Perceptions of Educators' Use of English as a Second Language Strategies and Research-Based Practices with English Language Learners in Northeast Tennessee.

Marisol Hernandez
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Perceptions of Educators’ Use of English as a Second Language Strategies and Research-Based Practices with English Language Learners in Northeast Tennessee

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the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
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of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education

by
Marisol Hernandez
August 2009

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Keywords: English Language Learner (ELL), ESL Strategies, Research-Based Practice
ABSTRACT

Perceptions of Educators’ Use of English as a Second Language Strategies and Research-Based Practices with English Language Learners in Northeast Tennessee

by

Marisol Hernandez

The purpose of the study was to investigate the level of use of English as a second or subsequent language strategies and research-based practices in the instruction of ELL students in Northeast Tennessee. The researcher sought to ascertain the perceptions of educators in Northeast Tennessee about teaching practices and beliefs in regard to the instruction of ELL students and to determine to what level these educators include ESL strategies and ESL research-based practices when teaching ELL students.

Participants in the study consisted of regular classroom teachers, English as a second language teachers, and principals from districts identified as ELL low density districts and ELL high density districts. A survey instrument was used to collect the data. The survey instrument was developed using a framework based on published research on proven practices identified and delineated in the literature review. The survey consisted of 45 questions and encompassed 5 dimensions: (a) instructional practices, (b) ESL strategies, (c) principles for building English language learners responsive learning environments, (d) staff development, and (e) instructional strategies.

The survey used a 5-point Likert scale with 3 open-ended questions. Findings from the Research-Based Practices Survey were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study used 2-way ANOVA to analyze the data and answer the research questions.

The finding of the study revealed significant difference in the mean scores for staff development between administrators and ESL strategies as a function of density and significant difference in the mean scores for staff development between administrators and all teachers (ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers) as a function of density.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, my parents, and my family. To my father and mother who had a vision for learning and sacrificed so much to ensure the fulfillment of the American dream for my immigrant family. To my brothers, who encouraged me and believed in my capacity. To my nephews, Jesse, John Stuart, Jay, and Donavan, and my niece, Julie Anne, who inspired me to be relentless in my journey to be a lifelong learner and a role model for them. Also, I want to dedicate this dissertation to my Kingsport family, the Gambles (Barbara, Ralph, and Elizabeth). To Barbara, who stood by me all these years with her friendship, encouragement, and support. To Ralph, who encouraged and supported Barbara and me by cooking for us and helping in any way he could, and to the “Little Doc” Elizabeth for encouraging me to endure.
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To my fellow ELPA “Rats” of the SREB Cohort, I thank you for your friendship and support. Thanks to Carolyn Kennedy, an outstanding principal and servant leader, for your support, friendship, and for caring that I did not stay behind. And thanks to the Kingsport City School System; thanks to Ed Abbott (Director of Federal Programs) for believing in me, supporting me, and for your wise advice.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Schools in America today are on a journey to improve the way they operate and do business. The pressures exerted on schools at the moment are, in part, due to the enactment of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation and the accountability movement. Students’ needs are changing and resources are eroding according to the National Education Association (2007). Yet, countless districts across the nation are making major progress to change and to restructure what they have to do to ensure that all students can succeed regardless of family income, gender, ethnicity, or language proficiency.

In an article written by Sanchez (2007) for a Seattle newspaper, *U.S.-Born Don’t Learn the Language Easily*, “the latest U.S. government statistics show that approximately 5.5 million students in the United States (the equivalent of one-tenth of the total U.S. student body) are English Language Learners” (p. 1). Further, the article infers that by the year 2025 “one of every four students in this country’s public school system is expected to be initially limited in English proficiency according to the U.S. government figures” (p. 1).

The Pew Hispanic Center reported that “English Language Learners as a whole are trailing behind all other groups, including white, Hispanic and African American students” (Sanchez, 2007, p. 1). Further, the article states that the “achievement gap increased from fourth to eighth grade,” according to Richard Fry, author of the report (Sanchez, p. 1).

According to Futrell, Gomez, and Bedden (2003), meeting the needs of a diverse student body is one of the most persistent and daunting challenges facing educators in the United States. Further, Futrell et al., in an article, *Teaching the Children of a New America: The Challenge of Diversity*, stated that the U.S. is one of the most diverse nations in the world, and nowhere is that diversity more evident than in our schools. Additionally, the researchers maintained that the
cliché of America as a “melting pot” is no longer appropriate and perhaps should have been more aptly coined as a “marble cake” where elements of diversity are allowed to flourish and are recognized.

Futrell et al. (2003) further explained that enrollment in our elementary and secondary schools, at the present time, has reached 53 million children – 35% from racial or ethnic minority groups. According to the researchers, approximately 25% of school-age children live in poverty. Further, they point out that more than 33% of children between the ages of 5 and 17 are of Limited English Proficiency.

Educational professionals know that the quality of instruction that students receive is critical and that effective teaching counts (Futrell et al, 2003). Therefore, educators must focus on research-based practices and effective ESL strategies in order to promote-create experiences that increase and enhance the acquisition of English as a second language. Educators must find a way to promote academic achievement for ELL students in order to empower students to be productive citizens in a global society and economy.

Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Klein (as cited in Futrell et al.) stated:

If all children are to be effectively taught, educators must be prepared to address the substantial diversity in experiences children bring with them to school – the wide range of languages, cultures, exceptionalities, learning styles, talents, and intelligences that in turn require an equally wide and varied repertoire of teaching strategies. (p. 2)

Futrell et al. (2003) reported that 80% of teachers who participated in a self-appraisal survey conducted in 1999 told the National Center for Educational Statistics that they were not well prepared for many of the challenges of the classroom, including integrating needed skills into their instruction for teaching students with limited English proficiency Futrell et al. stated that:

Much work remains to be done before communities can be confident their schools have the capacity to help all students to perform at their highest levels. This point is particularly relevant with the passing of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,
which mandates academic standards and high-stakes assessments designed to hold teachers, students, and schools accountable. (p. 2)

The National Council of La Raza is an organization dedicated to advance the civil rights of Hispanics. The Council, the largest Hispanic organization in the U.S., was founded in 1968 and is a private nonprofit organization.

According to its mission statement, the council is an advocacy organization that conducts applied research and policy analysis to advocate for Latinos in the areas of civil rights, immigration, assets/investments, employment, economic status, health, and education. It seeks to advocate in the areas from a Latino point of view and to influence policy in order to enhance prospects for Latinos’ quality of life in the United States (National Council of La Raza, 2008).

Janet Murguia, the president and CEO of The National Council of La Raza states that the organization “works with more than 150 community-based organizations throughout the nation to help people integrate into American life by learning English, becoming citizens, and registering to vote. Latinos want what every American cherishes, the opportunity to be part of the American fabric and a shot at the American Dream” (Santa Barbara News Press, 2008).

The Council of La Raza serves as a collective voice for the Hispanic community in important issues and as expressed by Jane Murguia has earned the right because “Latinos have been fighting and dying for this country for more than 200 years. They, like all Americans, should be able to express their opinions, agree or disagree on issues, or fight for what they believe in without having their right to belong challenged or their patriotism called into question. Our democracy deserves nothing less” (Santa Barbara News Press, 2008).

The organization lobbies to influence policy in many areas of the educational arena that include bilingual education, early childhood education, high school reform, and the DREAM Act, which is intended to permit students that are illegal aliens to go to college paying the tuition of in-state legal residents (National Council of La Raza, 2008).
According to the National Council De La Raza, in the year 2003, the demographic data showed the following:

Latinos accounted for more than 8 million students in the U.S. K-12 public schools, or 19% of total school enrollment, making them the second largest segment of the U.S. student population after white students. Immigrant and English language learners (ELL), or limited English proficient (LEP) students are a significant part of the Latino population. (Lazarin, 2006, p. 1)

The National Council of La Raza estimates that 5 million ELL students were enrolled in United States schools in 2003-2004 and that 79% were native Spanish speakers. The council also reported that 45% of those students were ELL. Given the growth in our nation’s schools, it is clear that the achievement or non-achievement of ELL students will affect overall academic achievement in school districts. ELL students represent approximately 10.3% of public school enrollment according to the Council of La Raza. Furthermore, the council stated that the ELL population is increasing in “nontraditional,” Latino, and “nontraditional” immigrant states such as Tennessee, with a 448% increase in ELL student population between 1994-2004. Nontraditional immigrant states are states in which immigration was not as significant as in traditional states such as New York, Florida, etc. Lazarin (2006) opined that it is necessary for all states to improve the quality of ESL programs and instructional practices in order to meet the demands of the accountability era and the No Child Left Behind Act.

According to Futrell et al. (2003), every school, every district, and every teacher has a responsibility to see that students are educated to be lifelong learners, to become gainfully employed, and to contribute to and benefit from our democratic society. Linquanti (1999) reported that the number of students who are English-language learners has expanded exponentially in many of the eastern states of the United States that did not have a prevalent ELL population in the past. Fostering these students’ academic success has never been more essential and critical.
It is imperative to determine what instructional practices and programs work best for English Limited Proficient students. It is essential to establish and to practice what the “most rigorous and reliable research reviews tell us about English language acquisition and to determine the role of students’ native language in teaching reading, learning academic English and succeeding academically.

**Background of the Study**

The acquisition of the English language is vital for the success of English language learner (ELL) students. English proficiency opens the door to educational opportunities and to social mobility. The use of English as a second language strategy and research-based practices by qualified school administrators and teachers is challenging. In addition, there is a shortage of qualified school administrators and teachers who can effectively deal with this population. The President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (2003) stated in its report *From Risk to Opportunity: Fulfilling the Educational Needs of Hispanic Americans in the 21st Century* that “As Americans, we should all work as a nation to reach out to children at risk and provide them an opportunity” (p. viii). Furthermore, the report cites that one of the ways to resolve the problem of lack of academic achievement for at-risk minority students is to use “scientific research to drive instruction and to increase the quality, particularly in reading” (p. 29).

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of use of English as a second language (ESL) strategies and research-based practices in the instruction of ELL students in Northeast Tennessee. The researcher sought to ascertain the perceptions of educators in Northeast Tennessee about teaching practices and beliefs in regard to the instruction of ELL students and to determine to what level these educators include ESL strategies and ESL research-based practices when teaching ELL students.
The study focuses on the perception of preparedness of educators in Northeast Tennessee regarding ESL strategies and the inclusion of ELL research-based practices.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were investigated in this study through the use of a quantitative survey:

1. *ESL and Regular Classroom Teachers*

   Are there differences in the mean scores for each of the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies) in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

2. *Administrators and Regular Classroom Teachers*

   Are there differences in the mean scores for each of the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies) in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

3. *Administrators and ESL Teachers*

   Are there differences in the mean scores for each of the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies (in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?
4. **Administrators and All Teachers**

   Are there differences in the mean scores for the dimension ELL responsive learning environments in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and all teachers (ESL and regular classroom teachers) as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

5. **Administrators and All Teachers**

   Are there differences in the mean scores for the dimension staff development in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and all teachers (ESL and regular classroom teachers) as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

**Significance of the Study**

In the state of Tennessee, in the last couple of years, there has been an increase in the English language learners student population (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). The National Council of La Raza’s statistical brief states that:

Limited English Proficient enrollment has increased in nontraditional states and that between the year 1995 and 2005, one of the states that has experienced one of the largest growth in ELL population is the state of Tennessee, with an increase of 370%. (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007, p. 8)

The *No Child Left Behind Act* clearly states that every child in the U.S. must make adequate yearly progress, and it requires schools to meet the instructional needs of students. This study is significant because reports show that there is a shortage of qualified school administrators and teachers who can effectively deal with this population. Extensive research states that the most significant factor for increasing student learning is the quality of the teacher (Ferguson, 1998; Goldhaber & Eide, 2002; Goldhaber, Brewer, & Anderson, 1999; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 1999; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997).
This study provides valuable information about educators’ perceptions and the level of use of ELL strategies and research-based practices in the instruction of ELL students in Northeast Tennessee.

**Delimitations and Limitations**

The study was delimited to administrators and teachers in Northeast Tennessee. No attempt was made to determine the study’s external validity; i.e., the extent to which its findings can be generalized to other educational institutions outside Northeast Tennessee.

The validity of the study is also dependent on the candor of study participants. Even so, it is hoped that these findings can help other institutions investigate the level of use of ELL strategies and research-based practices in the instruction of ELL students and ascertain the perceptions of educators about teaching practices and beliefs in regard to the instruction of ELL students.

**Definitions of Terms**

The following terms are described and explained for the purpose of this study.

*AMAO (Annual Measurement Achievement Objectives)* – Title III of NCLB mandates ELL students to be assessed for proficiency in English in grades K through 12. The targets that are set are called AMAO and they are required by Title III. The AMAO targets are set at the state level (Vialpando, Yedlin, Linse, Harington, & Cannon (2005).

*English Language Learners (ELLs)* – children and adults who are learning English as a second or additional language. This term may apply to learners across various levels of proficiency in English. ELL may also be referred to as non-English speaking (NES), limited English proficient (LEP), and a non-native speaker (Echeverria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).
English as a Second Language Program (ESL) – the acronym is used to refer to programs and classes to teach students English as a second language or a subsequent language (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Home Language(s) – the language or languages spoken in the student’s home by people who live there, also referred to as first language (L1), primary language, or native language (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Limited English Proficient (LEP) – a term used to refer to students with restricted understanding or use of written and spoken English; a learner who is still developing competence in using English (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Native Language – an individual’s first, primary, or home language (L1) (Echeverria et al, 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Alignment – match among the ESL and content standards, instruction, curriculum, and assessment (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) – language proficiency associated with schooling and the abstract language abilities required for academic work. It is a complex conceptual linguistic ability that includes analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

L1 – a widely used abbreviation for the primary, home, or native language (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Pullout instruction – students are “pulled out” from their regular classes for special ESL class instruction, remediation, or acceleration (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Social Language – refers to the basic language proficiency associated with fluency in day-to-day situations, including the classroom (Echeverria et al, 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).
Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) – refers to face-to-face conversational fluency, including mastery of the pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. English language learners typically acquire conversational language used in everyday activities before they develop more complex, conceptual language proficiency (Echeverria et al. 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Constructivism – a theoretical perspective in which an individual’s prior experiences, knowledge, and beliefs influence how understanding is developed and experiences are interpreted. In teaching, the focus is more on how knowledge is constructed rather than on products, with richly contextualized opportunities for students to engage in inquiry and discovery (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Culture – the customs, lifestyles, traditions, behavior, attitudes, and artifacts of a given people. Culture also encompasses the ways people organize and interpret the world and the way events are perceived based on established social norms (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Language Minority Student – in the United States, a student whose primary language is not English. The individual student’s ability to speak English will vary (Echeverria et al, 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Bilingual Education Programs – school instruction using two languages, generally a native language of the student and a second language that the student is trying to acquire (Echeverria et al, 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Language Proficiency – an individual’s competence in using a language for basic communication and for cognitive purposes (Echeverria et al, 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).
Scaffolding – the support provided by teachers to enhance the learning and student performance of a learning objective (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

High-Density Districts – for purposes of this study, high-density districts are districts in which English Language Learners make up at least 1.6% or higher of the general population in the district in Northeast Tennessee.

Low-Density Districts – for purposes of this study, low-density districts are districts in which English Language Learners make up 1.5% or lower of the general population in the district in Northeast Tennessee.

ESL Pull Out – a program model where the ESL teacher pulls a student out of the class to teach English as a second language or a subsequent language (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

ESL Push In or Inclusion – a program model in which the ESL teacher provides English instruction to the English language learners within the general education classroom (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Sheltered English Instruction – a program in which math, science, and social studies content is taught by a content specialist who is ESL certified. The content specialist uses ESL strategies to teach content to the English language learner (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Two-Way, Dual-Language, or Bilingual Immersion Programs – A program in which students from at least two different language backgrounds develop bilingualism or literacy in two languages (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Resource Center or ESL Laboratories – a program in which the English language learner leaves the regular classroom in order to receive instruction from a certified ESL teacher (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).
Newcomer Centers – a program in which students attend an ESL center for a period of time to obtain some level of English proficiency (Echeverria et al., 2004; Harris & Hodges, 1995; McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996).

Overview of the Study

This research study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study and includes the statement of the problem, research questions, and significance of the study, delimitations and limitations, and the definitions of terms to be used in the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature. Chapter 3 presents and outlines the methodology of the research to be conducted. Chapter 4 presented a statistical analysis of the survey results. Chapter 5 conveyed the summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research and outline instructional recommendations for the effective instruction of English Language Learners.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act* in 2001 has affected English as a Second Language instruction in regard to instructional processes. The review, which is structured into 12 sections begins with a discussion that provides essential background on English language learners and demographics related to English language learners. The next three sections outline and present information related to the implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act* that are related to English language learners, the value and importance of English language programs and the *No Child Left Behind Act* and Title III legislation. The following four sections discuss language instruction (theory to practice), language acquisition, English as a Second Language (ESL) strategies, and research-based practices for English language learners. The last section of the literature review discusses culturally responsive teaching, English learners and school reform, and concludes with a summary.

**Demographics**

The Urban Institute asserts that immigration is changing the demographics of schools in the United States at an astonishing rate while, at the same time, districts are being held responsible for the academic achievement of limited English speaking students in the era of accountability and school reform (Capps, 2005).

In 1979, around 1.25 million students in the United States public schools were recognized as English language learners (AFT, 2002). In the year 1995, the English language learner population had approximately doubled, to 2.44 million students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997a); and, in the year 2000, English language learner population was an estimated 4.1 million students (Macias et al., 2000).
Data obtained from the 2000 census has depicted that the number of children between the ages of 5 and 17 who speak a language other than English is even greater than the estimated 41 million. The number has increased by 54% from the 1990 census in view of the fact that the ELL student population has increased by 95% while the school-age student population in general has only increased by 12% (Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory, 2003).

As a result, students who are limited in English proficiency live all over the United States and are represented in rural and small urban districts. According to data published by the U.S. Department of Education, the Limited English Population enrollment has increased from 3,184,696 in 1994-1995 to 5,113,636 in 2004-2005 (NCELA, 2006), which represents an increase of 60.57% in LEP growth since 1994-1995.

According to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, the English language learners population is the fastest-growing student group in American schools, with enrollment increasing 150% since 1990 (NCELA, 2006). The NCELA also reported that, in the future English language learners will account for approximately one third of students in American schools. August and Shanahan (2006) stated that the number of homes where a language other than English is spoken has more than doubled in the last decade. Statistical data supports the continuation of this trend, as evidenced by the National Council of La Raza’s report regarding the large number of ELL students in the primary grades (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). The council’s report suggested that approximately 52.6% of all ELL students are enrolled in grades preK-5.

