This study seeks to advocate for both ELLs and the mainstream teachers, by rejecting the return to a sink or swim mentality. Instead, this study explores the common experience of the ELLs and the mainstream teacher. This common experience provides a new lens for exploring the means by which ELLs and teachers work together within the classroom and create a catalyst for change.

Reflecting on the role of sociocultural learning theory in the findings, analyzing the classroom instruction, exploring the diminished importance of the content area and rejecting the return to a sink or swim policy, prepares the reader to explore the five common assumptions held by the teacher and students in this secondary inclusive mainstream US Government classroom. These assumptions will be discussed in the section below.

Five Common Assumptions

Examinations of experiences of the mainstream teacher and ELLs within an inclusive mainstream classroom began with a focus on the instructional dynamic (Ball & Forzani, 2006). Initially, data collection centered on determining points of intersection between the teacher, students, content and environment. Closer inspection of the interactions revealed commonalities within the experiences of the inclusive classroom mainstream teacher and the ELLs within the classroom. Throughout the study, the teacher and the students were operating under a similar set of assumptions. These assumptions guided the instructional decisions and classroom participation throughout the semester. Examining these assumptions helps to clearly demonstrate an understanding of this secondary mainstream US Government classroom.

All Members of the Class were Capable of Achieving Success by Hard Work

Within this mainstream classroom, Mrs. GT and the ELLs shared a common understanding of success. This common assumption includes the obvious component of passing or excelling in the course. However; beyond the obvious, this shared understanding reveals a variety of perceptions which directly influence the experiences of the mainstream classroom. First, this assumption reveals that both the teacher and the students agree that the inclusive mainstream setting was the best setting for these students to study government. Most mainstream teachers believe that a mainstream educational setting is the best for ELLs (Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Reeves, 2006; Penfield, 1987) and Mrs. GT was no exception. The ELLs within her classroom also shared this sentiment. For the students, inclusion in the mainstream offered them opportunities to use English as

a means of communication and kept them from feeling like outsiders. William, Maria and Keith, who had the strongest language skills, believed the mainstream setting offered them the most “normal” exposure to the content and pacing of a high school classroom. Maria and Keith felt that the mainstream setting was a place where they could excel, while William felt the setting was most appropriate as he was ready to be out of ESOL. For Beth and Carlos, the mainstream setting was a challenge because it forced them to use academic and social English which was above their English proficiency level, but each indicated it was the preferred educational setting. For all of the ELLs, the challenge of functioning academically in English seemed to be one that they welcomed.

The second perception made evident by this common assumption, was that everyone, regardless of language level, could achieve this success within this mainstream classroom if they were willing to work. The importance of such a belief cannot be ignored because its influence stretches across various aspects of the classroom for both the teacher and the students. This belief influences the teacher’s pedagogical approach, methodological choices, and selection of content within the classroom. Research indicated that many mainstream teachers often confuse an ELL’s language proficiency with a student’s ability to learn (Clair, 1995; Harper & deJong, 2004; Sharkey & Lazer, 2000) and that this belief may result in less academic rigor in coursework given to ELLs. This was not the case with Mrs. GT. She made her instructional decisions based on the belief that the ELLs within her classroom were capable of attaining the content knowledge necessary to meet the stated standards of the course. Perhaps, some of Mrs. GT’s belief that the ELLs could be successful within this class was due to her already supportive structure within this mainstream class. Some of the techniques which

benefitted the ELLs, such as the repetitive classroom procedure, the early notice and time given to exam preparation, the use of review games, the inclusion of interactive and collaborative projects, and the opportunity to recovery projects were not extra work designed specifically for the ELLs. Instead, these were built in as support structures for the students in the class and were already present in her teaching. In many ways, Mrs. GT's teaching style and approach to curriculum benefitted the students. She did not need to fundamentally change her teaching style, which may have been a larger shift and created more tension and a different perspective about the inclusion of ELLs.

The ELLs recognized the supportive structure of the classroom and acknowledged that they were capable of being successful with in this classroom if they were willing to work. Chris, Maria and Kevin specifically noted that the course was easy and felt that this was because Mrs. GT provided such clear instruction and so many opportunities to be successful. They realized that working was the key to success. Even the ELLs who struggled in the class acknowledged the possibility of success because of the structure of the course, which seems to have served as a motivator for being focused and completing assignments. For example, Beth, who struggled for the length of the study because she could not pass the exams, recognized that failing exams would not cause her to fail the course as long as she was willing to work hard on other assignments. The grading scale and the multiple opportunities for success in the class seem to have prevented Beth from giving up on the class entirely. William demonstrated another example of working for success when he changed his approach to the class. Upon realizing that he was failing the course, he realized that it was important that he take responsibility for his situation and increase the amount of work that he was doing for this course. This change in

attitude and increased effort in his work was valued by Mrs. GT, further illustrating the connection between work and success within this classroom.

The amount of work needed to be successful varied from participant to participant. It is important to remember that the established definition of success in this mainstream classroom was passing. Achieving this goal required different levels of work for each participant. Indeed, Mrs. GT did not adjust the content of the classroom; she adjusted her methodology which required extra work and often mainstream teachers are concerned about the extra work which is involved with the inclusion of ELLs (Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006). However, Mrs. GT made accommodations for her ELLs without complaint regarding the extra time or work. This being said, perhaps the accommodations which Mrs. GT provided did not require much additional work. Accommodations, universally applied, do not require the same amount of work as individualized accommodations based on language proficiency. For example, the cloze notes, which were provided with each lecture, were her lecture notes with key words removed. Though the notes were helpful, there was no variation for the level of language proficiency of the students. Each ELL received the same type of cloze notes regardless of the student's individual need. Maria and Keith, for example, did not require the same type of accommodations as Chris. However, Mrs. GT, like many mainstream teachers, would have no way of knowing how to vary her accommodations as she has no training in second language acquisition nor any training in materials or methods for ELLs. Without this training, she is simply doing the best she can (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Clegg, 1996; Harklau, 2000; Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006). Regardless of the universal nature of the accommodations, the ELLs in the class

acknowledged and appreciated the concern for their ability to succeed in the class and it contributed to an overall atmosphere which supported the success of every student.

The willingness of both the mainstream teacher and the ELLs to work for success within this classroom simultaneously contributed to and resulted from an environment in which the students felt valued and capable. Repeatedly, throughout the literature, effective classrooms are those in which students are both supported and academically challenged (Derwing et al., 1999; Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006, Harper & deJong, 2006; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Verplaeste, 1998; Walqui, 2008; Williams, 2001). This belief, that everyone in this mainstream class could be successful through hard work, created a frame for the events in the classroom. Walqui (2008) argues a major component which helps determine the success of ELLs in the mainstream is that from the very beginning of a class ELLs need to be treated as full participants within the community of learners. The shared understanding that everyone could be successful within this classroom set the stage for full participation within this community of learners.

Achieving Present Success was Directly Linked to Lessons Learned from the Past

From analysis of the findings of this study, it is clear that the past played a pivotal role in the present educational decisions within this classroom. The theoretical underpinnings of the study, which emphasize that the experience of the present is shaped by the understandings of past experiences (Cresswell, 2009; Crotty, 2006; Schwandt, 2000) make this an expected finding from this study. However, the specific ways in

which lessons taken from past experiences played a role within the present classroom was striking.