The National Council of La Raza Statistical Brief reported the following statistical facts that are pivotal in understanding the demographic changes that are taking place in the nation’s schools regarding growth and size of the ELL population:

The number of ELL enrolled in U.S. schools has increased substantially in the past decade. During 2004-2005 academic year, there were an estimated 5.1 million ELL students enrolled in preK-12 public schools, representing 10.5% of the total school population and demonstrating more than a 56% increase between 1994-1995 and 2004-
2005. LEP enrollment has significantly increased in nontraditional states Latino and immigrant states. Between 1995 and 2005, states that experienced the largest growth rates in ELLs included South Carolina (714%), Kentucky (417%), Indiana (408%), North Carolina (372%) and Tennessee (370%). (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007, p. 7)

By all accounts, the largest percentage of ELL students is native speakers of Spanish which represent 73% of the ELL population (Fleischman & Hopstock, 1993; August & Hakuta, 1997). Unfortunately, a considerable proportion of ELL students receive lower grades, achieve lower scores than their classmates on national standardized tests in the areas of reading and mathematics, and drop out of school at a higher rate. The United States Department of Education’s Prospects research study reports that third-grade ELL students had a mean percentile score of 24.8 in reading and 35.2 in math on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, while the mean percentile score in reading was 56.4 and 56.8 in math for all third graders in public schools (August & Hakuta).

According to the National Council of La Raza statistical brief (as cited by Kohler & Lazarin, 2007), there are distinct differences in the achievement scores in reading and mathematics between students who are considered English learners and students who are non-ELL; as follows, in the data reported by the 2005 National Assessment for Educational Progress:

Only 29% of ELL 8th graders scored at or above basic achievement level for mathematics compared to 71% of non-ELL 8th graders. Also, 29% of all ELL 8th graders scored at or above the basic achievement level for reading, compared to 75% of non-ELL 8th-grade students. (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007, p. 9)

Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) explained that there is a significant difference in the achievement gap between ELL students and students who are non ELL. They also stated that the dropout rate for English language learners is triple that of non-ELL students or native English speakers.

As stated by Nordmeyer (2008), “English language learners face social, cultural and personal challenges, but perhaps their biggest difficulty is learning academic content in English”
Furthermore, he mentioned that due to the change in demographics ESL teachers need to undergo a paradigm shift of their traditional teaching roles in order to become more effective. Additionally, Nordmeyer (2008) articulated the viewpoint that ELL educators, in order to increase student achievement in the content area, must become more knowledgeable about how “language and content are related in today’s classroom” (p. 35). Lastly, he explained that educators must reflect and rethink the approaches or models used to teach English language because English language learners are faced with the challenge of learning English and content at the same time. According to the researcher and the American Federation of Teachers, the quantity of this achievement gap is attributed to the fact that a disproportionate number of ELL children have a propensity to be from underprivileged socioeconomic circumstances (August & Hakuta, 1997). For instance, 77% of ELL students are entitled or eligible for free and reduced lunches in comparison with 38% of the general school population in schools (Moss & Puma, 1995). The trend continues to this date as described by Villegas and Lucas (2007) because

Over the past three decades, the racial, ethnic, and linguistic demographics of the K-12 student population in the United States have changed dramatically. In 1972, 22 percent of all students enrolled in elementary and secondary public schools were of racial/ethnic minority backgrounds (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2002). By 2003, racial ethnic minorities students accounted for 41 percent of total enrollments in U.S. public schools. (p. 28)

According to Ziechner (2005), despite the fact that federal and state policies have increased the accountability and requirements of teachers, professional development opportunities to build capacity for the teachers responsible for the education of English language learners have not been adequate. Gebhard and Willett (2008) from the Access to Critical Content and English Language Acquisition Alliance (ACCELA) stated that teachers need to be involved in “sustained professional learning opportunities in order to become content and content-language specialists” (p. 42).
Gebhard and Willett (2008) stated that ACCELA was founded to support the
development of academic language of ELL students by addressing the professional development
needs of mainstream teachers that work with ELL students in schools. The Alliance explained
that academic language differs from everyday language in significant ways. Also, they suggested
that teaching language entails more than teaching cognitive vocabulary. Further, they stated that:

The job of the teacher is to broaden English language learners abilities to use language
across a variety of social and academic content. (p. 43)

Lapkoff and Li (2007) state that it is evident that schools in the United States are
wrestling with the changes of the composition of student population as demographics alter the
education scene. Also, according to the U.S. Census Bureau predictions, the population in the
United States reached 300 million on October 17, 2006, and there have been rapid changes in the
makeup of the population in the last 50 years (as cited by Lapkoff & Li). Also, the U.S. Census
Bureau reported that during the last 50 years Americans had developed into a population that was
growing older, more educated, and more diverse in nature. Therefore, according to Lapkoff and
Li, these trends have an implication for school districts in conditions of enrollment levels,
student characteristics, and resources available to provide an education for students.

Background on English Language Learners

Today teachers face a great challenge because, as they look into their classrooms, what
they see is unlike the classroom they experienced as children in school (Flores, 1996). Garcia
states the reality as:

In the nation’s classrooms 1 in 3 children nationwide are from an ethnic or racial minority
group, 1 in 7 (14%) speaks a language other than English at home, and 1 in 15 was born
outside the United States. (Flores, 1996, p. 7)
Further, Garcia reports the following:

Linguistic and cultural diversity of America’s school population has increased dramatically during the past decade, and it’s expected to increase even more in the future. While three-quarters of Americans now claim European descent, by 2050 only half will. The concept of “minority” group will become obsolete, as no group will form a majority. (Flores, 1996, p. 7)

According to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2006 report, between 1979 and 2004 the number of school-age children (ages 5-17) who spoke a language other than English at home increased from 3.8 to 9.9 million. Also, the Congressionally-mandated report states that the number of school-age children who spoke English with difficulty increased from 1.3 million to 2.8 million between 1979 and 2004. Additionally, the annual statistical report mentions the fact that Spanish was the language most frequently spoken at home by both those who spoke a language other than English at home and by those who spoke English with difficulty.

Garcia (2000) maintained that in the school districts across the United States providing an education for immigrant and ethnic minority students was a foremost concern. Further, Garcia (2000) explained that for many of these immigrant children the U.S. education experience is not a successful one with positive outcomes in regard to academic achievement. Garcia describes the state of affairs of these students by citing the alarming statistics that state: “While one-tenth of non-Hispanic white students leave school without a diploma, one-third of Hispanics and two-thirds of immigrant students drop out of school” (Flores, 1996, p. 9).

It is a gloomy truth that must be changed, according to Garcia, and he urges administrators, teachers, parents, and policy makers to take action by doing “something different, such as changing teaching methods, adopting new curricula, allocating more funding” (p. 10). Further, he stated that “such actions might be needed, but that the actions are meaningless, unless we begin to think differently about these students” (p. 10). Garcia (2000) points out that:
In order to educate them, we must first educate ourselves about who they are and what they need in order to succeed. Thinking differently involves viewing these students in new ways that may contradict conventional notions, and coming to a new set of realizations. (p. 10)

The future of the ELL population is critical as stated by Peter Zamora of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund before the Committee on Education and Labor of the United States House of Representatives on September 10, 2007, during Miller/McKeon Discussion Drafts of ESEA Reauthorization:

While the Elementary and Secondary Education Act has greatly affected the entire Latino student community, it has been particularly significant for English Language Learners (ELL) students, who often face particularly acute educational inequalities. The academic success of the ELL student population is critical to the success of the Latino community and the U.S. student population as a whole. Over three-quarters of the ELL students are Latino and nearly half of K-12 Latino students are ELL. Over the past fifteen years ELL student enrollment has doubled, and experts predict that one-quarter of the total U.S. public school population will be made up of ELL students by 2025.

It is obvious that, in order for these students to succeed, educators need to acquire new understandings with regard to ELL students, be more cognizant of their instructional needs, and use effective strategies to ensure ELL students’ academic success in all content areas, especially literacy, in order to promote their integration into mainstream America as successful citizens.

Garcia (2000) in Enhancing English Language Learning in Elementary Schools implies that helping non-native English speakers with the acquisition of English and reading proficiency is an essential component that must be part of the effort to provide the best education possible to children of diverse backgrounds. According to Sutton (1989), children in the elementary grades can encounter difficulties with reading for reasons as varied as the children themselves. Further, she states that the response to these reading difficulties frequently is to overlook the obvious and to place the students in remediation. Lastly, Sutton mentions that these remedial classes are designed for English native speakers, whose reading problems usually have different causes.
Researchers state that it may take as long as five to seven years for limited English-speaking students to gain the command of English needed for them to perform successfully in academic areas (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1984). The barriers to their effective communication and comprehension involving reading and writing are sometimes hidden by their relatively quicker acquisition of conversational language and mastery of decoding skills in English as explained by Cummins (1984) due to acquisition of BICS, or Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills.

Chamot and O’Mally (1986) reported that students who appear to have command of English may be struggling to communicate and find meaning when faced with an academic setting and tasks that are without context and cognitively demanding. Also, he explains that designing a strong reading program for English language learners requires a deep understanding of the characteristics of ELL children and their unique instructional needs.

Smith (1982) and Thonis (1981) explained that as students reach the upper elementary grades the cognitive and linguistic demands they face in reading become increasingly challenging. Also, they mention that teachers can help their limited English proficient students deal with these complex demands and make greater sense of what they read in several ways. Further, they state that it is helpful to think of reading as a multifaceted development process in which the successful student learns to make those connections that link language, print, and thought (Smith, Thonis).

NCLB and Implications for the ELL Program

Background

The research conducted by the Brown Alliance (2003) reported that “Language and educational policies in the United States continue to evolve at the same time and are influenced by social, political, and economical factors” (p. 1). The Brown Alliance reports that information from the 2000 U.S. Census is used to develop and implement educational policies in the United
States related to language and educational practices. The policies developed and adopted by legislators influenced classroom instructional practices and the methods used to teach ELL students in the nation.

ELL students are educated differently from state to state and have access to different types of programs depending on where they reside. According to the Brown Alliance, the U.S. currently does not have a formal national language policy that outlines policy and practices for schools. Further, the Brown Alliance mentions that 26 states in the United States have declared English their official language, including Tennessee.

According to Berube (2002), the foundation for providing LEP students equitable access to learning began with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Also, he states that Supreme Court opinions, case law precedent, and Congressional actions following passage of this law have strengthened the legal rationale. Further, Berube explains the importance of ensuring that English language learners receive an equitable education appropriate for their linguistic and academic needs.

As a result of these protections which have been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, there is a constant process to enhance the performance of ELL through the use of research-based practices as suggested by Berube (2002). Further, he states that schools are bound by these legal provisions that promote the academic achievement of English Language Learners.

Capp (2005) stated that in 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* was instrumental in ensuring that school systems explore what programs work best instructionally and are more appropriate for ELL students. Further, he mentions that, as a result of the class-action suit in 1974, the Supreme Court ruling led to the implementation of the “Lau Remedies” by the federal government in schools that were out of compliance. Also, according to the researcher, another pivotal case, *Castaneda v. Packard*, defines the public school’s responsibilities in terms of programs for ELL students. Lastly, Capp explains that in essence the ruling requires that a school’s ELL program
must be based on research and it requires districts to be accountable for results in the implementation process as well as student achievement.

According to the Brown Alliance (2003), it is required that “school districts implement policies for equal access of students for whom English is a second language or a new language” (p. 3). Those policies are “set at the school level but never supersede federal or state law,” according to the Brown Alliance (p. 3).

Boyle and Peregoy (2005) maintained that English language learners’ experiences in the nation’s schools are affected by current policy trends and school reform efforts. According to Boyle and Peregoy, educational policies affect many areas such as academic standards, assessment, and high-stakes testing. Additionally, he mentions that programs for ELL students are subject to guidelines that are specific to their language proficiency and outlined in detail in Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

As per federal law outlined in Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), schools are required to identify and serve students who require educational assistance or support based on English language proficiency. Boyle and Peregoy (2005) explained that the Title III provisions have two main goals. The goals are (a) to promote the learning of the English language and (b) to provide meaningful instruction in order to ensure that students acquire academic content knowledge that is suitable for their grade level of instruction.

According to Boyle and Peregoy (2005), the No Child Left Behind Act promotes English language proficiency and does not promote bilingual instruction. In addition, they suggest that the act does not outline a specific type program of ELL instruction. Schools are given the freedom to implement the program that is most suitable for their student population and the responsibility to decide whether to use students’ native language in the instructional process.

Lazarin (2006) explains that The NCLB Act mandates that school districts use instructional methods that are research based and proven to be effective. Further, he states the
law has unapologetically directed focus to the academic achievement of ELL students. Lastly, he asserts, as a result, ELL students will be more likely to have access to demanding coursework and highly-qualified teachers.

The act commands the establishment of standards and benchmarks for English language proficiency and academic content. In addition, the academic content must be comparable or aligned with standards and benchmarks established for the general K-12 population. Underlying the NCLB Act is the essential purpose of closing the achievement gap based on the key premise that all students can learn (Lazarin, 2006).

According to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT, 2002), school districts, in the absence of clear research data that guide and support schools to identify and implement the most effective ESL program, are forced to develop programs based on local circumstances and available resources. There are many kinds of structured language support models that schools can adopt and most existing programs can be grouped into five main categories or types (Hakuta, 2000).

In the United States school districts use different types of instructional models to provide language instruction for English language learners. The models for teaching English language learners are varied. Some districts may choose to use a model that immerses students completely in English, and some other districts use an approach that uses a bilingual approach in order to develop English proficiency and content.

Gonzalez, Minaya-Rowe, and Yawkey (2006) suggested that the types of programs used by districts must adhere to federal law requirements that ensure English language learners must be provided with an educational program that impacts access to the core curriculum and are provided with opportunities for English language development. Gonzalez et al. state that the increase of English-limited students in the United States has resulted in an increase of ELL
students in schools and has brought to the forefront the notion those schools are not all prepared to deal with the academic needs of these students.

There are models of instruction or instructional programs that are commonly used to instruct English language learners (Genessee, 1999). According to Genessee, the following models are the most widespread instructional programs employed by school districts in order to instruct English language learners. The program models are ESL pullout, sheltered English instruction, transitional bilingual education (TBE) programs, and two-way, dual-language, or bilingual immersion programs. The programs are characterized by the amount of the student’s native language usage in the instructional process and by the approach used to teach academic content, according to Linquanti (1999).

A report from the Center for Education, Diversity, and Excellence suggests that “No single approach or program works best in all situations” (Genesse, 1999, p. 4). Further, the center suggested that “many approaches can be successful when implemented well” (p. 4). Lastly, the researchers mentioned that “local conditions, choices, and innovations are critical ingredients” for success in the process of implementation of ESL programs at the local level (p. 4).

Tennessee Board Policy Number 3.207 deals with the delivery models that a district ESL program in the state of Tennessee can provide (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2008). The acceptable models are ESL pullout program, ESL cluster centers to which students are transported from their zone schools, resource centers or laboratories, newcomer centers, push-in or inclusion models, sheltered content classes, content-based classes, structured immersion classes, and scheduled ESL periods. The state of Tennessee is an English-only state in regard to ESL instruction and that limits the models that can be used. The ESL program models that promote bi-literacy cannot be used in schools in Tennessee to develop English language proficiency.
School districts must consider local circumstances such as availability of certified faculty, financial resources, number of ELL students, proficiency level of students, amount of available materials in students’ native language, and availability of materials in order to provide an effective and appropriate program (Berube, 2000). The existing programs or models for structure language support are English as a second language (ESL), sheltered instruction/structured immersion, transitional/early-exit bilingual education, maintenance/late-exit bilingual education, and two-way bilingual education/dual-language immersion.

English language learners’ experiences in the nation’s schools are affected by current policy trends and school reform efforts (Boyle & Peregoy, 2005). According to Boyle and Peregoy, educational policies affect many areas such as academic standards, assessment, and high-stakes testing. Additionally, programs for ELL students are subject to guidelines specific to their language proficiency and outlined in detail in Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

According to federal law, schools are required to identify and serve students who require educational assistance or support based on English language proficiency. The purpose of that support has two main goals (Boyle & Peregoy, 2005). The goals are (a) to promote the acquisition of the English language and (b) to provide meaningful instruction in order to ensure that students acquire academic content knowledge is suitable for their grade level of instruction.

The NCLB Act promotes English language proficiency and does not promote bilingual instruction (Boyle & Peregoy, 2005). Also, the act does not outline a specific type program of ELL instruction. Schools are given the freedom to implement the program that is most suitable for their student population and whether to use the students’ native language in the instructional process. The NCLB Act mandates that school districts use instructional methods that are research based and proven to be effective. The law has unapologetically directed focus to the
academic achievement of ELL students, and as a result ELL students will be more likely to have access to demanding coursework and highly-qualified teachers (Lazarin, 2006).

The NCLB act commands the establishment of standards and benchmarks for English language proficiency and academic content. In addition, the academic content must be comparable or aligned with those established for the general K-12 population. Underlying the NCLB act is the essential purpose of closing the achievement gap based on the key premise that all students can learn (Lazarin, 2006).

Value and Importance of ELL Programs

The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education states in the NCLB Action Brief (2008) that ELL programs are of great importance to the nation because there are 5.5 million ELL students in U.S. public schools who speak more than 400 different languages. Further, they point out that that constitutes 12% of the students in public schools.

Wadsworth and Remaley (2007) state that Americans believe and view education as a pivotal instrument and the vehicle that empowers students to have access to a good life in the future. According to the researchers, the change in the composition of the population has not changed the perspective that students and parents from diverse backgrounds have that common aspiration to be educated as reported by years of public opinion polls (Wadsworth & Remaley). Further, they mention that studies have consistently shown that education is valued by students and parents of different ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic status. Additionally, they suggest that families from diverse backgrounds expect schools to provide the instructional leadership to train students for the future.

Americans feel that education is a crucial factor in success and that it plays a pivotal part in assuring access to equal opportunity (Wadsworth & Remaley, 2007). Even though the consensus is that education is a pivotal factor in attaining success, the fact remains that research demonstrates the educational system is not delivering on that promised as expected (Wadsworth
It is apparent that, more than 50 years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, disparities still exist in the opportunities that students are afforded, and minority students are not always provided with access to the same quality of education across the nation as students in affluent or predominantly-white communities (Wadsworth & Remaley). The ruling by the Supreme Court of the *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1954 established that the doctrine “separate but equal” was unconstitutional and it abolished “dejure” segregation in public schools (Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, 1954).