Many of the instructional decisions made within this mainstream class were linked directly to Mrs. GT attempts to recreate her past academic successes as both a student and a teacher. These educational decisions have a direct influence and the experiences of the ELLs within her classroom and often resulted in academic practices which benefitted this group of ELLs. For example, from her own personal past experiences as a student, Mrs. GT created classroom policies which supported students who were not strong test takers. The weight of grades within her grading scale created a classroom environment in which traditional exams were important, but were not the determining factor of a student's ability to pass the course. This approach was obviously beneficial to Beth who also struggled with test taking. It may have also been beneficial in less obvious ways. Mrs. GT provided a graded study guide and an in class review prior to tests. These techniques also support the poor test taker; and the ELL, by helping to focus them on the important information from the unit ((Ballantyne et al.,2008; Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006, Harper & deJong, 2006; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno, 2007). From her own academic successes, Mrs. GT seems to have learned tests are not the only measure of a student's content knowledge.

Mrs. GT's teaching style, which is often traditional, also reflects Mrs. GT's past academic successes as a student. The structure of her class, which was often 20 to 25 minutes of lecture followed by an expansion activity, came from her own experiences, as a history student. Within her lectures, she attempts to connect to the students while

delivering information. This style of content delivery is directly linked to her own appreciation for teachers who attempted to tell stories during lecture. Mrs. GT strove to keep her lectures accessible to the students in her class by asking questions and relating the abstract information to the daily lives of the students. These additional pieces of the lecture were attempts to build context, which is an important part of making content accessible to ELLs (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006, Harper & deJong, 2006; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Verplaeste, 1998; Williams, 2001). However, it did not seem that the ELLs responded to her attempts to create context. Often times, they did not respond to the questions that were being asked during the lecture and instead spent their time focused on getting the information on to their paper. One reason for the lack of response may have been that the questions often asked for the recall of information from US History. This type of recall was not possible for many of the students, including three of the ELLs who were also currently taking US history. Though Mrs. GT attempted to engage students during the lecture, it was obvious that the students prioritized copying the information ahead of discussing the information which was being presented. This lack of interaction from the students meant that it may have been difficult to formatively assess the knowledge being gained from the lecture, creating a greater level of emphasis on the summative end of unit exam. However, this method of content delivery, instead of a discussion based presentation, allowed Mrs. GT to cover the pacing of the course in way which ensured that she would “cover all of the standards.” This lecture and note taking teaching style

allowed Mrs. GT to both recreate her own past academic success and paved the way achieving her definition of success within the class.

The literature on teaching ELLs focuses on a shift away from a traditional teaching style, particularly in which the teacher disseminates knowledge to the students through lectures (Dong, 2004; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Mantero & McVicker, 2006; Penfield, 1987; Reeves, 2006; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). In this study, however, the lecture and note taking component of a traditional teaching style seemed to appeal to the students because it coincided with the students' prior understandings of instructional delivery. The teaching style on this mainstream class was similar to the teaching style they were accustomed to in their home countries. Chris, Keith and Maria, all had less than one year in US schools, and recognized that the traditional style of teaching was familiar. These students were academically strong students in their home countries and were skilled at listening to lecture and taking notes. They used their own academic successes from the past as a means of recreating academic success within this classroom. The match between the teaching style which students were accustomed to and the teaching style of this classroom allowed the ELLs to use their prior knowledge of academic skills (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006, Harper & deJong, 2006; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lewis-Moreno, 2007; Verplaeste, 1998; Walqui, 2008) as a cognitive base for being successful in the mainstream classroom.

The ELLs not only recreated past academic successes with classroom skills but also with content knowledge. Chris and Maria both demonstrated the importance of prior

content knowledge for ELLs. Maria, had extensive knowledge of the concepts of government from her studies in Colombia. This knowledge created a foundation for the knowledge she was learning in US Government (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006). Her prior knowledge provided her with a confidence regarding the information she was learning in the course. Chris, who did not acknowledge a strong content base, did make use of his prior knowledge by acquiring content specific vocabulary through the use of cognates. Both of these ELLs were using learning strategies, which Mrs. GT could have emphasized with in her classroom to the benefit of the ELLs in the class (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006). The other ELLs, Beth, William and Keith, may have benefitted from Mrs. GT providing a more direct form of building context. Research explains that using non linguistic forms of representation is often a good way to create context and build or activate prior knowledge (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006).