In the United States it is essential that all students have access to the type of education that develops the cognitive skills and language proficiency that are necessary to fully take part in school. ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers who have ESL students in their classes are faced with the difficult challenge of providing and being creative in developing instructional experiences that provide the skills necessary to fully participate in school. In states such as Tennessee, supporting the instruction of English language learners is essential due to the great increase of the English language learner population over the last few years. In the state of Tennessee, the English language learner population has increased at a rate of 448%, and according to researchers, it is a trend that will continue for the next 2 decades (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

The passage of the *No Child Left Behind* mandate has great implications on the way educators approach the instructional process for ELL students and how educators perceive the importance of educating students that are limited in English proficiency. The *No Child Left Behind Act* requires that ESL students are provided with the same quality education as other students by requiring achievement standards and accountability measures that are as stringent as those of native speakers of English. It is a clear message that is being reinforced by the Office of English Language Acquisition as stated by Kathleen Laos who said:

> The role of every teacher in every classroom in the nation has never been more important than today. The teacher, who is the key component within the standards reform model,
must link core academic instruction to the content standards set by the state. In classrooms with diverse populations, teachers must also ensure that the curriculum and teaching strategies reflect an alignment with English Language Proficiency Standards. (personal communication, January 27, 2003)

The future of this nation is going to be greatly shaped by the future of ELL students because they are the fastest growing student population in America (National Clearinghouse for English Language Learners, 2002). According to the Department of Education predictions, ELL students will comprise 25% of the student population in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). ELL students will comprise one out of every four students in the classroom. This is an equivalent of 5.5 million children (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), and that number of students can easily make up the population of the state of Tennessee. Further, the prediction for the future is that the number of ELLs will more than double in the next 20 years (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Hispanic students, who make up 70% of the ELL population, are almost four times more likely to drop out of school; and, overall, 50% of minority students do not complete high school as programmed (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007).

According to the U.S. Secretary of Education (Rod Paige, personal communication, October, 2005), it is apparent that as a nation the United States cannot afford to ignore the academic achievement of these students because ELL students due to the increasing numbers will affect different aspects of American life. How well these students perform will affect economic, civic, social, and national security issues.

**No Child Left Behind Act/Title III**

*No Child Left Behind* is a law that was passed by Congress in 2002. The new law contains the most sweeping changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since it was enacted in 1965 (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). The federal law was designed to support education in American public schools for all children. The purpose of the
The act was to ensure all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.

The act seeks to guarantee all students in the United States receive a quality education and to close the achievement gap that is present between students who characteristically achieve well in schools and those who do not. The students who do not characteristically perform well in school are usually from minority and ethnic groups, are from low socioeconomic backgrounds, have disabilities, and are limited in English proficiency (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). This federal legislation aims to reduce the achievement gap of economically disadvantaged students and minority children, including those who are English language learners (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures the progress of all public schools and school districts in the United States toward empowering all students to meet the state’s academic achievement standards. AYP measurements target the performance and participation of various subgroups based on race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, and English proficiency. The goal of NCLB is to have 100% of students proficient by 2013-2014.

In order to achieve the aforementioned purposes, NCLB legislation contains four education reform principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and control in regard to how districts spend federal money, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work by scientific research.

Title III, under the NCLB legislation, deals with English language acquisition and immigrant education. The No Child Left Behind Act includes English Language Learners provisions under Title I and Title III. In Title I, the No Child Left Behind Act outlines and describes the state standards, assessments, annual yearly progress and other accountability requirements for ELL students (Section 1112). Annual measurement achievement objectives
(AMAO) assess proficiency in English. The AMAO targets are required by Title III provisions, and the targets are set at the state level.

Under Title III, the No Child Left Behind Act imparts funding to local and state educational organizations required by NCLB to increase the English proficiency and core academic content knowledge of limited English proficient students. The NCLB act uses the term “LEP” for limited English proficiency. Further, Title III schools and school districts are given the freedom to determine what method of instructional delivery to teach ELL students English as long as the program chosen is based on research-based practices proven to be effective.

According to the American Federation of Teachers, as various programs or models of ELL instruction have been disseminated and implemented in different ways at the district and school level, a theoretical dispute has arisen in regard to the most efficient manner for the education of English language learners in the selection of program method (AFT, 2002, Number 14, Policy Brief). The American Federation of Teachers, in the newsletter publication called “Educational Issues Policy Brief,” delineates the divisive query in a simple and concise manner. The American Federation of Teachers reports that these theoretical arguments can be separated and viewed as three central divergent philosophical camps as follows:

First, the proponents of bilingual education (some academic instruction in native language) argue that ELL students are harmed when schools sacrifice content knowledge on the altar of the earliest possible acquisition of English. The fact that students are taught to read in more than one language is seen as an important benefit that may prove valuable in later life. On the other side, the critics of Bilingual education believe that this approach has worked to trap students in culturally and linguistically isolated settings, thus impeding their ability to enter the American mainstream. These critics point out that, while families can provide children with grounding in their native language and culture, many students are totally dependent on schools to equip them to succeed in the English speaking world; thus, they call for immediate immersion, arguing the more time spent in English, the better. A third camp, located somewhere in between the other two, is likely either to support ESL or transitional bilingual education programs, depending on circumstances. (AFT Policy Brief, 2002, p. 2)
The American Federation of Teachers states the issue continues to be discussed because research does not support the supremacy of any of the ELL programs aforementioned due to lack of sufficient data and definitive evidence to resolve the theoretical dispute regarding the best model for ELL instruction. The problems lie, according to the National Research Council (NRC), in a focal impasse: “In the absence of a well-defined set of program objectives, any research effort to assess success of programs will encounter problems and difficulty from the start” (Meyer & Feinberg, 1992, p. 3, as cited in AFT Policy Brief, 2002).

The Center for Applied Linguistics (2003) reported that the NCLB mandate allows state education agencies to determine how the definition of ELL subgroups is interpreted. According to the Center for Applied Linguistic, states may narrowly define the subgroup as only those students who receive ELL services directly or, more broadly, as those who receive ELL services and students being monitored in regard to academic achievement based on required state assessments. Furthermore, states are required by the NCLB act to describe in their Title III application how the state plans to bring about an increase in ELL students’ English proficiency in the four domains of receptive and productive language: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

School districts across the nation are mandated to monitor the academic progress of ELL students and are required to report the district’s ELL students’ results from the English proficiency assessment with the statistical information that details the quantity of ELL students that are attaining proficiency by the end of the academic school year. Districts must report the percentage of students that are obtaining English proficiency, making progress in English proficiency, and have transitioned out of the ELL program as outlined in the NCLB Title III, Sections 3113, 3212, 3213, 3247, and 3302 (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

According to NCLB regulations, Title III federal funds can be employed for the subsequent school district and school-related activities such as English instruction, professional development and training of staff, curriculum development, remedial tutoring and tutorials,
technology acquisition, parental involvement, and support for teacher aides trained to provide service to ELL students.

It is apparent that public schools in the United States have felt the impact of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The demands on schools and educators have increased immensely since the enactment of the NCLB Act as a direct outcome of the accountability requirements of the *No Child Left Behind law*. This law has forced stringent timelines to make certain that schools concentrate on the goal of high standards for all students regardless of socioeconomic, ethnic, or racial minority status. Therefore, school districts and educators must develop and implement a structure personalized to the educational requirements of students and the strengths of all stakeholders involved in the educational process (Protherol, Shellard, & Turner, 2003).

Rentner and Jennnings (2006) state that it is apparent that test-driven accountability at the present moment is the standard in public schools, due to the *No Child Left Behind Act*, which is the conclusion of 15 years of standards-based reform in schools in the United States.

The Center on Education Policy has scrutinized the implementation of the NCLB Act for the last 4 years across the nation. It reported that local and state educational administrators stated that NCLB Act reliance on tests was too narrow to measure for educational achievement of students and to acknowledge that NCLB has aimed and increased the awareness of low-achieving students and intensified efforts to improve schools that are low on a persistent basis in the area of student achievement (Rentner & Jennings, 2006).

**Language Instruction (Theory to Practice)**

The National Council of Teachers of English (online document) recognizes that all teachers of English language learners must have specialized content knowledge and skills in the area of ELL methodology in order to effectively teach and engage ELL students. Consequently, it is essential that teachers who instruct students with linguistically diverse needs be provided with staff development support and encouraged to use effective research-based practices in order
to successfully teach ELL students (NCTE, 2006). Unfortunately, the greater part of linguistically diverse students are in classrooms where the teachers have no formal or little training in the teaching of linguistically diverse students (Barron & Menken, 2002).

In a survey conducted by the Education Department’s National Center for Education Statistics in 1998 dealing with teacher quality, only one in five teachers told the national survey that they felt “very well prepared” to work in a modern classroom. Only 20% said they were confident in working with students from diverse backgrounds with limited English proficiency or with disabilities.

An article written for the National Staff Development Association in regard to the schools and staffing survey found:

The number of English language learners in U.S. schools has only increased since the survey was conducted, meaning more English language learners in more classrooms where teachers have not received adequate training. (Hill & Flynn, 2008, p. 46)

In order to promote the effectiveness of educators who work with English language learners and increase their student achievement in the content, school districts across the nation should start using instructional coaches for educators who work with English language learners. The use of instructional coaches can increase the effectiveness of ESL program models and infuse the use of research-based practices in classroom and instruction. This practice increases student achievement in the content area and accelerates the development of language proficiency.

According to Kinhead (2007), from the Center of Strengthening the Teaching Profession, “Coaches partner with principal, teachers, and specialists to support instructional improvement” (p. 7). Further, he stated that “instructional coaches work to improve teachers’ use of instructional strategies and the application of best practices” (p. 7). Also, Kinhead stated that using coaches “creates opportunities for professional development for teachers and principals modeled on the standards-based reform” (p. 8). Lastly, he mentioned that “coaches work to develop the capacity of teachers to implement research-based instruction” (p. 8) to increase
student achievement and meet the learning needs of students with diverse linguistic backgrounds using research-based practices. Educational professionals who work with English language learners need to be mentored and have the opportunity to learn about research-based practices in the area of ESL instruction, language acquisition process, and how to teach content to English language learners.

According to researchers, professional development in this area has been neglected by school districts (Hill & Flynn, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Futrell, et al., 2003). Villegas and Lucas (2002) stated that educators must become culturally responsive and see themselves as change agents in order to make schools more equitable. In addition to the use of coaches, teachers of linguistically diverse students need to participate in professional learning communities as recommended by the National Staff Development Council standards. According to Kinhead (2007):

Through focused reflection and dialogue, and by working within the context of daily classroom practices, coaches draw out individual potential, eliciting greater growth in the individual/team that could not be accomplished by the teacher alone. (p. 10)

According to Kinhead (2007), coaching activities can be tailored to meet the specific needs of a district based on student achievement data. Also, he stated that districts can choose to be involved in activities that promote teacher implementation of best practices and instructional strategies, promote reflection of teaching practices, encourage the use of performance data to assess student progress and drive the instructional cycle, support differentiated instruction for students of varying levels of proficiency, and culturally responsive teaching practices. Villegas and Lucas (2002) stated that:

Preparing teachers to teach children of diverse racial, ethnic, social class, and language background is a pressing issue in teachers education today and will continue to be for some time to come. (p. 20)
According to the Alliance for Excellence in Education (“Six Key Strategies for Teachers,” 2005), a New Teacher Center (NTC) was developed at the University of California to work with teachers during their first two years in the education profession. The center works with teachers in every grade and subject area. The beginning teachers are assigned mentors. The center reported, according to the Alliance for Excellence in Education, that one of the difficulties the beginning teachers discussed with assigned mentors was that English language learners lack the basic literacy skills to learn grade-level content. Also, according to the center, a state-wide survey of teachers in California identified one of the top concerns of secondary teachers of ELL students as “addressing the individual and diverse needs of ELL students in both academic skills and English-language acquisition” (p. 1). The New Teacher Center (NTC) at the University of California stated that:

Students’ language development and subject knowledge flourishes when teachers are supported to equip students with academic language skills, perquisites for understanding subject-matter and culturally responsive resources for learning. (Alliance for Excellence in Education, 2005, p. 3)

In order to teach ELL students effectively, mainstream classroom teachers and ELL teachers are expected to become more efficient in instructional practices in order to facilitate the language acquisition because the expectations of classroom instruction have changed. Classroom instruction of ELL students must be comprehensible, interactive, cognitively challenging, promote cultural understanding, connect to students’ real-life experiences, and develop language and literacy across the curriculum; and the primary goal of instruction ought to be the attainment of academic standards (Grognet Jameson, Franco, & Derrick-Mescua, 2000).

Slavin and Cheung (2003) depict in their Effective Reading Program for English Language Learners Synthesis Report that the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act has increased the demands for the success of ELL students and all subgroups addressed within the NCLB Act in the aspect of accountability. As a result, the academic achievement in ELL in the area of reading has become a major focus and an area of emphasis for staff development in the
knowledge of instructional needs of diverse students in the areas of academic achievement and culturally responsive teaching.

It is apparent that in order to act in response to the requirements of NCLB school districts need to modify curricula and provide staff development for educational practitioners that address the unique and specific academic and cultural needs of linguistically diverse students. Literacy development has become an important area of focus, even though the subject matter of reading for bilingual students was ignored in the research literature until recent times (Garcia, 2000).

The accessibility to educational professionals who have knowledge in the area of language acquisition is limited due to a teacher shortage and the highly qualified restrictions imposed by the No Child Left Behind Act. This is a major problem since it is anticipated that more than 50% of teachers will have an ELL student in their classrooms in the course of their career (McKeon, 1994). Further, the problem is compounded by the shortage of teachers who are proficient in the use of ESL strategies, have a degree in English as a Second Language, and who meet qualification for certification in the area of ESL (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997a).

**Language Acquisition**

According to experts in the field of language acquisition, districts having ELL students can enhance the capacity of regular classroom teachers to assist ethnically and linguistically diverse students by offering staff development that provides a framework that helps regular classroom teachers to understand the process of second-language acquisition (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). In order to empower classroom teachers to work with linguistically diverse students, it is essential that they are trained to have the capacity to formulate sound choices regarding the instructional practices that facilitate the process of language learning (Collier, 1995).

Even though considerable professional staff development is indispensable to expand knowledge of second-language acquisition methodology and theory for mainstream teachers,
various fundamental understandings can be learned quickly and used in the classroom to impact the effectiveness of academic instruction for ELL students (Reed & Railsback, 2003).

According to the report *Strategies and Resources for Mainstream Teachers of English Language Learners*, published by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (Reed & Railsback, 2003), second-language theories are founded on extensive research over years in the fields of linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and neurolinguistics (Freeman & Freeman, 2001). Language acquisition theory is pivotal in understanding the process of how an ELL student learns a second language.

Acquisition is a term used to emphasize the natural processes and ways that a child acquires a language (Grognet et al., 2000). Krashen (1981) stated that there is a clear difference between acquisition and learning. Krashen, a most distinguished linguist, in his hypothesis articulates that there are two independent systems of second-language execution. The two independent systems are the acquired system and the learned system.

The acquired system deals with the concept of acquisition and is the result of a subconscious process students experience that is similar to the same process involved when students acquire their native language. The process entails significant interaction in the target language and natural communication in which the emphasis is communication, not correct grammar structure (Krashen, 1987). Krashen asserts that language acquisition is a natural phenomenon.

The learned system deals with the concept of learning and is the result of formal instruction and entails a formal cognizant which results in conscious knowledge of target language such as grammar rules and, according to Krashen, learning is not as important as acquisition (Krashen, 1987).

According to Northwest Regional Laboratory, the process of language acquisition entails a continuum of learning that has stages of language learning that are conventional and have a
specific progression (Reed & Railsback, 2003). The stages of language acquisition that have
developed as a result of years of research in the field are Silent/Receptive or Preproduction Stage,
the Early Production Stage, the Speech Emergence Stage, the Intermediate Language Proficiency
Stage, and the Advanced Language Proficiency Stage (Reed & Railsback).

An understanding of the aforementioned stages can help educators who interact with ELL
students to expect and acknowledge the student’s current level of attainment in the process of
language acquisition and to adjust the instructional program and curricula to the language needs
of the student. This helps to facilitate the progression to the next stage or level of language
acquisition (Reed & Railsback, 2003). Further, Krashen and Terrell (1983) as well accentuate
the requirement for English language learners to be engaged in verbal production or speaking
skills in the target language at a level that is appropriate to English proficiency level and
comfortable to students.

Brown (1994) states that the process of and developing into a bilingual individual is a
way of life. Further, he suggested that the learner is affected as a whole person. The acquisition
of the new language affects many areas because it requires attainment of a new way of life and a
new way of thinking, feeling, and acting. Also, he mentions that it requires an aggregate
commitment that entails participation at a physical, academic, and emotional plane.
Additionally, according to the researcher, the process of acquiring English as a second language
is complicated and multifaceted due to being connected with infinite variables of a subjective and
objective nature.

What does learning English require of students? Can students learn English by simply
being immersed in the conventional classroom? According to Krashen (1981), in order for
students to learn English, they must understand the meaning that is being transmitted by means of
receptive or productive language. Students have to be capable of comprehending the message
that is communicated. A concept that is endorsed by language acquisition specialists called
*comprehensible input* developed by Stephen Krashen proposes that learners obtain a language by *intaking* and comprehending language that is a *little beyond* their present stage or level of language proficiency (Krashen, 1981).

Sowers (2000) states that it is, therefore, imperative that teachers who instruct linguistically diverse students provide students with linguistic opportunities that are challenging but, at the same time, built from previously-taught material or prior knowledge in order to ensure the meaning of activity or lesson is comprehensible. According to Reed and Railsback (2003), affording language learners with regular, comprehensible input entails possessing a sound knowledge of the ability level of students and the appropriate assessment tools for ELL students to arrange and organize lessons at the appropriate level of “input” that is slightly beyond their current level of English proficiency.

Also, research conducted by Merrill Swain and other language acquisition researchers, concludes that the concept extends to productive language or “comprehensible output.” The researchers explained students must be provided with opportunities to produce language at their level of proficiency (Pica, Holliday, Lewis, & Morgenthaler, 1989; Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996; Swain & Lapkinn, 1995).

Stephen Krashen’s (1981) *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning* states that the process of language acquisition requires “comprehensible input” in low-anxiety situations. Further, Krashen’s theory states that language acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language. Also, he states that students are allowed to produce when they are “ready.”

Another important piece in Krashen’s (1982) *Principles and Practices of Second Language Acquisition* is the Affective Filter Hypothesis. Krashen identifies the effect of human feelings or emotions on learning the “affective filter.” Many researchers (Krashen, 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; McLaughlin, 1990) have studied the function of emotions on the
process of language acquisition and how emotions affect the process. According to Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis, language learners need to be in a supportive environment that is risk free due to the belief that stress impairs students’ ability to become skilled at language and to verbalize.

According to Herrell and Jordan (2004), the function of the classroom environment needs to be taken into consideration when dealing with English language learners because purposeful exposure to language is not sufficient to facilitate language learning. It is essential that students are provided with an environment in which numerous opportunities for language interaction are provided on a regular and consistent basis. Swain and Lapkin (1995) explained that opportunities for language interaction need to be included in classroom activities and projects where students are required to work together to solve problems. The researchers state that involving students in cooperative projects and activities promotes the acquisition of language in a context that is authentic and meaningful. Also, the experience supports the development of semantic processing and syntactic processing (Herrell & Jordan).

Herrell and Jordan (2004) state it is essential that students are provided with an environment where they feel secure in regard to comfort level and that limits anxiety due to failure. Also, they mention that educators must closely regulate students’ motivation and self esteem in order to minimize anxiety. Therefore, creating an environment where stress is minimized reduces the effects of the affective filter which can interfere with the metacognitive processes and learning that needs to take place in order to facilitate language learning (Herrell & Jordan).