Mrs. GT also made some instructional decisions based on past successes as a teacher. By continually choosing to show Dave, because it gets positive responses from the students, Mrs. GT continues to recreate successful lessons. It is important to note that though she does not directly address this in interview conversation, student response to assignments is important to Mrs. GT. Upon closer inspection, the lessons in which the students are most engaged and most enthusiastic are lessons that are visual such as Dave or interactive such as the Presidential Campaign project. Though the ELLs report a

comfort with the lecture and note taking teaching style, they also identified their favorite classroom activities as those that were more interactive in nature. Perhaps, the students and teacher benefitted from the shift away from traditional teaching than they realized. From her past, Mrs. GT has seemingly learned that student enjoyment is an important component of learning.

Mrs. GT's design of classroom procedures were employed as a means of avoiding past struggles. She was by nature a very organized person, and her past experiences with too much grading had created a classroom with clear procedures. For example, her use of the notebook and bell work, which was born out of her own struggles, was beneficial to the ELLs because it provided routine that was predictable (Colombo & Furbush, 2009). In her classroom, the ELLs often appreciated that they knew exactly what was expected of them. They knew what they were supposed to do when they entered the classroom, they knew what information was to be in the notebook, and they knew where to find make up work. The language learning students were very quickly educated in the procedures needed to function within this classroom (Curran, 2003). Perhaps this confidence in procedures also served to make the students feel as full participants within the classroom. This confidence was important as students like Chris did not start the semester off feeling confident about government course, due to his prior experiences with social studies. Due to this lack of confidence, he was more diligent in this course than he had been in El Salvador. His choice to work harder than he did in El Salvador was beneficial because he was able to avoid a past challenge with social studies and create a different experience to use as a basis for his future academic experiences with the subject matter (Schwandt, 2000).

Facilitating Success Means Seeking to Understand and Interact with Others

The experience of the mainstream classroom for Mrs. GT and the ELLs was influenced directly by a common need to understand and interact with others. Mrs. GT had an understanding of the language learners in her classroom because of her own experience as a language learner while she was in college. Mrs. GT entered this inclusive classroom with empathy for the language learners in her class because she had her own experience as a language learner. Young and Young's (2001) suggested that this experience made her have a more positive perception of ELLs. This empathy was important because it was the impetus for all of the accommodations she made in her classroom. She very clearly attributed her expectations and assistance to the ELLs within this classroom as being based on her own experiences as a language learner. Though this position ensured that Mrs. GT would attempt to accommodate the ELLs in her class, it also limited her knowledge of accommodations to her own experience. Like many other mainstream teachers, Mrs. GT had neither participated in any professional development regarding the instruction of ELLs, nor had she had any training in teaching the literacy skills of her discipline (Batt, 2008; Karabenick & Noda, 2006; Major, 2006; Williams, 2001). From our conversations, it did not appear that she intended to seek any of this training. Without this specialized training, Mrs. GT was bound to the knowledge that she gained from her own experience, which may not be enough to help all ELLs succeed in her class. Though all of the students in her class passed, perhaps there was an entire aspect of untapped potential that remains unacknowledged in both the teacher and the students because of Mrs. GT's lack of professional development for teaching ELLs (Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Youngs & Youngs, 2001).

Mrs. GT's understanding and empathy for language learners shaped her relationships with these students. From her concern for the success of these students, it seemed that Mrs. GT developed a relationship with the students that was based on authentic caring (Noddings, 2000; Valenzuela; 1999). She very obviously recognized that she taught students not just US Government. While in the classroom, she often checked the comprehension of each student individually during the expansion activity. She also made herself available to the students before and after school for help, though William was the only student who took advantage of this opportunity. Mrs. GT's caring for the ELLs was professional and predominately academic in nature. This did not make her concern cold; it simply meant that the students understood her concern for their success in her class and they responded to that concern by working hard to be successful. The ELLs were aware that the accommodations that Mrs. GT provided were above and beyond what they may get in other mainstream classes, and this cemented the belief that Mrs. GT understood them.

This understanding between the teacher and the students seemed to create a sense of responsibility among the ELLs which encouraged the students to participate in the class even when that participation made them uncomfortable. Public speaking was one instance in which the ELLs were highly uncomfortable, but continued to participate regardless of the discomfort. In the instance, where the ELLs had to speak in front of the class, each was very uncomfortable, but they all surmounted this discomfort and participated in the assignment. This willingness to participate was certainly a combination of factors, but the importance of being literally and figuratively understood within the class cannot be ignored. Chris, who was extremely nervous and difficult to

understand while speaking English, stood in front of his peers and completed the assignment. As he was speaking in front of the class, he was difficult to understand and the situation was highly uncomfortable; however, when he finished the task he was proud of himself. As the ELLs responded to this event, they emphasized the literal and figurative need to be understood by their native speaking peers. As research suggested, these ELLs were aware of their differences and expressed concerns about being accepted by their native speaking peers (Gunderson, 2000; Harklau, 1994). The ELLs and Mrs. GT recognized the importance of opportunities to interact in English.

. Mrs. GT intentionally provided many opportunities for interactions in English. These interactions were most often peer to peer interactions and potentially helped the ELLs process both language and content (Carroll et al., 1996; Williams, 2001). During these interactions, Mrs. GT used a variety of grouping techniques which helped support the ELLs in their academic success. In the beginning of the semester, the ELLs were seated together and were often grouped together. Within these ELLs exclusive groups, the students tended to be comfortable enough to interact, but often these interactions were a mixture of English and the home language. For Chris, a beginning speaker, these interactions were highly beneficial because he was often receiving bilingual instructions from his peers (Cummins, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). However, for Beth this tendency to use the home language limited her opportunities to interact in English. As the semester progressed, the students were given more opportunities to choose their own groups. These opportunities were usually well received by the ELLs, and they begin to look forward to working in groups with native speakers. By the Presidential Campaign project at the end of the semester, even Chris was selecting groups where he had no choice but to

interact in English. Several activities within this mainstream class, served to allow the ELLs access to feel as full members of the classroom (Walqui, 2008) and interact in English with others (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006; Long, 1996) which helped to facilitate success in this mainstream classroom.

Being a “Team Player” Offers Protection from Uncomfortable Situations

Another common understanding among Mrs. GT and the ELLs within her class, which shaped their experiences of this mainstream class, was that on occasion people pretended to be a “team player” as a means of protection from uncomfortable situations. As seen through the scrapbook assignment, Mrs. GT was unwilling to discard an assignment for which she saw no value. Her critique of the assignment was harsh, yet she assigned it to the students because she felt that being a “team player” was necessary. Research supports the loss of power which some teachers feel as curriculum makers (Arkoudis, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2005) and in a profession that is dominated by tradition. Interestingly, Mrs. GT fully supported the movement towards standards based education, but she did not support the requirement that teachers should teach the standards in the same way. However; the other teachers, who insisted on using this project, held seniority within the department. Perhaps the unspoken rules guiding behavior and cooperation within the school (O’ Brien et al., 1995) made it difficult for Mrs. GT to completely abandon a component of the curriculum that she did not value. Another point of interest is that the ELLs did not reject the scrapbook in the same way that Mrs. GT did. Though they were not excited about the project, they did not express that the project was useless. Perhaps they saw a benefit from the reading, summarizing,

locating information and making use of different types of media which the project required. Instead of rejecting the assignment outright, she not only included the scrapbook assignment, but she simultaneously implemented miniature versions of the projects she would use to replace the project in her “ideal world.” To avoid an uncomfortable situation, Mrs. GT chose to act as a team player.