Educators are usually concerned with the amount of time it takes students to learn English. The most comprehensive research in this area has been completed by Wayne and Virginia Collier, who conducted a longitudinal study that involved 70,000 English language learners from 1982 to 1996. The study determined the amount of time it took students with no
previous background in the English language to attain native speaker performance (50th percentile) on norm-referenced tests (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

They studied how socioeconomic status, first language, types of programs implemented by schools to learn English, native literacy, and amount of years in place of origin schooling affected the time required to learn English. They concluded that the most determinant factor in regard to the time it takes to learn English as a second language was the total of years of formal schooling students received in their native language (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

A different theory that has affected classroom instruction for language learners is Cummins’ (1981, 1996) distinction concerning social and academic language acquisition. Social Language or Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) deals with the language skills necessary for social circumstances. Academic language or Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) deals with the language that is necessary for academic learning.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are the verbal communication skills required to function in social situations and are not cognitively demanding. BICS provides a student the conversational skills necessary for a language learner to conduct a productive conversation in a social situation and be understood. According to Cummins (1980), the amount of time necessary to acquire BICS ranges from 2 to 3 years and the attainment of BICS is not academically challenging. According to Haynes (2007), language learners utilize BICS in social interactions that are context embedded and in a meaningful social context. Cummins (1980) states that a predicament or problem arises when school teachers assume that because students can function in social situations they are proficient in the English language.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is the language needed to function in the content area in a formal academic setting, and it is critical for student achievement. CALP entails functioning in productive language (speaking and writing) and receptive language (listening and reading) across different content area subjects. The acquisition of CALP takes
time because it requires cognition from language learners and due to its decontextualized nature (Cummins, 1996). The acquisition of CALP entails developing fluency in language that is academic intensive and it takes approximately 4 to 7 years to develop (Cummins, 1981). The acquisition of CALP is influenced by many factors, such as the type of ELL instruction received (Thomas & Collier, 1997), language proficiency level, age and time of arrival at school, level proficiency of native language, and the amount of support provided to promote the attainment of academic language (Cummins, 1981, 1996; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

The implications for classroom instruction with regard to the acquisition of BICS and CALP for ELL educators and regular classroom teachers are that students must be explicitly taught each type of language in order to promote the achievement of students in the classroom and the acculturation of students to American society. Language learners need to acquire CALP in order to be competent in classes that require expertise in cognitively demanding tasks and that require students to be strategic readers in content area textbooks.

Brown (2007, online document) states that ensuring the success of ELL has never been more important than at this time with the demands of the No Child Left Behind Act and the accountability measures that required ELL students to make adequate academic yearly progress. Further, Brown (2007) emphasizes that educational achievement of an ESL student’s academic career is dependent upon the attainment of CALP and that it is “critical that ESL teachers move beyond the functional English syllabus and start providing a content-rich, high standards curriculum that prepares ELL students to become academically successful in content learning.”

According to Halliday (1978), an additional pivotal factor that enhances the acquisition of language by linguistically diverse students who serve to support the acquisition of target language is the notion that language learners are motivated to acquire language because it serves a specific purpose or utility for them. Halliday further identified seven functions that assist
language learners to comply with physical, emotional, and social needs and to interact with the environment. The functions identified by Halliday are: (a) instrumental, (b) regulatory, (c) interactional, (d) personal, (e) heuristic, (f) imaginative, and (g) representational.

Reed and Railsback (2003) suggest that acquiring basic knowledge about language acquisition theories can facilitate classroom teachers and enhance the ability of educators to impart suitable content-area instruction to language learners.

According to Reed and Railsback (2003), acquiring basic knowledge about language acquisition theories can facilitate classroom teachers and enhance the ability of educators to impart suitable content-area instruction to language learners. Also, acquiring an awareness of language acquisition theories allows educators to provide instructional experiences and strategies, and develop assessment instruments to advance the acquisition of language that is cognitively demanding (CALP) and that is essential to succeed academically (Robson, 1995).

**ESL Strategies**

Strategies are procedures employed in instruction and learning that serve as a way of reaching a goal (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985). ESL strategies can be approached from different angles and perspectives. Teacher strategies are all the ways or procedures a teacher uses to assist, show, direct, and synchronize student learning. Teachers can empower learners to be strategic learners by teaching them how to use different strategies on their own by coaching students in the use of strategies.

In order to provide a framework of effective strategies for linguistically diverse students or language learners, it is essential to base the application and instruction of the strategies to be used within one or more underlying premises that will guide the instruction (Herrell & Jordan, 2004).

In the book *Fifty Strategies for Teaching ESL Students* (Herrell & Jordan, 2004), a list of theoretical premises is provided to support the instruction of English language learners by
providing activities that enhance comprehensible input, verbal interaction, contextualized language, cooperative learning, effective use of teaching strategies to reduce anxiety of students, and the present prospect of active involvement of language learners. A variety of teaching strategies that are research based include the use of TPR (Total Physical Response), cooperative learning, language experience approach, dialogue journals, academic language scaffolding, native language support, accessing prior knowledge, and cultural studies.

**Research-Based Practices for English Language Learners**

The aspiration of school reform is to establish instructional practices that allow all students to gain knowledge and achieve academically at the highest levels. In order to reach that goal, schools and districts are required to ascertain the best practices available to achieve the endeavor of providing opportunities for all students to be successful and to provide equitable access to a quality education (Hansel & Cavel, 2002). In order to achieve this goal, according to *No Child Left Behind*, educators in the field must employ and implement educational strategies and models proven to be effective by scientifically-based research.

Schools and districts are required to consider before implementation the evidence of their efficacy. The No Child legislation, in section 9103 (37) of the *No Child Left Behind Act* describes and characterizes scientifically-based research as follows: “research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs” as cited in *Unlocking the Eleven Components of Comprehensive School Reform*, published by the National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform (Hansel & Cavel, 2002, p. 17).

According to Hansel and Cavel (2002) making decisions based on reliable, sound scientific research is a difficult commission for schools because the accessibility to evidence of effectiveness for program models or instructional strategies may not be obtainable. Further, even though the requirement may be problematical to adhere to in practice, the requirement is a
necessary one because it ensures that school reform efforts are based on programs that are able to enhance and alter positively student achievement (Hansel & Cavel). Lastly, Hansel and Cavel state that the government, in order to ensure access to data regarding the evaluation of programs and instructional strategies, has developed and provided a protocol for schools and districts to make decisions efficiently by providing access to a protocol called the “decision tree.”

The research available reveals that with practically every single instrument used to measure student achievement English language learners have a propensity to be behind their native-English-speaking peers and to exhibit momentous disparity in regard to achievement on assessments that are used to ascertain achievement at the state and national level (Olson, 2003; Snow & Bincarosa, 2003).

Researchers point out that English language teachers and mainstream teachers in schools across the nation’s school districts are experiencing pressure to instruct English language learners rapidly and more competently (Brennan, Kim, Wenz-Gross, & Siperstein, 2001) due to the enactment of the No Child Left Behind legislation (Goertz & Dufy, 2003). Nath, Ross, and Smith (1996) state that it has become obvious to English language instructors that the use of effective scientifically-based instruction is critical in the implementation of teaching techniques that are more resourceful and that facilitate the acquisition of discourse that is social and academic in nature in order to improve instructional practices in the classrooms that have linguistically diverse students.

Echeverria (2006) maintains that, in the face of the efforts to promote achievement of English language learners through comprehensive school reform, education professionals must recognize the goal can only be attained by ensuring that educators are equipped with the information and pedagogical understanding that are required to provide the “unique” educational needs of ELL students by providing professional development based on effective practices.
However, practitioners in the field of education must bear in mind that the instructional decisions made are required, to a certain degree, on expertise and a degree of qualified reasoning because “school leaders will need to rely on the best available empirical judgment in creating their programs” (Martinez, 2005, p. 6).

The use of professional judgment, according to Martinez (2005), required the ability to be a critical consumer, taking the time to examine the available research to decide whether it is pertinent and useful to the school’s explicit circumstances and the instructional needs of the students, making an effort to produce a summary of the findings of studies and integrating the available substantiation and proof of the research into the decision-making process.

The National Task Force for Early Childhood Education for Hispanics (2007) studied the challenges encountered by Hispanic minority children that impede success and released a study called *Para Nuestros Ninos: Expanding and Improving Early Education for Hispanics*. The authors of the report concluded:

> In spite of extensive efforts to raise the academic achievement level of Hispanic students, Hispanic students continue to achieve at a lower level than whites across the K-5 years and that Hispanic children were still behind in the achievement of reading and math areas. (p. 16)

Flores (2001) conducted a survey that investigated teachers’ beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how these beliefs influenced practices with bilingual educators. According to the researcher, findings revealed that there was “a need for strong bilingual teacher preparation programs in which critical reflective practices were evident” (p. 16). Further, Flores indicated that the data revealed teachers’ responses to the survey “implied that they lack knowledge of the best practices” (p. 17).

According to research conducted by Walker, Shafer, and Liams (2004) at the University of North Dakota, “Teachers’ attitudes about language minority students play a crucial role in student outcome” (p. 130). They report that the possibility that teacher attitudes toward ELL
students in the mainstream classroom may become negative over a period of time due to the increase in ELL population, teachers are lacking the professional expertise on how to instruct ELL students in the mainstream classroom, immigrant families are settling in nontraditional immigrant states and rural areas, and changes in legislation are rigorously making teachers more accountable. Further, he cites research that estimates 44% of ELL students in the United States now live in rural communities, as reported by Berube (2000).

The researchers state that “professional development in working with ELL students in the mainstream classroom is particularly needed in rural communities and small cities” (Walker, Shafer, & Liams, 2004, p. 132). The researchers mentioned that main classroom teachers who have not received professional development in the area of English as a second language are besieged when they have to instruct an ELL student. They have no idea how to instruct ELL students effectively and no idea where to begin.

The study findings revealed that 87% of the teachers who participated in the survey had never received any professional development in working with ELL students and that 20% directly objected to making modifications for ELL students in the classroom instruction. The researchers concluded that professional development was needed to enhance professional knowledge in ELL instruction and to cultivate an environment that is accepting to linguistic diversity. They state that:

Professional development efforts in helping teachers effectively teach English language learners in inclusive settings must be comprehensive, appropriate, and long term, as well as heavily focused on confronting and changing negative attitudes that serve to impede progress. Entrenched community attitudes may be the most difficult to change. As a frustrated but still optimistic ELL teacher commented, “This state as a whole seems like it is negative to any kind of change. We’re really conservative . . . It’s just going to take time. It might not be this generation, but maybe next one.” Unfortunately, for many English language learners, change may come too late. (Walker, Shafer, & Liams, 2004, p. 156)
A study was conducted at the University of Nebraska by Reeves (2006) that involved teachers’ attitudes toward including ELL students in mainstream classrooms. The study revealed that a majority of the teachers who participated in the study reported that they did not feel trained to work with ELL students. Further, the study revealed that the teachers had misconceptions regarding how a second language is acquired. The researcher reported that 90.3% of survey participants had not received training to work with ELL students. Further, he reports that even though they felt unprepared about working with ELL the survey respondents were “ambivalent” about receiving professional development.

Reeves (2006) stated that one reason teachers may have for not wanting to participate could be that

. . . they feel they do not need professional development to work with ELL students, that they believe that is primarily the responsibility of the ELL teacher to educate ELL students and that they are tired of “one shot” professional development that does not sustain change and educational reform. (p. 138)

According to Reeves (2006), there are initiatives that have been successful in providing effective professional development for ELL teachers but that those initiatives focused on the “importance of active teacher participation, commitment to school wide, long term change and strong, on going university-to-school partnerships” (p. 139). He concludes by stating that “the findings suggest that teachers want to welcome ELL students into the mainstream, the data also reveal a teaching force struggling to make sense of teaching and learning in multilingual school environments” (p. 139).

Lopez (2006), in a presentation at the National Association of Bilingual Educators Conference about a study called *When Schools Undergo Radical Changes in Student Demographics*, explained the effects of immigrant issues in a group of Texas schools that had undergone demographic transformation of ELL population due to hurricane Katrina. The researcher reported that a change in demographics does not imply that a school will experience
negative or positive changes in accountability scores or academic achievement. However, he reported that the school’s learning capacity does predict how well it will perform when radical changes in ELL student population enrollment occur.

Calderon (2007) reported that many teachers and principals are concerned with the influx of ELL students into their schools and acknowledge that the manner in which they have been teaching the students is not meeting the instructional needs. As a result, the Carnegie Corporation of New York funded a project to develop professional development programs that would meet the needs of English language learners and teachers. The project was called Expediting Comprehension for English Language Learners (ExC-ELL), and it studied the effects of a professional development model for middle and high school teachers of English, science, mathematics, and social studies who were involved in the education of English language learners.

The study involved teachers in a staff development program that was designed to promote effective instruction for English language learners. Calderon explained that professional development sessions were designed for all stakeholders including literacy coaches, content curriculum specialists, principals, and central office administrators on how to coach and observe teachers in order to increase student achievement. The study focused on providing intensive professional development that targeted instruction for ELL students in reading and vocabulary development.

The study yielded positive results and a protocol was developed that includes planning content lessons, coaching by literacy coaches not familiar with ELL instruction, supervision by administrators, teacher self reflection, peer coaching, and conducting classroom research. One of the conclusions derived from the project conducted was that “teachers need assistance and models for developing lessons that integrate subject matter content, reading and writing skills” (Calderon, 2007, p. viii). Another recommendation in the conclusion was to involve teachers in learning communities as a tool to help teachers deal collectively with implementation issues and
to learn collectively as a group. Further, the protocol developed in the study recommends “systematic and comprehensive professional development throughout the year to sustain any program, approach, or instructional change” (p. ix).

Foulger and Jimenez-Silva (2007), in a study that dealt with the writing development of ELLs and teacher perceptions of the use of technology in project-based learning, states that teachers need to be supported in professional models that use collaboration and partnerships. According to the researchers, the partnerships need to include other teachers, school support staff, and school and central office administrators.

Furthermore, the study supports the idea that ELL students need to be provided “with rich opportunities to learn in meaningful ways language that is necessary for them to succeed academically” (Foulger & Jimenez-Silva, 2007, p. 122).

Lastly, Foulger and Jimenez-Silva (2007) explained that a paradigm shift needs to take place in regard to the beliefs about the education of ELL students. The researchers do so by:

suggesting their abilities to engage at higher levels of thinking with more complex curriculum, in their non-native language, might feel counterintuitive at first, but could provide better results in the long run. (p. 126)

Foulger and Jimenez-Silva (2006) suggest that districts need to develop a system wide culture in which learning is escalated for its teachers as well as its students and that when this ideal is instigated, expanded, and amplified, high levels of student performance might surprise us all. (p. 122)

A study was conducted in Idaho by Batt (2008) to study the teachers’ perceptions of ELL education and potential solutions to overcome the greatest challenges. The study revealed that skilled teachers in the area of language acquisition and the use of effective ELL instructional strategies are hard to hire due to a limited amount of teachers that are certified in ESL. Further, the researcher revealed that research in the area supports that ESL positions are difficult to fill in schools (Batt, 2008; Howard, Stefanie, & Norton, 2006).
According to Batt (2008) the survey conducted revealed that teachers believed that “not all educators who work with ELLs in their schools were qualified to work with linguistic minority students” (p. 4). Also, the study participants expressed that the “lack of knowledge colleagues had about educating ELLs” (p. 4) was one of their biggest challenges. Lastly, the survey results revealed that a big problem was that in schools “mainstream teachers and administrators do not understand ELL needs and how to teach them” (p. 4). Study participants indicated that in addition to the aforementioned concerns they felt the ELL programs were understaffed and that ELL teachers had too many additional duties, such as translation, making phone calls for mainstream teachers, coordinating program, conducting professional development, etc.

Further, she states that the ELL practitioners who participated in the survey recommended restructuring solutions to improve the education of language minority students by hiring more ESL teachers, creating an ESL coaching teacher position, hiring ELL assistants, creating an academy for sheltered English instruction, and by providing research-based professional development that effectively meets the needs of ELL students. Also, the practitioners recommended the grouping of students by proficiency levels, changing program models and making changes to the ESL curriculum (Batt, 2008).

In the conclusion of the article published in Multicultural Education the researcher concludes that:

This study of teachers’ perceptions of ELL education in a rural state identifies their greatest challenges in linguistic minority education as well as ranked recommendation for solution. In-service practitioners need professional development to compensate for knowledge and skills not obtained during the teacher certification process, yet needed in today’s educational context. Practitioners voiced a need to hire more specialists and to provide educators a multicultural education and training in ESL methods as a means to acquire more assistance from mainstream teachers. (Batt, 2008, p. 7)
Batt (2008) maintained that the success of ELL students needs to be the responsibility of all teachers. Further, she mentioned that university programs can help to alleviate the problem by requiring preservice teachers to take courses in ESL methods and sheltered English instruction as part of graduation requirement and certification. Batt concluded by stating that, “the success of ELL students cannot remain the sole responsibility of ESL and bilingual educators in the era of No Child Left Behind” (p. 8).

According to the *Education Week* report called Quality Counts 2009: Portrait of a Population, How English Language Learners Are Putting Schools to the Test, the phenomenon of the growing population of English language learners in the state of Tennessee is a national trend that exists in the United States in the states located in the Southeast and Midwest regions of the nation. In the era of NCLB and accountability, “today’s public schools are increasingly characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity” (Lessow-Hurley, 2003).

The researchers of the report found that the achievement gap between English language learners and the general population is significant and that 25% of all students classified as English language learners are not making progress in the acquisition of English as a second language or a subsequent language. According to Lessow-Hurley (2003), this challenge must be confronted by schools by building “bridges between cultures, helping all students develop academically and equally.” Further, the researcher states that “professional educators agree that every teacher must develop specialized awareness, skills and knowledge to work in culturally diverse settings” (Lessow-Hurley, p. 54).

According to Waxman and Tellez (2002) the best way to assist linguistically diverse students is to ensure that they receive instruction that is focused in research-based instructional practices found to be successful in the instruction of ELL students. The researchers in 2002 conducted a synthesis of the research in order to identify effective teaching practices for ELL students that was limited to research that was contemporary and that was based on empirical
data. After examining a total of 30 studies, the researchers (Waxman & Tellez) concluded the following strategies were effective in teaching English Language learners:

- Using collaborative learning communities
- The use of multiple representations
- Building prior knowledge
- Using instructional conversations
- Practicing culturally responsive teaching
- Providing cognitively guided language instruction
- Access to technology-enriched instruction

The National Council of English Teachers, in the association’s website, recommends the following eight strategies or practices in order to enrich the training of linguistically diverse students and recommends the practices to mainstream classroom teachers as follows:

1. Enunciate clearly, but do not raise your voice. Add gesture, point directly to objects, and draw pictures when and if necessary.
2. Write clearly, legible and in print – many ELL students have difficulty reading cursive.
3. Develop and maintain routines. Use clear and consistent signals for classroom instructions.
4. Repeat information and review frequently. If a student does not understand, try rephrasing or paraphrasing sentences and simpler syntax; check often for understanding, but do not ask, “Do you understand?” Instead, have students demonstrate their learning in order to show comprehension.
5. Try to avoid using idioms and slang words.
6. Present new information in a variety of ways.
7. Provide frequent summations of the salient points of a lesson, and always emphasize key vocabulary words.
8. Recognize student success overtly and frequently, but also be aware that in some cultures overt, individual attention is considered inappropriate and can therefore be embarrassing or confusing to the student.