The ELLs also acted as “team players” as a means of avoiding an uncomfortable situation. Mrs. GT’s response to the scrapbook project included implementing three mini simulation assignments. One of these assignments was a mock trial. All of the ELLs within the class, with the exception of William, selected to participate in the jury for this project in order to avoid public speaking. The act of public speaking was extremely intimidating for the ELLs and they very actively pretended to be excited members of the jury in order to avoid being assigned to a role which would require them speaking in front of the class. To further the pretending to be a team player, Chris was upset when a member of the jury with in this project ignored the students who voted guilty at the end of the trial. However, as a means of avoiding the confrontation with the other student, Chris pretended to agree with the jury’s decision. This avoidance technique was evident in many situations within this mainstream class.

It is possible that Mrs. GT and the ELLs both employed this avoidance technique while in the mainstream classroom in one final way. During this class, there were never any public acknowledgements of the cultural background or home languages. It is possible that both Mrs. GT and the ELLs were intentionally avoiding conversations about differences including power that comes with race, ethnicity, and language. Although research emphasizes the need for conversations about these topics within schools

(Corson, 2000; Lippi Green, 2001), sometimes these conversations can have the effect of further isolating students. Perhaps this fear of further isolating students was the motivation behind avoiding these conversations (Duff, 2001; Gunderson, 2000; Harklau, 1994). Observing this avoidance technique on the part of both the teacher and the student requires considering the role of the environment which in causing this response. Perhaps neither the teachers nor the students felt supported in their environments, to assert their true opinion. Without a supportive environment, it is questionable as to the ability of teachers or students to grow into their full potential (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2006; Cho & Reich, 2008; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Dong, 2004; Echeverria, et al. 2006).

Teachers and Students Expect Content Courses to Prepare Students for the Future

The experiences of the teacher and the ELLs within the secondary mainstream classroom in this study were shaped by a final assumption which established a purpose for content courses. Both the teacher and the students within this study felt that this US Government course was a place in which the students should leave being better prepared for the future. Within the classroom, Mrs. GT continually referred to graduation which was the immediate future for a majority of the students and to an academic future when the students were in college one day. She overtly used the future as a means of motivating the students. Interestingly enough, her choice of using graduation as an immediate motivation for the ELLs was limited in its effectiveness because the students were dealing with individual circumstances which kept all but two of them from actually graduating by the end of the year. At the end of the study only Beth and William actually received high school diplomas. Though passing this government course was a

requirement for graduation, Chris, Keith and Maria were all aware that their graduation was not solely dependent on success or failure in this course. Mrs. GT also offered her perception of college courses as a means of motivating the students. In her coffee cup speech, Mrs. GT seemed to offer the students a justification for her teaching style of lecture and her requirement of making the students take notes. This overt reference to the future actually masked a more specific hidden curriculum (Horn, 2002) of life skills. Mrs. GT named responsibility and organization as two skills that she tried to teach in this class, which are not part of the standard curriculum. Mrs. GT recognized an immediate connection to the skills that students gain from school and the skills which they would need to function when they leave school and she believed that it was her responsibility to teach the skills. Mrs. GT also felt that the content of the government course should also be useful to the students. In her estimation the purpose of a US Government course in high school was to give the students a survey of information which should help them to become a more informed electorate. The content of this course directly shaped who these students will be in the future.

The ELLs agreed that there was a direct connection between this course and the future. For these ELLs, the purpose for this course was varied. For William, who was a citizen, the purpose of the course was to make him an informed member of his country. Chris agreed, however he felt disconnected from the knowledge since he was not a US citizen and would not be one in the near future. For Maria, knowing about the US Government was simply a means of expanding her general knowledge base, but the course itself provided the opportunity to improve her chances at citizenship and scholarship. Keith seemed to struggle with a personal connection between US

Government and his future. He searched for a connection which was meaningful, but never seemed to find one that satisfied him. Finally, Beth felt that the major purpose of the government course was to prepare her for the future by helping her improve her English. Perhaps because the participants of this study acknowledged the importance of this course, beyond the boundaries of school, it provided an impetus for everyone to continue to work in order to be successful in the class.