The strategies are based on tips that were adapted from recommendations from the Center for Applied Linguistics and Escort in Strategies and Resources for Mainstream Teachers of English Language Learners (Reed & Railsback, 2003, p. 31).

The book Classroom Instruction That Works for English Learners (Hill & Flynn, 2006) imparts the mainstream teacher with the background knowledge necessary to implement instructional strategies and practices that have been proven to increase student achievement for English language learners based on the research used to write Classroom Instruction That Works (Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2001).

The book is a synopsis of the research results from over 100 studies. The book identifies nine areas of research-based instruction that are used by Hill and Flynn (2006) to build a framework for the instruction of ELL students in order to facilitate the acquisition of content and language skills. The nine categories are as follows:

1. Setting objectives and providing feedback
2. Nonlinguistic representations
3. Cues, questions, and graphic organizers
4. Summarizing and note taking
5. Homework and practice
6. Cooperative learning
7. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
8. Generating and testing hypothesis
9. Identifying similarities and differences

(Hill & Flynn, 2006, p. 6)
The Education Alliance at Brown University has developed a framework to promote the success of ELL students that uses a series of principles to guarantee responsive learning environments which provide differentiated instruction that imparts equal access and leads to achievement (Coady et al., 2003).

The following are the principles for building an ELL-responsive learning environment as mentioned in Claiming Opportunities: A Handbook for Improving Education for English Language Learners through Comprehensive School Reform:

1. School leaders, administrators, and educators recognize that educating English language learners is the responsibility of the entire school staff.
2. English language learners are most successful when educators recognize the heterogeneity of the student population that is collectively labeled “ELL” and are able to vary their responses to the needs of different learners.
3. The school climate and general practice reinforce the principle that students’ languages and cultures are resources for further learning.
4. There are strong and seamless links connecting home, school, and community.
5. English language learners have equitable access to school resources and programs.
6. Teachers have high expectations of English language learners.
7. Teachers are properly prepared and willing to teach English language learners.
8. Language and literacy are infused throughout the educational process, including curriculum and instruction.
9. Assessment is authentic, credible to learners and instructors, and takes into account first- and second-language acquisition literacy development.

The Brown Alliance seeks to make available information based on research to schools in order to increase the perception of policy makers about concerns that relate to English language
learners and to influence the restructuring in a way that promotes the inclusion of English language learners in the comprehensive school reform process to profit from the linguistically diverse study (Coady et al., 2003).

**English Language Learners and School Reform**

The contemporary efforts to conduct school reform accentuate the necessity to advance the quality of education that students receive and the achievement of all students. According to the Education Alliance at Brown University (Coady et al., 2003), the comprehensive school reform movement has, in the last decade, aimed to make education in public schools in the United States more efficient. The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (CSRQ, 2006) states that the trend to refine instructional practices is a continuous systematic cycle in schools in order to adjust to demographic shift of students, new policies, new curriculum, professional development, parent involvement, assessment, community involvement, standards, and to meet the challenges of policies enacted by federal policies such as *No Child Left Behind*. As a result, schools’ missions and student services must be altered in order to accommodate the instructional needs of all students, including English language learners. Further, the current reform movement will bring about change for all stakeholders and change in how schools seek to improve the academic success of students (Temple, 1996). The ultimate goal is to enrich students’ scholastic attainment by converging and focusing on “rethinking” and “restructuring” schools in order to provide learners with a quality education (CPRE Policy Briefs, n.d.).

According to Coady et al., (2003), the comprehensive reform endeavors to enhance schooling by means of implementing measures that promote the use of “integrated, well-aligned, school wide changes in instruction, assessment, curriculum, classroom management, school governance, professional development, technical assistance, and community participation” (p. 1). Further, Coady et al. state the ultimate aim of this restructuring venture is to make possible the attainment of challenging state content standards.
Kindler (2002) outlines that at the same time there has been an enormous increase in the population of students who are English language learners in schools; and, as a result, it was estimated that during the school year 2000-2001, the LEP population was 10% of the school population.

Unfortunately, research shows that the strategies intended to develop the academic achievement of all students via comprehensive school reform have not been adequate to meet the instructional needs of English language learners or have not considered the unique implications that are associated with educating effectively linguistically diverse students (Coady et al., 2003). According to Springfield, Datnow, Ross, and Snively (1998), the research that has been conducted to guide school reform models is not inclusive of English language learners. Gandara (1994) cautions by stating:

While LEP (Limited English Proficient) and other “at risk” students are frequently cited as justifications for why reforms are needed, they are rarely included in any specific way in the reforms themselves. (p. 46)

The Education Alliance in the handbook *Claiming Opportunities* states that

It is imperative for districts to work with individual schools and designers of reform models to ensure that programs specifically address the needs of ELL students. These students often do not have the opportunity to fully participate in school wide school reform, and it is essential that districts should address issues of equity and multiculturalism as any reform initiative. (Coady et al, 2003, p. 63)

Wagner (1994) stated that collaboration needs to be emphasized between ELL educators and general staff that serve language learners. But, that collaboration requires strong leadership in guiding the change process or reform efforts within a school. According to researchers, schools that serve students that are culturally diverse and English language learners seek to cooperate with each other to create and cultivate a communal vision of excellence for the school culture that is reflected in the instructional practices of the institution. Additionally, the instructional leader (principal) needs to guarantee that English language learners are included and
be a promoter of inclusion of the ELL students in the restructuring process by ensuring that language issues are part of the reform agenda (Goldenberg & Sullivan, 1994; Minicucci & Olsen, 1992).

Restructuring schools to function effectively to educate all students including linguistically diverse students and to bring about productive change takes time (Temple, 1996). Further, Temple states that the essentials that promote change are not accomplished without difficulty, or at once, because constructing a school culture that has the capacity to “collaborate together using teacher inquiry and reflections as vehicles for instruction” requires a significant amount of time and a change in paradigm (p. 4). Change is a long-term process that can be disorganized and continuing (Fullan, 1991).

The Brown Alliance does not support the concept that assuming that whatever works for one segment of student populations will, by design, support another (Coady et al., 2003). Coady cites LaCelle-Peterson and Rivera (1994) who state that

It is erroneous to assume that changes that affect monolingual English students favorably will automatically do the same for English Language Learners. (Coady, 2003, p. 55)

The director of the Brown Alliance implies that it is imperative that educators raise the level of consciousness regarding the educational issues of linguistically diverse students. Further, according to Adeline Becker (Executive Director of the Brown Alliance), educators need to influence the movement of school reform to reorganize in order to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to enhance the education of ELL students:

Equity doesn’t imply that the instructional strategies work best for one individual or group work for all. Students come to us with different backgrounds and different language proficiencies and with different educational histories, we need to differentiate instruction based upon students’ prior knowledge of language, literacy, and content. The specific needs and strengths of the English language learners in a particular school need to be taken into account in designing that school’s reform. (Coady et al., 2003, p. 2)
The meager presence of linguistically diverse students in a school that is going through structure school reform does not itself comprise access or equality/fairness in educational opportunities for those students. As stated in the lexis of the Lau v. Nichols decision by Judge Douglas (1974):

There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum: for those students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education. (Lau v. Nichols, excerpts, p. 2)

Nelson (1996) states that countless schools in the United States are facing the difficult task of educating English language learners. Further, he mentions a student population that is diverse because of different cultural backgrounds and languages spoken. Also, he suggests in the enterprise of restructuring school and implementing school reform that is inclusive of English language learners, some schools have been successful in the reform process and have been able to adapt programs to accommodate the needs of English language learners by organizing in nontraditional ways, developing sound language acquisition programs, and by providing a high-quality curriculum in the language arts area.

According to Nelson (1996) schools that have been successful in the reform process cultivate language acquisition and development for students who are limited English proficient. These schools share certain elements of practice even though they may differ in approach to language acquisition methodology or pedagogy (Nelson). The schools share the following fundamentals as outlined by the Institute for Policy Analysis and Research:

- Schools have altered the organization of the school in ways to support improved teaching and learning for all students, including LEP students.
- They have adapted their programs for LEP students in response to their students’ needs.
- They have provided LEP students access to challenging content.
- They have engaged LEP students with their only English-peers.
• They have implemented innovative curricular strategies, including cooperative learning, active learning, and experiential instructional strategies.

(Nelson, 1996, p. 1)

The Education Alliance at Brown University (Coady et al., 2003) articulates the viewpoint that effective school reform is the result of a cohesive effort that requires investment in time and effort of schools and central office personnel.

Further, the Alliance stated that in order for those efforts to be successful schools must carefully plan for “ELL Responsive School Reform.” This includes stakeholders in the planning stages, conducting an assessment of perceived needs, developing “buy in” from all stakeholders for the reform plan. This, in turn, will promote successful implementation of a restructuring plan. Further, it recommends schools conduct a literature review of research in order to select suitable reform strategies and/or instructional models that ensure success for the student population in attainment of the instructional goals of students (Coady et al., 2003).

The research done in these exemplary schools makes it obvious that LEP students can be taught and learn taxing academic content in language arts while they are acquiring the English language by innovating organizational structures that provide explicit benefits to English language learners by constructing a culture of acceptance and a mission and vision that includes all the students within the school (Nelson, 1996).

According to Muirhead (2000) the challenge to meet the needs of English language learners has two dimensions in that schools must instruct students in English and, at the same time, teach those students the knowledge/skills necessary to acquire content knowledge. As a result, Muirhead states, in order to be feasible and effectual, comprehensive school reform needs to integrate all the facets of a school, commencing with curriculum and instruction, school management, and organization; and it needs to satisfy the instructional and language acquisition needs of all students. Further, he mentions the plan must address the special needs of
linguistically diverse students and outline the specific strategies to be used in order to empower students to acquire the knowledge to satisfy the exigent requirements of academic content, performance, and academic standards.

Wilde, Thompson, and Herrera (1999) state that there is a grave need for comprehensive school reform strategies to meet the requirements of English language learners across the nation. Further, Wilde et al. assert that it is a critical issue because ELL students are one of the groups of students that are not being provided for instructionally and they are the fastest-growing population. The U.S. Department of Education has reported that English language learners comprise 40% of the student population in certain urban areas (U. S. Department of Education statistics).

**Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Culturally responsive teaching is an effective practice for student success as identified by Waxman and Tellez (2002). In their synthesis of effective teaching practices, the researchers explained that culturally responsive instruction calls attention to the students’ cultural apprehensions such as family and community issues. Furthermore, as explained by Waxman and Tellez, the concerns of students must be addressed and included in the curriculum textbooks as well as instructional activities that occur in the educational setting or classroom.

Waxman and Tellez (2002) suggested or determined that culturally responsive teaching accentuates social and academic accountability while, at the same time, develops awareness that promotes a positive reception to diversity. Another key finding, according to these researchers, was that this learner-centered practice works from students’ existing knowledge base, improves self confidence, and increases the transfer of school-taught knowledge to real-situations. (p. 2)

In *Leading with Diversity*, Pacheco and Trumbull (2008) state that the current research on education reform affirms that it is imperative that educators “meet the learning needs” of English
language learners as a result of the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Further, the researchers state that the change in demographics mandates that teachers be prepared to work with students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. The educational research on school reform shows that English language learners are among the student population that are the most in need of academic support as stated by Pacheco and Trumbull (2008)

Summary

The literature on English language learner instruction indicates that the instruction of ELL students must be based on practices that have been proven to be effective by research. Further, studies indicate that the teacher plays a critical role in the instruction of ELL students. According to several studies dealing with teacher quality, only a minority of teachers felt confident to instruct students from diverse backgrounds with limited English proficient students.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to investigate the level of use of English as a second or subsequent language strategies and research-based practices in the instruction of ELL students in Northeast Tennessee. The study sought to ascertain the perceptions of educators in Northeast Tennessee about teaching practices and beliefs in regard to the instruction of ELL students and to determine to what level these educators include ESL strategies and ESL research-based practices when teaching ELL students. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and procedures of the study.

Research Methodology and Design

A survey instrument was used to collect data to determine the level of use of ESL strategies and research-based practices in the instruction of ELL students in Northeast Tennessee. One survey was developed for teachers (see Appendix A) and a second survey was developed for administrators (see Appendix B). Both surveys were sent with a letter of informed consent (see Appendix C).

The main focus and objective of the survey was to analyze and establish what research-based ESL instructional practices were used in Northeast Tennessee to instruct ELL students. The use of a quantitative approach requires a course of action that includes collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and recording the outcomes of the study conducted (Creswell, 2003). The study used descriptive statistics in order to focus on the level of preparedness of educators in Northeast Tennessee in the areas of ESL strategies and the inclusion of ESL research-based practices.

Population and Sample

Participants in this study were school principals, ESL teachers, and classroom teachers with ESL students in elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in Northeast
Tennessee. For purposes of this study, school districts were categorized into two groups: districts with high-density ELL populations and districts with low-density ELL populations. In order to define the parameters of the two categorizations, the following steps were taken to determine the guidelines for the labeling of a district as low density or high density. Using data from the State of Tennessee reported in district report cards:

1. I determined the percent of ELL population for each district.
2. I ranked the districts based on percent of ELL population.
3. I found the highest percentage was 3.4 and the lowest percentage was 0.2.
4. I proceeded to add the lowest percentage and highest percentage together.
5. I chose the figure 0.2 to subtract from the sum and the number was divided by 2.
6. I determined that, based on the figure, districts with 1.5 or lower were determined low density and districts with 1.6 or higher were determined high density.

The study targeted 840 participants from school districts located in city and county public school systems in Northeast Tennessee. I used cluster sampling to select participants. There were 12 districts that participated in the study (9 low density and 3 high density). The study included 100 schools (50 low density schools and 50 high density schools).

**Instrumentation**

I developed a survey instrument to collect data for the study. As part of the survey development process, survey development activities were conducted. The survey instrument was developed using a conceptual framework (see Appendix D) that evolved from best research practices identified and discussed in the literature review. The survey consisted of five dimensions with 45 Likert-style questions, three open-ended questions, and a section for comments. The survey dimensions were: (a) instructional practices [9 questions], (b) ESL strategies [7 questions], (c) principles for building English language learners environments [10
questions], (d) staff development [8 questions], and (e) instructional strategies [7 questions]. In the survey three of the dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, and instructional strategies) overlap because the dimensions were based on research-based strategies developed by different researchers from organizations that focus on the ELL population’s academic achievement. The survey was a paper survey.

Dimension 1 survey questions were based on classroom instructional practices outlined in Classroom Instruction that Works (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001), the findings of National Reading Panel and National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) Standards.

Dimension 2 survey questions were based on Effective Teaching Practices for English Language Learners: Spotlight on Student Success, published by the Laboratory for Student Success, Number 705 (Waxman & Tellez, 2002).

Dimension 3 survey questions were based on principles outlined in Claiming Opportunities: A Handbook for Improving Education for English Language Learners through Comprehensive School Reform, published by the Educational Alliance at Brown University (Coady, 2003).

Dimension 4 survey questions were based on National Staff Development Council Standards for Staff Development.

Dimension 5 survey questions were based on instructional practices outlined in Educating English Language Learners: Implementing Instructional Practices by NCLR (National Council of La Raza) and Education Alliance at Brown University (Vialpando et al, 2005).

The instrument was constructed on a Likert scale with 45 statements and with five possible answers to each questionnaire statement (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree). The survey was validated by a panel of experts before it was used in order to ensure construct and content validity and to make recommendations for improvement. The
survey was based on several frameworks developed by researchers and recognized educational organizations in the field of language acquisition that include research-based practices proven to be effective in the field of ESL and a standards-based school reform environment.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were investigated in this study:

1. *Are there differences in the mean scores for each of the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies) in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?*

   Ho1₁ There are no differences in the mean scores for instructional practices in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

   Ho1₂ There are no differences in the mean scores for ESL strategies in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

   Ho1₃ There are no differences in the mean scores for ELL responsive learning environments in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

   Ho1₄ There are no differences in the mean scores for staff development in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).
Ho1. There are no differences in the mean scores for instructional strategies in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

2. Are there differences in the mean scores for each of the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies) in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

Ho2. There are no differences in the mean scores for ESL instructional practices in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

Ho2. There are no differences in the mean scores for ESL strategies in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

Ho2. There are no differences in the mean scores for ELL responsive learning environments in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

Ho2. There are no differences in the mean scores for staff development in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

Ho2. There are no differences in the mean scores for instructional strategies in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).
3. Are there differences in the mean scores for each of the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies) in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

Ho3₁ There are no differences in the mean scores for instructional practices in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

Ho3₂ There are no differences in the mean scores for ESL strategies in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

Ho3₃ There are no differences in the mean scores for ELL responsive learning environments in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

Ho3₄ There are no differences in the mean scores for staff development in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

Ho3₅ There are no differences in the mean scores for instructional strategies in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

4. Are there differences in the mean scores for the dimension ELL responsive learning environments in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and
all teachers (ESL and regular classroom teachers) as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

Ho41 There are no differences in the mean scores for ELL responsive learning environments in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and all teachers (ESL and regular classroom teachers) as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

5. Are there differences in the mean scores for the dimension staff development in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and all teachers (ESL and regular classroom teachers) as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

Ho51 There are no differences in the mean scores for staff development in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and all teachers (ESL and regular classroom teachers) as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

Data Collection

Prior to the implementation of the study, permission was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of East Tennessee State University (see Appendix E). Additionally, permission was obtained from school systems in order to collect data and use the data for research purposes (see Appendix F).

The data collected were analyzed by the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software program and results reported with the appropriate statistical analysis. The survey was distributed via mail to all low density and high density districts.
**Data Analysis**

Quantitative analysis was used to answer the research questions. Research questions number 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were analyzed using 2-way ANOVA for each dimension and version of the survey. In order to conduct statistical analysis for research questions 1, 2, and 3, five null hypotheses were developed or constructed for each question. From research questions 4 and 5, one null hypothesis was constructed or developed for each. Alpha level of .05 was used when analyzing data.

**Summary**

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology and design, population, instrument, research questions, and procedures used in data collection. The study used quantitative procedures to investigate the level of use of ELL research-based practices in the instruction of ELL students, the areas of instructional practices, ESL strategies, learning environments, staff development, and ELL instructional strategies in the instruction of ELL students in Northeast Tennessee.
CHAPTER 4  
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

According to the American Federation of Teachers, the goal for educators involved in the education of English language learners in any capacity should be to promote excellence in programs for English language learners. The education of English language learners is critical because they are the largest growing student population according to the National Council of La Raza (NCLR, 2006) and as articulated by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT, 2006).