Summary

This study implies that students and teachers sharing a common definition of success and a willingness to work in order to achieve this success is necessary for being successful in the mainstream classroom. The role of the past educational experiences of both the teacher and the ELLs within the classroom shaped and influenced almost every aspect of the classroom. In this study, these elements worked to the advantage of both the teacher and the ELLs in the classroom. However, it is just as likely that in the classroom next door this combination of influences was not working together to the advantage of the teacher or the student. During this study, it appeared that teachers like Mrs. GT, who could benefit from professional development regarding the instruction of ELLs were not receiving it, and instead were left to operate operating based on prior experiences as language learners or recreating past academic successes or avoiding past academic failures. Because of this lack of knowledge, Mrs. GT was unable to maximize the effectiveness of accommodations or to fully activate or contextualize the prior knowledge of ELLs within the classroom in order to help increase these students' progress in both language and content development. Until, professional development regarding the instruction of ELLs in the mainstream classroom becomes a priority, this study

demonstrates that ELLs are left to navigate a classroom in which the prior experiences of the teacher and the students were influencing procedures and instructional decisions which directly contrasts with the research indicates that ELLs need a systematic instruction which emphasizes both content and academic language as a means of allowing them to be successful in mainstream classrooms and on standardized tests (Colombo & Furbush, 2009); Echeverria et al., 2006; Harper & de Jong, 2004).

This study also indicates that both teachers and ELLs who seek to understand and interact with others were successful in the mainstream. Understanding others and being understood by others, both literally and figuratively, was imperative for creating an environment in which both teachers and students can flourish. Without this supportive environment, both teachers and students developed and employed avoidance techniques in order to protect themselves from uncomfortable situations. The use of these avoidance techniques indicated that many schools and individual classrooms have not evolved into supportive educational environments, but instead only appear to be collaborative. In order to assist teachers in creating supportive classroom environment, there must also be a supportive school environment (Clegg, 1996). An increased emphasis on helping teachers collaborate professionally is needed as a means of supporting the establishment of a collaborative classroom atmosphere.

Finally, there was an agreement between the teacher and ELLs that school should prepare these students for the future. When teachers and students share the common vision that a course is relevant because it meets the needs of the students by preparing them for the future, the course benefitted from the sense of content which was both immediate and relevant. As such, establishing a curriculum which is seen as relevant to

both the teacher and ELLs is paramount to facilitating success for these students in the inclusive classroom.

Overall, the most important finding and implication of this study was that the experiences of the mainstream inclusive classroom are shared between the mainstream teacher and the ELLs. As this study emphasizes, isolating a single component of the classroom, such as the teacher, the student, the content or the context and seeking a causal relationship between that single component and an individual experience of education cannot provide a clear understanding of the complexities of the mainstream classroom. This approach inadvertently polarizes the components of the classroom, treating them as if they do not function in a reciprocal relationship within the classrooms. By isolating these elements, the commonalities in the teacher and students as they experience the classroom are easily overlooked. Understanding these commonalities offers a broader understanding of the mainstream classroom. In order to create lasting improvements regarding the education for ELLs, we must work with not only teachers, students, content and contexts; but also focus specifically on the interactions between these elements.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Initial Interview Questions Mainstream Teacher

- Tell me about you. How long have you been a teacher? What subjects do you teach? What subjects have you taught in the past?
- Tell me about your prior experiences teaching English language learning students. What courses have you taught where you were working with ELLs? How were you challenged by having ELLs in your mainstream class? How were you successful in teaching ELLs?
- When you view the curriculum map for this course, what are your instructional priorities? How did you make those decisions?
- Some teachers indicate that there is often pressure to cover the course content and prepare for tests that there is very little time to actually teach. How would you respond to this statement particularly regarding your government class?
- What are your goals for the students in this course? How can a student be successful in this class?
- How would you describe your 6th period government class? What are features that stand out to you? What do you enjoy? What challenges you?