An important factor in the development of research-based programs involves the perceptions and attitudes of teachers and administrators. The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of teachers’ use of English language learners strategies and research-based practices in Northeast Tennessee.

The data for this study were collected using the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey instrument. Data retrieved included mean scores for the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies) of the survey. The study consisted of 172 participants. The demographic profile of the participants is represented in Table 1. The return rate was 20.4% and was about equal for teachers, administrators, and ESL teachers in high density and low density school districts.
Table 1

*Demographic Profile of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators – Low Density</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators – High Density</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers – Low Density</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers – High Density</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers – Low Density</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers – High Density</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>172</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Analysis**

Mean scores for the survey dimensions were calculated for each educational professional. The dimension scores (perceptions and attitudes) ranged from 5 to 1, with 5 being the highest score. The survey results were analyzed to determine teacher perceptions and attitudes in each of the dimensions.

**Research Question 1: ESL and Regular Classroom Teachers**

*Are there differences in the mean scores for each of the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies) in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?*

There are independent variable factors in research question 1, ESL teachers with two levels, high and low density, and regular classroom teachers with two levels, high and low density. The dependent variables are the mean scores of each dimension of the survey. This study used the 2 x 2 ANOVA design characterized by Green and Salkind (2005), the number of levels of ESL teacher and the number of levels of regular classroom teacher.
Ho1. There are no differences in the mean scores for instructional practices in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the instructional practices dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 1 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 2. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density, $F(1,125) = 1.17$, $p = .282$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$, a significant main effect for type of professional educator, $F(1,125) = 10.0$, $p = .002$, partial $\eta^2 = .074$, and no significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,125) = .212$, $p = .646$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA results indicated that ESL teachers had higher mean scores than regular classroom teachers and there was no difference between teachers in high density and low density populations (Table 2). Figure 1 represents the Instructional practices scores of regular and ESL teachers for instructional practice, dimension 1.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Perception Scores of Regular and ESL Teachers for Instructional Practice

There are no differences in the mean scores for ESL strategies in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the ESL strategies dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 2 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 3. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density, $F(1,125) = <.001$, $p = .992$, partial $\eta^2 = <.001$, no significant main effect for type of
professional educator, \( F(1,125) = 3.27, \ p = .073 \), partial \( \eta^2 = .026 \), and no significant main effect for ELL population density, \( F(1,125) = .070, \ p = .792 \), partial \( \eta^2 = .001 \).

The 2 x 2 ANOVA results indicated no significant results; ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers had similar mean scores and there was no difference between teachers in high density and low density populations. Figure 2 represents the ESL Strategies scores of regular and ESL teachers for ESL strategies, dimension 2.

**Table 3**

*Means and Standard Deviations Regular and ESL Teachers for Dimension 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are no differences in the mean scores for ELL responsive learning environments in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL Population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the ELL responsive learning environments dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 3 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 4. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density, $F(1,125) = .496, \; p = .482, \; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .004$, no significant main effect for
type of professional educator, $F(1,125) = 1.03, \ p = .311, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .008$, and no significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,125) = 1.22, \ p = .270, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .010$.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA results indicated no significant results; ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers had comparable mean scores and there was no difference between teachers in high density and low density populations. Figure 3 represents the ELL responsive learning environments scores of regular and ESL teachers for ELL responsive learning environments dimension 3.

Table 4

*Means and Standard Deviations Regular and ESL Teachers for Dimension 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are no differences in the mean scores for staff development in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL Population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the staff development dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 4 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 5. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density,
\( F(1,125) = .635, \ p = .427 \), significant main effect for type of professional educator, \( F(1,125 = 4.49, \ p = .036 \), partial \( \eta^2 = .035 \), and no significant main effect for ELL population density, \( F(1,125) = 1.51, \ p = .220 \), partial \( \eta^2 = .012 \).

The 2 x 2 ANOVA results indicated no significant results; ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers had similar mean scores and there was no difference between teachers in high density and low density populations. Figure 4 represents the staff development scores of regular and ESL teachers for staff development, dimension 4.

Table 5

*Means and Standard Deviations Regular and ESL Teachers for Dimension 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4. Perception Scores of Regular and ESL Teachers for ELL Staff Development.

Ho15 There are no differences in the mean scores for instructional strategies in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL Population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the instructional strategies dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 5 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 6. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density, $F(1,125) = .079$, $p = .779$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$, no significant main effect for type of professional
educator, $F(1,125) = 2.66$, $p = .105$, partial $\eta^2 = .021$, and no significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,125) = .009$, $p = .926$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA results indicated no significant results; ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers had similar mean scores and there was no difference between teachers in high density and low density populations. Figure 5 represents the instructional strategies scores of regular and ESL teachers for instructional strategies, dimension 5.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations Regular and ESL Teachers for Dimension 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5. Perception Scores of Regular and ESL Teachers for Instructional Strategies.

Research Question #2: Administrators and Regular Classroom Teachers

Are there differences in the mean scores for each of the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies) in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

There are two factors in research question 2, administrators with two levels, high and low density, and regular classroom teachers with two levels, high and low density. The dependent variables are the mean scores of each dimension of the survey. According to Green and Salkind (2005), “the design for this study may be described as a 2 x 2 ANOVA” (p. 186), the number of levels of administrator and the number of levels of regular classroom teacher.
There are no differences in the mean scores for instructional practices in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the instructional practices dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 1 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 7. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density, $F(1,129) = .185, p = .668$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$, no significant main effect for type of professional educator, $F(1,129) = .347, p = .557$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$, and no significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,129) = 1.39, p = .240$, partial $\eta^2 = .011$.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA indicated no significant results; administrators and regular classroom teachers had the same mean scores and there was no difference between groups in high density and low density populations. Figure 6 represents the instructional practices scores of administrators and regular classroom teachers for instructional practices, dimension 1.

Table 7

*Means and Standard Deviations Administrators and Regular Classroom Teachers for Dimension 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: The o means that score was 2-4 quartiles from the mean.

Figure 6. Perception Scores of Administrators and Regular Classroom Teachers for Instructional Practice

Ho$_{2_2}$ There are no differences in the mean scores for ESL strategies in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL Population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the ESL strategies dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 2 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 8. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density, $F(1,129) = 2.54$, $p = .113$, partial $\eta^2 = .019$, no significant main effect for type of professional
educator, $F(1,129) = 3.40, \ p = .067$, partial $\eta^2 = .026$, and no significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,129) = 1.68, \ p = .197$, partial $\eta^2 = .013$.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA indicated no significant results; administrators and regular classroom teachers had the same mean scores and there was no difference between groups in high density and low density populations. Figure 7 represents the ESL strategies scores of administrators and regular classroom teachers for instructional practices, dimension 2.

Table 8

*Means and Standard Deviations Administrators and Regular Classroom Teachers in Dimension 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are no differences in the mean scores for ESL responsive learning environments in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the responsive learning environments dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 3 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 9. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density.
density, $F(1,129) = 3.32$, $p = .071$, partial $\eta^2 = .025$, but significant main effect for type of professional educator, $F(1,129) = 4.65$, $p = .033$, partial $\eta^2 = .035$, and significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,129) = 4.97$, $p = .027$, partial $\eta^2 = .037$.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA indicated that administrators had lower mean scores than regular classroom teachers and there was no difference between the groups in high density and low density populations. Figure 8 represents the ELL responsive learning environments scores of administrators and regular classroom teachers for ELL responsive learning environments dimension 3.

Table 9

*Means and Standard Deviations Administrators and Regular Classroom Teachers for Dimension 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 8. Perception Scores of Administrators and Regular Classroom Teachers for ELL Responsive Learning Environments.

Ho24 There are no differences in the mean scores for staff development in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the staff development dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 4 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 10. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density.
density, $F(1,129) = 2.96,\ p = .088$, partial $\eta^2 = .022$, no significant main effect for type of professional educator, $F(1,129) = 2.42,\ p = .122$, partial $\eta^2 = .018$, but significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,129) = 14.54,\ p = <.001$, partial $\eta^2 = .101$.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA indicated that administrators had lower mean scores than regular classroom teachers and there was no difference between the groups in high density and low density populations. Figure 9 represents the staff development scores of administrators and regular classroom teachers for staff development, dimension 4.

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations Administrators and Regular Classroom Teachers for Dimension 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are no differences in the mean scores for instructional strategies in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the instructional strategies dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 5 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 11. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density.
density, $F(1,129) = 3.79, \ p = .054, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .029$, but significant main effect for type of professional educator, $F(1,129) = 4.01, \ p = .047, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .030$, and no significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,129) = 3.12, \ p = .080, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .024$.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA indicated that administrators had higher mean scores than regular classroom teachers and there was no difference between the groups in high density and low density population. Figure 10 represents the instructional strategies scores of administrators and regular classroom teachers for staff development, dimension 5.

Table 11

*Means and Standard Deviations Administrators and Regular Classroom Teachers for Dimension 5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question #3: Administrators and ESL Teachers

Are there differences in the mean scores for each of the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies) in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

There are two factors in research question 3, with two levels, administrators with ESL teachers with two levels, high and low density. The dependent variables are the mean scores of
each dimension of the survey. According to Green and Salkind (2005), “the design for this study may be described as a 2 x 2 ANOVA” (p. 186), the number of levels of administrators and the number of levels of ESL teachers.

Ho31 There are no differences in the mean scores for instructional practices in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the instructional practices dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 1 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 12. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density, $F(1,180) = .384, \ p = .537, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .005$, but significant main effect for type of professional educator, $F(1,180) = 5.79, \ p = .018, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .079$, and no significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,180) = .002, \ p = .964, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = <.001$.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA indicated that administrators had lower mean scores than ESL teachers and there was no difference between groups in high density and low density populations. Figure 11 represents the instructional practice scores of administrators and ESL teachers for instructional practices, dimension 1.
Table 12

Means and Standard Deviations Administrators and ESL Teachers for Dimension 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The o means that score was 2-4 quartiles from the mean.

Figure 11. Perception Scores of Administrators and ESL Teachers for Instructional Practice
There are no differences in the mean scores for ESL strategies in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the ESL strategies dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 2 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 13. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density, $F(1,180) = 1.60$, $p = .209$, partial $\eta^2 = .020$, but significant main effect for type of professional educator, $F(1,180) = 9.24$, $p = .003$, partial $\eta^2 = .104$, and no significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,180) = 1.10$, $p = .298$, partial $\eta^2 = .014$.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA results indicated that administrators had lower mean scores than ESL teachers and there was no difference between groups in high density and low density populations. Figure 12 represents the ESL strategies scores of administrators and ESL teachers for ESL strategies, dimension 2.

Table 13

*Means and Standard Deviations Administrators and ESL Teachers for Dimension 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: The o means that score was 2-4 quartiles from the mean.

Figure 12. Perception Scores of Administrators and ESL Teachers for ESL Strategies

Ho3. There are no differences in the mean scores for ELL responsive learning environments in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL Population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the ELL responsive learning environments dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 3 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 14. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density, $F(1,180) = .975, p = .327$, partial $\eta^2 = .012$, but significant main effect
for type of professional educator, $F(1,180) = 8.01$, $p = .006$, partial $\eta^2 = .091$, and significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,180) = 6.84$, $p = .011$, partial $\eta^2 = .079$.

The $2 \times 2$ ANOVA results indicated that administrators had lower mean scores than ESL teachers and there was no difference between groups in high density and low density populations. Figure 13 represents the ELL responsive environment scores of administrators and ESL teachers for ELL responsive learning environments, dimension 3.

Table 14

*Means and Standard Deviations Administrators and ESL Teachers for Dimension 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are no differences in the mean scores for staff development in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL Population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the staff development dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 4 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 15. The ANOVA indicated a significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density,
$F(1,180) = 4.5, \ p = .037, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .053,$ and significant main effect for type of professional educator, $F(1,180) = 9.75, \ p = .003, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .109,$ and significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,180) = 6.23, \ p = .015, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .072.$

The $2 \times 2$ ANOVA results indicated significant results; administrators had lower mean scores than ESL teachers and there was a difference between groups in high density and low density populations. Figure 14 represents the staff development scores of administrators and ESL teachers for staff development, dimension 4.

Table 15

*Means and Standard Deviations Administrators and ESL Teachers for Dimension 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: The o means that score was 2-4 quartiles from the mean.

*Figure 14.* Perception Scores of Administrators and ESL Teachers for ELL Staff Development.

**Ho3** There are no differences in the mean scores for instructional strategies in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL Population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the instructional strategies dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 5 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 16. The ANOVA indicated
no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density, $F(1,180) = 1.76$, $p = .188$, partial $\eta^2 = .022$, no significant main effect for type of professional educator, $F(1,180) = .115$, $p = .736$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$, and no significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,180) = 2.60$, $p = .111$, partial $\eta^2 = .032$.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA results indicated that administrators had similar mean scores to ESL teachers and there was no difference between groups in high density and low density populations. Figure 15 represents the instructional strategies scores of administrators and ESL teachers for instructional strategies, dimension 5.

Table 16
Means and Standard Deviations Administrators and ESL Teachers for Dimension 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: The o means that score was 2-4 quartiles from the mean.

Figure 15. Perception Scores of Administrators and ESL Teachers for Instructional Strategies.

Research Question #4: Administrators and All Teachers

Are there differences in the mean scores for the dimension ELL responsive learning environments in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and all teachers (ESL and regular classroom teachers) as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

There are two factors in research question 4, with two levels, administrators and all teachers with two levels, high and low density. The dependent variables are the mean scores of dimension 3. According to Green and Salkind (2005), “the design for this study may be
described as a 2 x 2 ANOVA” (p. 186), the number of levels of administrators and the number of levels of all teachers.

Ho4 There are no differences in the mean scores for ELL responsive learning environments in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and all teachers (ESL and regular classroom teachers) as a function of ELL Population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the ELL responsive learning environments dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 3 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 17. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density, $F(1,169) = 3.0$, $p = .085$, partial $\eta^2 = .017$, but significant main effect for type of professional educator, $F(1,169) = 7.13$, $p = .008$, partial $\eta^2 = .040$, and significant main effect for ELL population density, $F(1,169) = .698$, $p = .009$, partial $\eta^2 = .040$.

The 2 x 2 ANOVA indicated that administrators had lower mean scores than all teachers (ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers) and there was no difference between groups in high density and low density populations. Figure 16 represents the ELL responsive learning environment scores of administrators and all teachers for ELL responsive learning environments.
Table 17

Means and Standard Deviations Administrators and ESL Teachers for Dimension 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The o means that score was 2-4 quartiles from the mean.

Figure 16. Perception Scores of Administrators and All Teachers for ELL Responsive Learning Environments.
Research Question #5: Administrators and All Teachers

Are there differences in the mean scores for the dimension staff development in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and all teachers (ESL and regular classroom teachers) as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

There are two factors in research question 5, with two levels, administrators and all teachers with two levels, high and low density. The dependent variables are the mean scores of dimension 4. According to Green and Salkind (2005), “the design for this study may be described as a 2 x 2 ANOVA” (p. 186), the number of levels of administrators and the number of levels of all teachers.

Ho51 There are no differences in the mean scores for staff development in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and all teachers (ESL and regular classroom teachers) as a function of ELL Population density (high and low density).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of ELL population density and type of professional educator on mean scores of the staff development dimension of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey. The means and standard deviations for the scores of dimension 4 as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 16. The ANOVA indicated significant interaction between the type of professional educator and the ELL population density, \( F(1,169) = 4.28, \ p = .040, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .025 \), and significant main effect for type of professional educator, \( F(1,169) = 5.47, \ p = .021, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .031 \), and significant main effect for ELL population density, \( F(1,169) = 13.77, \ p = <.001, \ \text{partial } \eta^2 = .075 \).

The 2 x 2 ANOVA indicated that administrators had lower mean scores than all teachers (ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers) and there was a difference between the groups in
high density and low density populations. Figure 17 represents the staff development scores of administrators and all teachers for staff development.

Table 18

*Means and Standard Deviations for Administrators and All Teachers for Dimension 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Teachers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

The analyses of the data were presented in Chapter 4. The data were collected from 12 school systems in Northeast Tennessee, surveying administrators, regular classroom teachers, and ESL teachers from low and high ELL population density schools. The ELL Research-Based Practices Survey was used as the scoring instrument, using the score of each of the five dimensions of each type of educator participating in the study. Professional educators participating in the study scored each dimension with a score of 1-5, with 5 being the highest. The score for each dimension was entered as variables for each professional educator. The scores were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Appendix G represents a summary of the findings.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the perception of level of use of English as a second or subsequent language (ESL) strategies and research-based practices in the instruction of English language learner students in Northeast Tennessee. The researcher sought to ascertain the perceptions of educators in Northeast Tennessee in regard to the instruction of ELL students and to determine to what level these educators included ESL strategies and ESL research-based practices when teaching English language learners.

A survey instrument was used to collect the data. The survey instrument was developed using a framework based on published research on proven practices identified and delineated in the literature review. The survey consisted of 45 questions and encompassed five dimensions: (a) instructional practices, (b) ESL strategies, (c) principles for building English language learners responsive learning environments, (d) staff development, and (e) instructional strategies.

The study’s participants consisted of regular classroom teachers, English as a second language teachers, and principals from districts identified as ELL low density districts and ELL high density. Findings from the Research-Based Practices Survey (Teacher version and Administrator version) were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. To answer the five research questions and the 17 null hypotheses, 2 x 2 way ANOVAS were used to contrast teacher and administrator groups as a function of ELL density. Eight hundred and forty surveys were mailed to study participants in 12 districts (ELL low density and ELL high density) The survey return rate for the study was 20.4%.

Summary of Findings

This section provides a summary of the findings by research question followed by a summary of findings by dimensions of the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey.
Research Question 1

*Are there differences in the mean scores for each of the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies) in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?*

Significant differences were found between regular teachers and ESL teachers, such that ESL teachers scored significantly higher in individual practices and in staff development. Scores from high and low ESL density environments were similar. No significant interactions were found.

Research Question 2

*Are there differences in the mean scores for each of the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies) in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?*

Significant differences were found between administrators and regular teachers, such that administrators scored higher in responsive learning environments than regular teachers and regular teachers scored higher than administrators in instructional strategies. Higher ESL density scores were significantly higher than low ESL density scores in staff development and in responsive learning environments. No statistically significant profession by density interactions were identified.

Research Question 3

*Are there differences in the mean scores for each of the five dimensions (instructional practices, ESL strategies, ELL responsive learning environments, staff development, and instructional strategies) in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?*
strategies) in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and ESL teachers as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?

ESL teachers scored significantly higher than administrators in instructional practices, ESL strategies, responsive learning environments, and in staff development. High ESL density scores were significantly higher than low ESL density scores in responsive learning environments, and in staff development. There was a statistically significant interaction in staff development, such that administrators in low density environments scored lower than ESL teachers and administrators in high density environments on staff development. The administrators in low density districts responded that they disagree or strongly disagree at a rate of 59.1% with the survey statement that staff development is data driven so it will have lasting impact on the academic achievement of ELL students, while the administrators in high density districts responded at a rate of 28.19%. Present findings support the contention of Coady et al. (2003), that instruction should be differentiated based upon students’ specific needs and strengths. Achievement data of a school or district need to be taken into account in designing schools’ reform efforts and staff development objectives for developing teacher capacity (Coady et al., 2003).

Most of the participants in the present study disagreed that staff development was data driven, revealing the need to use data from “standardized tests, district made tests, student work samples, portfolios and other sources to provide important input in the selection of district improvement goals and provide focus for staff development efforts” (NSDC, 2003, p. 25)

Research Question 4
Are there differences in the mean scores for the dimension ELL responsive learning environments in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and all teachers (ESL and regular classroom teachers) as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?
Overall, teachers scored significantly higher than administrators in responsive learning environments. Further, high ESL density scores were significantly higher than low ESL density scores in responsive learning environments.

Research Question 5

*Are there differences in the mean scores for the dimension staff development in the ELL Research-Based Practices Survey between administrators and all teachers (ESL and regular classroom teachers) as a function of ELL population density (high and low density)?*

Overall, teachers scored significantly higher than administrators in instructional strategies. Further, high ESL density scores were significantly higher than low ESL density scores. There was a significant interaction such that high ESL density scores were similar between administrators and teachers but that administrators in low ESL density environments scored lower in instructional strategies.

Instructional Practices (Dimension 1)

The finding of similar scores between groups for instructional practices was consistent with the views of the National Council of Teachers of English, which recognizes that all teachers of English language learners must have specialized content knowledge and skills in the area of ELL methodology in order to effectively teach and engage ELL students. The study revealed a significant effect for type of professional that supports the pedagogical position held by the National Council of Teachers that teachers who instruct students with linguistically diverse needs must be provided with staff development support and encouraged to use effective research-based practices in order to successfully teach ELL students (NCTE, 2006).

Present findings were consistent with survey research conducted by the Education Department’s National Center for Education Statistics (1998) dealing with teacher quality that found that only one in five teachers reported that they felt “very well prepared” to work in a
modern classroom. Further, only 20% said they were confident in working with students from diverse backgrounds with limited English proficiency or with disabilities. Furthermore, the National Staff Development Association schools and staffing survey found:

The number of English language learners in U.S. schools has only increased since the survey was conducted, meaning more English language learners in more classrooms where teachers have not received adequate training. (Hill & Flynn, 2008, p. 46)

ESL Strategies (Dimension 2)

Overall high scores in ESL strategies suggest that teachers who participated in the study may have taken on the challenge of educating English language learners by acquiring knowledge in the use of ESL strategies. Further, these findings are in agreement with the notion that teachers presently face a great challenge because, as they look into their classrooms, what they see is unlike the classroom they experienced as children in school (Flores, 1996). The high mean score for both groups in the ESL strategies dimension was in agreement with Garcia’s (2000) contention that in school districts across the United States providing an education for immigrant and ethnic minority students was a foremost concern. Garcia (2000) points out that:

In order to educate them, we must first educate ourselves about who they are and what they need in order to succeed. Thinking differently involves viewing these students in new ways that may contradict conventional notions, and coming to a new set of realizations. (p. 10)

Educators who are working with English language learners may be realizing that in order for these students to succeed educators need to acquire new understandings with regard to ELL students, be more cognizant of their instructional needs, and use effective strategies to ensure ELL students’ academic success in all content areas, especially literacy, in order to promote their mastery of decoding skills in English, possibly through the acquisition of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) (Cummins, 1984).
The lower mean scores for low density professional groups coincides with the notion that “professional development in working with ELL students in the mainstream classroom is particularly needed in rural communities and small cities” (Walker, Shafer, & Liams, 2004, p. 132). Walker et al. contend that classroom teachers who have not received professional development in the area of English as a second language are besieged when they have to instruct an ELL student. They have no idea how to instruct ELL students effectively and no idea where to begin (Walker et al., 2004).

Present findings are in agreement with a study conducted at the University of Nebraska which studies teacher attitudes toward including ELL students in mainstream classrooms (Reeves, 2006). The Reeves study revealed that a majority of the teachers who participated in the study reported that they did not feel trained to work with ELL students. Further, the teachers had misconceptions regarding how a second language is acquired. Over 90% of survey participants had not received training to work with ELL students. Further, even though they felt unprepared about working with ELLs the survey respondents were “ambivalent” about receiving professional development.

Reeves (2006) stated that one reason teachers may have for not wanting to participate could be that

. . . they feel they do not need professional development to work with ELL students, that they believe that is primarily the responsibility of the ELL teacher to educate ELL students and that they are tired of “one shot” professional development that does not sustain change and educational reform. (p. 138)

**Principles for Building Responsive Learning Environments (Dimension 3)**

The finding of lower scores in the low density groups aligns with The Education Alliance at Brown University framework to promote the success of ELL students that uses a series of principles to guarantee responsive learning environments which provide differentiated instruction that imparts equal access and leads to achievement (Coady et al., 2003).
Low density scores suggest the need for contemporary efforts to conduct school reform and accentuate the necessity to advance the quality of education that students receive and the achievement of all students. The outcome of the study supports the view held by Coady et al. (2003), the comprehensive reform endeavors to enhance schooling by means of implementing measures that promote the use of “integrated, well-aligned, school wide changes in instruction, assessment, curriculum, classroom management, school governance, professional development, technical assistance, and community participation” (p. 1).

Staff Development (Dimension 4)

The significant differences found for staff development between administrators and all teachers that it is essential to study the teachers’ perceptions of ELL education and to develop potential solutions to overcome the greatest challenges as reported in Batt’s 2008 study conducted in Idaho. This study revealed that skilled teachers in the area of language acquisition and the use of effective ELL instructional strategies are hard to hire due to a limited number of teachers that are certified in ESL.

The findings of lower mean scores in low density participants concurs with the idea that teachers believed that “not all educators who work with ELLs in their schools were qualified to work with linguistic minority students” (Batt, 2008, p. 4). Also, the study participants expressed that the “lack of knowledge colleagues had about educating ELLs” (Batt, 2008, p. 4) was one of their biggest challenges. Lastly, the survey results revealed that a major problem was that in schools “mainstream teachers and administrators do not understand ELL needs and how to teach them” (Batt, 2008, p. 4).

The results of the study support the position articulated by the Education Alliance at Brown University. Also, the administrators in low density districts responded that they disagree or strongly disagree that the instructional staff in their districts had access to mentoring and coaching in English as a second language strategies and instructional practices at a rate of
63.64%; while the administrators in high density responded at a rate of 23.73%. The Education Alliance at Brown University developed a framework to promote the success of ELL students that uses a series of principles to guarantee responsive learning environments that provide differentiated instruction that imparts equal access and leads to achievement (Coady et al., 2003). One of the principles discussed in the framework was that teachers need to be properly prepared and willing to teach English language learners as mentioned in Claiming Opportunities: A Handbook for Improving Education for English Language Learners through Comprehensive School Reform (Coady, 2003).

Lopez (2006), in a presentation at the National Association of Bilingual Educators Conference about a study called When Schools Undergo Radical Changes in Student Demographics, explained the effects of immigrant issues in a group of Texas schools that had undergone demographic transformation of ELL population due to hurricane Katrina. The researcher reported that a change in demographics does not imply that a school will experience negative or positive changes in accountability scores or academic achievement. However, he reported that the school’s learning capacity does predict how well it will perform when radical changes in ELL student population enrollment occur.

The recent findings support the idea of using instructional coaches and mentoring in order to promote the effectiveness of educators who work with English language learners and increase their student achievement in the content. School districts across the nation should start using instructional coaches for educators who work with English language learners. The use of instructional coaches can increase the effectiveness of ESL program models and infuse the use of research-based practices in classroom instruction. This practice increases student achievement in the content area and accelerates the development of language proficiency.

This study validates the statement of Kinhead (2007), “Coaches partner with principal, teachers, and specialists to support instructional improvement” (p. 7). Further, the findings affirm the literature review position that “instructional coaches work to improve teachers’ use of
instructional strategies and the application of best practices” (Kinhead, p. 7). Also, Kinhead stated that using coaches “creates opportunities for professional development for teachers and principals modeled on the standards-based reform” (Kinhead, p. 8). Lastly, Kinhead mentioned that “coaches work to develop the capacity of teachers to implement research-based instruction” (Kinhead, p. 8) to increase student achievement and meet the learning needs of students with diverse linguistic backgrounds using research-based practices. Educational professionals who work with English language learners need mentoring and the opportunity to learn about research-based practices in the area of ESL instruction, language acquisition process, and how to teach content to English language learners.

Teachers of ELL students need instructional coaches. The perception or belief reported that professional development in this area has been neglected by school districts has been asserted and reaffirmed through this study (Futrell et al., 2003; Hill & Flynn, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Villegas and Lucas (2002) stated that educators must become culturally responsive and see themselves as change agents in order to make schools more equitable. In addition to the use of coaches, teachers of linguistically diverse students need to participate in professional learning communities as recommended by the National Staff Development Council standards. According to Kinhead (2007), “through focused reflection and dialogue, and by working within the context of daily classroom practices, coaches draw out individual potential, eliciting greater growth in the individual/team that could not be accomplished by the teacher alone” (p. 10).

According to Kinhead (2007), coaching activities can be tailored to meet the specific needs of a district based on student achievement data. Districts can choose to be involved in activities that promote teacher implementation of best practices and instructional strategies, promote reflection of teaching practices, encourage the use of performance data to assess student progress and drive the instructional cycle, support differentiated instruction for students of varying levels of proficiency, and culturally responsive teaching practices. Villegas and Lucas (2002) stated that, “preparing teachers to teach children of diverse racial, ethnic, social class, and
language background is a pressing issue in teacher’s education today and will continue to be for some time to come” (p. 20).

There were significant differences found in the perceptions and attitudes of English as a second language staff development in high density and low density districts. The English as a second language teachers in low density districts responded that they disagree or strongly disagree that the instructional staff in their districts participated in sustained and rigorous professional staff development that improves educators’ content knowledge and provides them with research-based instructional practices and strategies at a rate of 40%, while the English as a second language teachers in high density districts responded at a rate of 20%.

The present findings suggest that it is essential that districts build teacher capacity by addressing the professional development needs of all teachers that work with ELL students (Gebhard & Willett, 2008). The results of this study support the notion reported in the literature review that teachers who work with ELL students must be provided with staff development support and encouraged to use effective research-based practices in order to successfully instruct English language learners (NCTE, 2006).

In addition, the present study revealed differences in the perceptions and attitudes of ESL teachers in high density and low density districts. The teachers in low density districts responded that they disagree or strongly disagree that the school provides staff with opportunities to deepen their understanding and responsiveness to racial, cultural, and other differences in students’ experiences and learning at a rate of 5%, while the English as a second language teachers in high density districts responded at a rate of 25%.

The study findings bring to the forefront the need to promote culturally responsive teaching in Northeast Tennessee as discussed in the literature review. The researchers Waxman and Tellez (2002) identified culturally responsive teaching as an effective practice that increases student academic achievement. Districts must deepen the culture competence of educators who
work with English language learners in order to be successful in educating English language
learners in the acquisition of English as a second language or subsequent language.

Participating teachers in low density districts responded that they agree or strongly agree
that the instructional staff in their districts participates in sustained and rigorous professional
staff development that improves educators’ content knowledge and provides them with research-
based instructional practices and strategies at a rate of 27.89% while the administrators in high
density districts responded at a rate of 46.67%. The results of the study revealed and corroborate
the need to increase educators’ content knowledge and the need to increase knowledge of
research-based practices due to the rapid increase in enrollment of the ELL population in
Northeast Tennessee. Present findings are in concurrence with the literature review conclusions
that are outlined in the Education Week report called Quality Counts 2009: Portrait of a
Population, How English Language Learners Are Putting Schools to the Test. The phenomenon
of the growing population of English language learners in the state of Tennessee is a trend that
exists in the states located in the Southeast and Midwest regions of the nation. In the era of
NCLB and accountability, “today’s public schools are increasingly characterized by cultural and
linguistic diversity” (Lessow-Hurley, 2003, p. 10).

The achievement gap between English language learners and the general population is
significant and 25% of all students classified as English language learners are not making
progress in the acquisition of English as a second language or a subsequent language (Lessow-
Hurley, 2003). According to Lessow-Hurley, this challenge must be confronted by schools by
building “bridges between cultures, helping all students develop academically and equally” (p.
12). Further, the literature review explained that research supports the belief that “professional
educators agree that every teacher must develop specialized awareness, skills and knowledge to
work in culturally diverse settings” (Lessow-Hurley, p. 54).
Furthermore, the study findings revealed that there were differences in the perceptions and attitudes of regular classroom teachers. The teachers in low density districts responded at a rate of 34.1% that they agree or strongly agree with the survey statement that staff development is data driven so that it will have lasting impact on the academic achievement of ELL students. However, the teachers in high density districts responded at a rate of 66.67%, which indicates a significant difference in regard to the staff development statement. The findings support the belief stated in the literature review and belief held by the National Staff Development Council that “staff development that improves the learning of all students uses disaggregated data” (NSDC, 2003, p. 25). Further, NSDC highlighted the importance of using student data to guide the learning of educators who work with English language learners by using the data to “determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and to help sustain continuous improvement” (NSCD, 2003, p. 25).

Instructional Strategies (Dimension 5)

The findings of the present study are supportive of the notion that restructuring schools to function effectively to educate all students as well as linguistically diverse students and to bring about productive change takes time (Temple, 1996). Further, Temple states that the essentials that promote change are not accomplished without difficulty, or at once, because constructing a school culture that has the capacity to “collaborate together using teacher inquiry and reflections as vehicles for instruction” requires a significant amount of time and a change in paradigm (Temple, p. 4). Change is a long-term process that can be disorganized and continuing (Fullan, 1991).

The study findings support argument that the research done in exemplary schools makes it obvious that LEP students can be taught and learn taxing academic content in language arts while they are acquiring the English language by innovating organizational structures that provide explicit benefits to English language learners by constructing a culture of acceptance and
a mission and vision that includes all the students within the school (Nelson, 1996). Lastly, the study supports the perception held by Muirhead (2000) that the challenge to meet the needs of English language learners has two dimensions in that schools must instruct students in English and, at the same time, teach those students the knowledge-skills necessary to acquire content knowledge. As a result, Muirhead states, in order to be feasible and effectual, comprehensive school reform needs to integrate all the facets of a school, commencing with curriculum and instruction, school management, and organization; and it needs to satisfy the instructional and language acquisition needs of all students. Further, Muirhead mentions the plan must address the special needs of linguistically diverse students and outline the specific strategies to be used in order to empower students to acquire the knowledge to satisfy the exigent requirements of academic content, performance, and academic standards.

Density

Density was a significant effect factor for Staff Development (Dimension 4) and Responsive Learning Environments (Dimension 3) in research question 2, 3, 4, and 5. The high density groups mean scores were higher across research questions 2, 3, 4, and 5 when compared to the low density groups. However, the mean score of the teachers in low density school districts was usually within a close numerical range or equal. But, the mean scores for administrators in low density school districts were consistently the lowest across research questions 2, 3, and 4 and for Staff Development (Dimension 4) and Responsive Learning Environments (Dimension 3). Also, the actual mean scores for administrators in low density school districts were significantly lower across research question 2, 3, 4, and 5 for Staff Development and Responsive Learning Environments.

The findings suggest that administrators in low density school districts need training in the areas of English as a Second Language and Responsive Learning Environments for English language learners. The data suggest that administrators in districts with low density ELL
students need to be more informed instructional leaders in order to facilitate a more effective model for English language instruction and provide instructional leadership.

**Conclusions**

The following conclusions are based upon findings of the research conducted and need to be taken into consideration in the instruction of ELL students in Northeast Tennessee.

1. According to the findings of the survey, schools need to incorporate the use of data to design staff development that increases teacher capacity to teach English language learners and empowers educators of ELL students to meet the students’ specific needs and strengths in order to promote the acquisition of English as a second or subsequent language and the academic achievement of ELL students in the content area.

2. The results of the study indicate that districts participating in the survey need to ensure that the learning environments for ELL students guarantee students responsive learning environments. Appropriate learning environments would impart equal access to quality learning.

3. In light of the current influx of ELL students and the future demographic transformations predicted for ELL population, school administrators need to improve schools’ learning capacity and teachers’ capacity in regard to the instruction of ELL students.

4. This study shows that professional development in the area of ESL has been neglected.

5. The study confirms that the districts in Northeast Tennessee must focus on developing cultural competence, culturally responsive teaching, and parent involvement in order to increase student achievement by preparing teachers to teach children who are linguistically and culturally diverse.
Lastly, the study brings to the forefront the need for advocacy on the part of educators of ELL students. Educators should lobby for legislation laws that allow for the use of programs that have been proven to be more effective in the field of language acquisition. These programs include dual immersion programs and Sheltered English instruction. They should also seek to abolish the English only law which promotes a subtractive approach to teaching English as a second or subsequent language.

Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendations are made toward increasing the academic achievement of English language learners and the acquisition of English as a second or subsequent language:

1. Design professional staff development for faculty involved in the instruction of English language learners that creates learning communities that focus on the learning needs of English language learners, develops goals for student achievement based on data and increases teacher capacity.

2. Use learning communities to develop cultural competence for teachers to assist diverse students in succeeding academically and acquire English language proficiency.

3. Provide staff development that supports educators’ learning of teaching methods designed to help diverse students succeed academically and acquire English as a second language.

4. It is recommended that districts focus on improving the communication process with ELL parents by identifying and removing barriers that impede effective communication between school and families.
Recommendations for Future Study

1. It is recommended that a study be conducted to determine how ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers are supporting the academic achievement of English language learners in the content area.

2. It is recommended that a study be conducted to determine how regular classroom teachers are modifying classroom instruction for English language learners.

3. A study should be conducted to determine how ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers collaborate in order to meet the educational needs of English language learners in order to promote language acquisition and academic achievement.

4. A study should be conducted to examine how English language learners are being instructed in the areas of literacy, vocabulary development, and comprehension in regard to the acquisition of Cognitive/Academic language proficiency (CALP).

5. Conduct a study to determine the level of ELL parental involvement in school activities and the barriers that limit involvement.

6. A study should be conducted to establish what types of formative assessments are being used to drive the instruction of ELL students and to determine to what extent instruction is data driven.

7. The present study should be replicated using a qualitative design, survey instruments, teacher interviews, parent interviews, and classroom observations.