- How would a new student in your 6th period class describe the classroom environment to his or her friends? What would make the student describe the class in that way?

APPENDIX B

Initial Interview Questions ELLs

- Tell me about you. Where are you from? How long have you been in the United States? How are you doing in school? What is your home language? How well do you feel that you know English?
- Tell me about your experiences in school in your home country. How many years were you in school in your home country? What subjects did you study?
- Tell me about your prior experiences in non ESOL classes. What courses have you taken which were not ESOL? How were you challenged by being in these classes? How were you successful in these classes ELLs?
- How would you describe your 6th period government class? What are features that stand out to you? What do you enjoy? What challenges you?
- When you are in this course, what do you focus on? What is important to you?
- Some ELLs indicate that mainstream classes are easy. How would you respond to this statement regarding your government class?
- What are your goals for this course? How can a student be successful in this class?
- How would a new student in your 6th period class describe the classroom environment to his or her friends? What would make the student describe the class in that way?

APPENDIX C

Follow up Questions for Mainstream Teacher

- With the assignments that you have given so far, how do you think the ELLs in the class are doing? What would you think they have found easy? What do you think may have been more difficult?
- In planning (name of lesson) this lesson you chose to teach in this way? How did you make that decision? In what ways did you modify your instruction or the assignment for the ELLs? How did you choose to make those accommodations? How do feel the students benefitted from those changes?
- In what ways is Government a challenging subject area for ELLs? Are these challenges different from the challenges faced by other struggling students?
- Are you finding teaching this inclusive Government class to be a different experience from what you expected? In what ways?

APPENDIX D

Follow up Questions for ELLs

- How do you feel like government class went today? What was the best moment?
What would you do differently next time?
- With the assignments that you have had so far, how do you think you are doing in the class? What have you found easy? What has been difficult?
- Today you were working on _____. How did you feel about that assignment?
- In what ways is Government a challenging subject for you? Are these challenges different from challenges you have had in other subjects?
- If you had to advise your teacher on ways that she could make her class better for you, what advice would you give? Would this advice work for other ELLs? In what ways would that particular type of help be beneficial?
- Are you finding being a student in this inclusive Government class to be a different experience from what you expected?
- Tell me about this class. How do you feel when you come in the door? How do you feel during the class? How do you feel when class is over?

APPENDIX E

Possible Reflective Journal Prompts

The purpose of these is to give you an opportunity to share your feelings about your US government class. You have a series of prompts below that you could use to help you talk about class or you may discuss whatever you would like. Please use the power point slide with today's date and narrate your reflections onto that slide.

- Describe a change you did you feel that you did that you felt benefitted the students in your class this week. Why?
- Describe something that upon reflection you would do differently for the ELLs in the government class. Why?
- Explain something that you l taught in Government class this week and how you taught it.
- Explain something that happened in class that made you feel proud and why it made you feel that way.
- How can you use some of your strengths and accomplishments to help you teach the ELLs in your Government class?
- How and when did you plan for Government this week?
- How would you like to be evaluated on teaching your Government class this week?

APPENDIX F

Student Reflective Journal Prompts

The purpose of these is to give you an opportunity to share your feelings about your US government class. You have a series of prompts below that you could use to help you talk about class or you may discuss whatever you would like. Please use the power point slide with today's date and narrate your reflections onto that slide.

- Describe something you did in government class today that you enjoyed.
- Describe something that you did in government class this week that you did not enjoy.
- Explain something that you learned in Government class this week and how you learned it.
- Explain something that happened in Government class that made you feel proud and why it made you feel that way.
- How can you use some of your strengths and accomplishments to help you in your Government class?
- How and when will you complete your work for Government this week?
- How would you like to be evaluated on your Government class this week?