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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Research-Based Practices Survey
Teacher Survey

Dimension 1 – Instructional Practices

Please answer the following questions about your instructional practices with English language learners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Practices</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- I use non-linguistic representations in my classroom (pictographs, graphic representations, physical models, drawing pictures, mind movies, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2- I use cues, questions, and advance organizers in my classroom.</td>
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<td>3- I use cooperative learning strategies in my classroom.</td>
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<td>4- I teach summarizing and note-taking techniques.</td>
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<td>5- I reinforce student effort and provide recognition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6- My ELL students are involved in generating hypothesis and testing hypothesis.</td>
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<td>7- I have my students make text-to-text, text-to-world, and text-to-self connections.</td>
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<td>8- I require ELL students to identify similarities and differences in the content they are learning.</td>
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<td>9- I consider cultural differences in the instruction of content.</td>
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</table>

*The survey questions on Area 1 are based on classroom instructional practices outlined in Classroom Instruction that Works (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001), the findings of National Reading Panel and National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) Standards. (National Council of Teachers of English, English Arts Standards, Standards on the web at http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/1108.46.htm)
Dimension 2 – ESL Strategies

Please answer the following questions about ESL strategies that are used in your classroom with English language learners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESL Strategies</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- I use collaborative learning communities.</td>
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<td>2- I use multiple representations in my classroom instruction.</td>
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<td>3- I use instructional conversation/dialogue.</td>
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<td>4- I build on prior knowledge.</td>
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<td>5- I practice culturally responsive teaching.</td>
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<td>6- I provide cognitively guided language instruction.</td>
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<td>7- ELL students have access to technology enriched-instruction in my classroom.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*The survey questions on Area 2 are based on Effective Teaching Practices for English Language Learners. Spotlight on Student Success published by the Laboratory for Student Success Number 705. (Waxman, H. C., & Tellez, K., 2002)*
Dimension 3 – Principles for Building an ELL – Responsive Learning Environment

Please answer the following questions regarding Responsive Learning Environments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Practices</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- School leaders, administrators, and educators recognize that educating English language learners is the responsibility of the entire school staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2- ELL learners are most successful when educators recognize the heterogeneity of the student population that is collectively labeled as “ELL” and are able to vary their responses to needs of different learners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3- The school climate and general practice reinforce the principle that students’ languages and cultures are resources for further learning.</td>
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<td>4- There are strong and seamless links connecting home, school, and community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5- English language learners have equitable access to school resources and programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6- Teachers have high expectations of English language learners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7- Language and literacy are infused throughout the educational process, including curriculum and instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8- Teachers are properly prepared to teach English language learners.</td>
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<td>9- Teachers are willing to teach English language learners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10- Assessment is authentic, credible to learners and instructors, and takes into account first- and second-language acquisition literacy development.</td>
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*The questions on this part of the survey are based on principles outlined in Claiming Opportunities: A Handbook for Improving Education for English Language Learners through Comprehensive School Reform published by the Educational Alliance at Brown University (Coady, 2003).*
Dimension 4 – Staff Development

Please answer the following questions regarding professional staff development:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Development</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Instructional staff participates in sustained &amp; rigorous professional staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>development that improves educators’ content knowledge and provides them with</td>
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<tr>
<td>research-based ESL instructional practices and strategies.</td>
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<td>2- Instructional staff has access to mentoring and coaching in ESL instructional</td>
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<td>practices and strategies.</td>
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<td>3- Staff development provides educators with the knowledge and skills to</td>
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<td>collaborate about ESL research-based practices.</td>
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<td>4- Professional development results in improved learning and research-based</td>
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<td>instruction for ELL students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5- Staff development supports educators’ learning of teaching methods designed to</td>
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<tr>
<td>help diverse students succeed academically and acquire English language proficiency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6- The school provides staff with opportunities to deepen their understanding and</td>
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<tr>
<td>responsiveness to racial, cultural, and other differences in students’</td>
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<tr>
<td>experiences and learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7- The district provides resources to support adult learning and collaboration in</td>
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<tr>
<td>the area of ESL instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8- Staff development is data driven so that it will have lasting impact on the</td>
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<tr>
<td>academic achievement of ELL students.</td>
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</table>

*The survey questions on Area 4 are based on NSDC Standards for Staff Development that can be found at [http://www.nscd.org/Standards/index.cfm](http://www.nscd.org/Standards/index.cfm).
Dimension 5 – Instructional Strategies

Please answer the following questions regarding instructional strategies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESL Strategies</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- I use dialogue journals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2- I use learning logs to help students determine concepts they have learned and to help students synthesize what they have learned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3- I use literature circles to help students synthesize what they have learned, make connections, and develop questioning skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4- I use creative innovations from pattern books and repetitive songs to ease students into writing by providing a model and template.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5- I use the language experience approach to help students make connections between oral and written language, ease students into writing, and to provide students with meaningful material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6- I use the Cloze procedure to activate prior knowledge in order to develop strategies for deciphering unfamiliar words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7- I use graphic organizers in my classroom to help students learn how to use graphic organizers as a comprehension and thinking tool.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Survey questions on area 5 of the survey are based on instructional practices outlined in Educating English Language Learners: Implementing Instructional Practices by NCLR (National Council of La Raza, 2005) & Education Alliance at Brown University.*
Final Questions:

1. Do you feel prepared to work with students from diverse backgrounds with limited English proficiency?

2. Do you feel confident working with students from diverse backgrounds with limited English proficiency?

3. What training would be most beneficial to instructional staff in your school/district in improving competencies with English Language Learners?

Comments:
APPENDIX B
Research-Based Practices Survey
Administrator Survey

Dimension 1 – Instructional Practices

Please answer the following questions about instructional practices with English language learners in your school or district:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Practices</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Teachers use non-linguistic representations in my classroom (pictographs, graphic representations, physical models, drawing pictures, mind movies, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2- Teachers use cues, questions, and advance organizers in my classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3- Teachers use cooperative learning strategies in my classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4- Teachers teach summarizing and note-taking techniques.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5- Teachers reinforce student effort and provide recognition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6- ELL students are involved in generating hypothesis and testing hypothesis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7- Teachers have students make text-to-text, text-to-world, and text-to-self connections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8- Teachers require ELL students to identify similarities and differences in the content they are learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9- Teachers consider cultural differences in the instruction of content.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*The survey questions on Area 1 are based on classroom instructional practices outlined in Classroom Instruction that Works (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001), the findings of National Reading Panel and National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) Standards. (National Council of Teachers of English, English Arts Standards, Standards on the web at [http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/1108.46.htm](http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/1108.46.htm))
### Dimension 2 – ESL Strategies

Please answer the following questions about ESL strategies that are used in your school or district with English language learners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESL Strategies</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Teachers use collaborative learning communities.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2- Teachers use multiple representations in classroom instruction.</td>
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<td>3- Teachers instructional conversation/dialogue.</td>
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<td>4- Teachers build on prior knowledge.</td>
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<td>5- Teachers practice culturally responsive teaching.</td>
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<td>6- Teachers provide cognitively guided language instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7- ELL students have access to technology enriched-instruction in classrooms.</td>
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</table>

*The survey questions on Area 2 are based on Effective Teaching Practices for English Language Learners. Spotlight on Student Success published by the Laboratory for Student Success Number 705. (Waxman, H. C., & Tellez, K., 2002)*
Dimension 3 – Principles for Building an ELL – Responsive Learning Environment

Please answer the following questions regarding Responsive Learning Environments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles Learning Environment</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- School leaders, administrators, and educators recognize that educating English language learners is the responsibility of the entire school staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2- ELL learners are most successful when educators recognize the heterogeneity of the student population that is collectively labeled as “ELL” and are able to vary their responses to needs of different learners.</td>
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<td>3- The school climate and general practice reinforce the principle that students’ languages and cultures are resources for further learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4- There are strong and seamless links connecting home, school, and community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5- English language learners have equitable access to school resources and programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6- Teachers have high expectations of English language learners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7- Language and literacy are infused throughout the educational process, including curriculum and instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8- Teachers are properly prepared to teach English language learners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9- Teachers are willing to teach English language learners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10- Assessment is authentic, credible to learners and instructors, and takes into account first- and second-language acquisition literacy development.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*The questions on this part of the survey are based on principles outlined in Claiming Opportunities: A Handbook for Improving Education for English Language Learners through Comprehensive School Reform published by the Educational Alliance at Brown University (Coady, 2003).*
Dimension 4 – Staff Development

Please answer the following questions regarding professional staff development:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Development</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Instructional staff participates in sustained &amp; rigorous professional staff development that improves educators’ content knowledge and provides them with research-based ESL instructional practices and strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2- Instructional staff has access to mentoring and coaching in ESL instructional practices and strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3- Staff development provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate about ESL research-based practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4- Professional development results in improved learning and research-based instruction for ELL students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5- Staff development supports educators’ learning of teaching methods designed to help diverse students succeed academically and acquire English language proficiency.</td>
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<td>6- The school provides staff with opportunities to deepen their understanding and responsiveness to racial, cultural, and other differences in students’ experiences and learning.</td>
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<td>7- The district provides resources to support adult learning and collaboration in the area of ESL instruction.</td>
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<td>8- Staff development is data driven so that it will have lasting impact on the academic achievement of ELL students.</td>
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</table>

*The survey questions on Area 4 are based on NSDC Standards for Staff Development that can be found at [http://www.nscd.org/Standards/index.cfm](http://www.nscd.org/Standards/index.cfm).*
Dimension 5 – Instructional Strategies

Please answer the following questions regarding instructional strategies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Strategies</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Teachers use dialogue journals.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2- Teachers use learning logs to help students determine concepts they have learned and to help students synthesize what they have learned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3- Teachers use literature circles to help students synthesize what they have learned, make connections, and develop questioning skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4- Teachers use creative innovations from pattern books and repetitive songs to ease students into writing by providing a model and template.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5- Teachers use the language experience approach to help students make connections between oral and written language, ease students into writing, and to provide students with meaningful material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6- Teachers use the Cloze procedure to activate prior knowledge in order to develop strategies for deciphering unfamiliar words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7- Teachers use graphic organizers in my classroom to help students learn how to use graphic organizers as a comprehension and thinking tool.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Survey questions on area 5 of the survey are based on instructional practices outlined in Educating English Language Learners: Implementing Instructional Practices by NCLR (National Council of La Raza, 2005) & Education Alliance at Brown University.*
Final Questions:

1. In your opinion, is the instructional staff in your school or district prepared to work with students from diverse backgrounds with limited English proficiency?

2. In your opinion, does the instructional staff in your school or district feel confident working with students from diverse backgrounds with limited English proficiency?

3. What training would be most beneficial to instructional staff in your school/district in improving competencies with English Language Learners?

Comments:
APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Survey Cover Letter

11-20-08

Dear Participant:

My name is Marisol Hernandez, and I am a graduate student at East Tennessee State University. I am working on my educational doctorate in school administration. In order to finish my studies, I need to complete a research project. The name of my research study is Perceptions of Teacher’s Use of English Language Learners Strategies and Research-Based Practices in Northeast Tennessee.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the level of use of ESL strategies and research-based practices in the instruction of ELL students in Northeast Tennessee. The study seeks to ascertain the perceptions of educators in Northeast Tennessee about teaching practices and beliefs in regard to the instruction of ELL students and to determine to what level they include ESL strategies and ESL research-based practices when teaching ELL students.

I would like to give a brief survey questionnaire to educational professionals (teachers and administrators) who work with the ELL population in North East Tennessee. It should only take about 15 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions about instructional practices. Since the project deals with the use of ESL strategies and research-based practices used in your school or classroom, it may cause some minor stress. However, you may also feel better that you have the opportunity to express yourselves about ELL instructional practices. This study may provide benefit by providing more information on perceptions of teachers’ use of English language learners strategies and research-based practices in Northeast Tennessee.

This method is completely anonymous and confidential. In other words, there will be no way to connect your name with your responses. Although your rights and privacy may be maintained, the ETSU IRB and personnel particular for this research at ELPA have access to the study records.

If you do not want to fill out survey, it will not affect you in any way. There are no alternative procedures except to choose not to participate in the study.

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled will not be affected.

If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me, Marisol Hernandez, at (423) 646-9613. I am working on this project under the supervision of Dr. Jasmine Renner. You have reached her at (423) 439-7629. Also, the chairperson of the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University is available at (423) 439-6055 if you have questions about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and to talk to someone independent of the
research team or you can’t reach the study staff, you may call an IRB coordinator at (423) 439-6055 or (423) 439-6002.

Sincerely,

Marisol Hernandez
APPENDIX D

Conceptual Framework for Research-Based Practices Survey

Research-Based Practices Survey
Conceptual Framework

- Dimension 1: Instructional Practices
- Dimension 2: ESL Strategies
- Dimension 3: Principles for Building ELL Responsive Learning Environments
- Dimension 4: Staff Development
- Dimension 5: Instructional Strategies
Dimension 1
Instructional Practices

Focus
Classroom Practices Based on Research And Standards

Source
Based on: Classroom Instruction that Works (Marzana, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001)
National Reading Panel
National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Standards
Dimension 2

ESL Strategies

Focus
Effective Teaching Practices for ELL Students

Source
Based on: Effective Teaching Practices for English Language Learners. Spotlight on Student Success published by the Laboratory for Student Success Number 70S (Waxman, H. C., & Tellez, K., 2002)
Dimension 3
Principles for Building ELL Responsive Learning Environments

Focus
Improving the Education of English Language Learners through Inclusion in School Reform Movement

Source
Based on principles outlined in Claiming Opportunities: A Handbook for Improving Education for English Language Learners through Comprehensive School Reform. Published by the Education Alliance at Brown University (Coady, 2003).
Focus
Professional Learning to Develop Teacher Capacity to Instruct English Language Learners

Source
Based on: NSDC Standards for Staff Development that can be found at:
http://www.nscd.org/standards/Index.cfm
### Dimension 5

**Instructional Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research-Based Instruction Strategies Based on Collaborative Work Done by the National Council of La Raza and the Education Alliance</td>
<td>Based on instructional practices outlined in Educating English Language Learners: Implementing Instructional Practices by NCLR (National Council of La Raza) and Education Alliance of Brown University (2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

Institutional Review Board – Approval of Initial Exempt Review

January 6, 2009

Marisol Hernandez
296 Fain Rd
Blountville, TN 37617

Re: Perceptions of Teacher’s Use of English Language Learners Strategies and Research-Based Practices in Northeast Tennessee

IRB#: c08-1766
ORSPA #: None

The following items were reviewed:
- Form 103 with Assurance Statement
- Narrative (11/20/2008)
- Letter to Participants
- Permission Letters from School Systems
- Conflict of Interest Form (no potential conflict of interest identified)
- CV
- Surveys (Administrators and Teachers)

On January 6, 2009, a final approval was granted in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Policies. No continuing review is required. The exempt approval will be reported to the convened board on February 5, 2009.

Unanticipated Problems involving Risks to Subjects or Others must be reported to the IRB (and VA R&D if applicable) within 10 working days.

Proposed changes in approved research can not be initiated without IRB review and approval. The only exception to this rule is that a change can be made prior to IRB approval when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the research subjects [21 CFR 56.108 (a)(4)]. In such a case, the IRB must be promptly informed of the change following its implementation (within 10 working days) on Form 108 (www.etsu.edu/irb). The IRB will review the change to determine that it is consistent with ensuring the subject’s continued welfare.
APPENDIX F

Permission to Survey Letter Sent to School Districts

To whom it may concern:

My name is Marisol Hernandez, and I am a graduate student at East Tennessee State University. I am working on my educational doctorate in school administration. In order to finish my studies, I need to complete a research project. The name of my research study is Perceptions of Teacher’s Use of English Language Learners Strategies and Research-Based Practices in Northeast Tennessee.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the level of use of ESL strategies and research-based practices in the instruction of ELL students in Northeast Tennessee. The study seeks to ascertain the perceptions of educators in Northeast Tennessee about teaching practices and beliefs in regard to the instruction of ELL students and to determine to what level they include ESL strategies and ESL research-based practices when teaching ELL students.

I would like to give a brief survey questionnaire to educational professionals (teachers and administrators) in your district who work with the ELL population in North East Tennessee. It should only take about 15 minutes to complete. Study participants will be asked questions about instructional practices. Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. Educational professionals in your district may refuse to participate.

Please, note that I have attached a copy of letter survey participants will receive and a copy of the survey for your approval. Please, advise of approval to survey educational professionals in your district by e-mail at mherman9659@aol.com or by letter to the following address:

296 Fain Road
Blountville, Tennessee

If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me, Marisol Hernandez, at (423) 446-9613. I am working on this project under the supervision of Dr. Jasmine Renner. You have reached her at (423) 439-7629. Also, the chairperson of the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University is available at (423) 439-6055 if you have questions about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can’t reach the study staff, you may call an IRB coordinator at (423) 439-6055 or (423) 439-6002.

Sincerely,

Marisol Hernandez

APPROVED
By Dr. The ETSU/VAIRB
JAN 06 2009

BY CHAIR/IRB COORDINATOR
## APPENDIX G

Summary of Means and Standard Deviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Classroom Teachers</td>
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<td>#2 Classroom Teachers</td>
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<td>#3 Classroom Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>#4 Classroom Teachers</td>
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</table>

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<th>Professionals</th>
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<td>ESL Teachers</td>
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VITA

MARISOL HERNANDEZ

Personal Data: Date of Birth: July 31, 1960
Place of Birth: Caracas, Venezuela
Marital Status: Divorced

Education: Southeastern University, Lakeland, Florida;
Elementary Education, B.A., 1987
Florida International University, Miami, Florida;
Urban Education Certificate, 1990
Florida International University, Miami, Florida;
Multicultural Education and English as a Second Language,
M.S., 1998
Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida;
Mathematics Education, Educational Specialist, 2001
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;

Professional Experience: Teacher, Dade County Public Schools; Miami, Florida,
1987-1997
Literacy and Bilingual/ESL Education Consultant,
Success for All Foundation (Johns Hopkins University),
1997-2002
ESL System Wide, Kingsport City Schools, Kingsport,
Tennessee, 2002-2008

Languages: Fluent in Spanish and English

Honors and Awards: Graduated Magna Cum Laude, Southeastern College
Break the Mold Grant Winner, 1998
Citibank Success Fund Grant Winner, 1999
Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, Florida International University and Florida State University’
Success Maker Teacher of the Month of December, 2001
CCC: 1998-1999 Outstanding Teacher of the Year
Sallie Mae Teacher of the Year – Carol City Elementary, 1987
Chapter One Teacher of the Year – Carol City Elementary, 1988
Recipient OBLEM Academic Scholarship for MS
Recipient of Eisenhower USSI Scholarship for Specialist Degree
   Based on academic achievement
Presenter, Title I Conference in ESL for Northeast Tennessee
Member, State of Tennessee Standards Based Committee ESL
Kingsport Technology Academy Graduate, 2004
Kingsport Technology Academy Facilitator, 2005
Member, Curriculum Cabinet, 2004
Facilitator, Curriculum Cabinet, 2005
Member, State of Tennessee ESL Standards Committee