

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of Education

**THE PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND PRINCIPALS OF AMERICAN
INDIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND TEACHING STRATEGIES THAT
ADDRESS ELL LEARNING NEEDS: A MULTI-VOCAL QUALITATIVE STUDY**

A Dissertation in

Educational Leadership

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2014

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation reports the findings of a multi-vocal qualitative study conducted in a school district, which serves predominantly American Indian students, in the southwestern United States. It explored the perceptions of parents, teachers and principals about instructional strategies to support teaching of American Indian ELL students. The first major goal of this inquiry was to generate recommendations and implications for improving instructional strategies for teachers and principals who work in schools with a high American Indian ELL population. The second goal of this study was the issue of whether or not American Indian ELL students' learning needs can be met by implementing instructional strategies that address ELL learning differences. The third goal of this study was to encourage and promote discourse in the area of American Indian ELL students and how to best serve their needs.

This study was guided by the following question: What instructional strategies might be most effective for American Indian ELL students? In addition, sub-questions included:

- (a.) What knowledge and skills do teachers of American Indian ELL students need to ensure learning?
- (b) How can instructional strategies recommended by the literature of ELLs (non-American Indian) be used to improve American Indian ELL students' learning?
- (c.) How do principals characterize the implications for supporting and fostering the implementation of instructional strategies?
- (d.) To what extent do parents perceive their child's teacher provides a suitable environment for ELL?

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The circle of knowledge is infinite. I hope to cross your path in the circle of learning again. I am so elated to arrive at this point in my circle of life. I would like to thank my committee for their expertise and advice as I made my way and eventually completed my dissertation. Your assistance and patience allowed me to fulfill my personal academic goal.

I would like to thank Becky Contestible for her never-ending assistance and countless times she provided advice on how to tread the waters within the department of Educational Leadership and pointing me in the right direction for help when I needed it.

I want to acknowledge my grandparents. My grandfather, Wilson Engle, whose wisdom and intelligence has always grounded me and allowed me to be the best person I could be. My grandmothers: Florence Engle and Laura Cleveland, who sadly both passed away during this endeavor. It was because of the path each of you traveled and obstacles you faced in your lifetime that I have been able to choose my path of education.

To my mother, Dorothy Engle, you are the strongest woman I know. Your unrelenting support and faith in everything I always wanted to do have allowed me to accomplish many things. I believe that your prayers have carried me through the challenges and obstacles that I overcame. Your wisdom, strength, and love have allowed me to become a whole person. This PhD is for you!

To my husband, Michael Bilagody, thank you for your never-ending support and love. You encouraged me every time I felt discouraged. You helped me when I needed help in dealing with entities. Because you are so well-versed in convincing others about

the positive aspects of a project, your assistance allowed me to move forward. You were always my loudest cheerer and you jumped for joy when I could not.

To my oldest children, whom I acquired through marriage, Cherae and Marin Bilagody. Thank you for coming to Pennsylvania to be with us and for all the continued help you provided to me and your younger siblings. I cannot thank you enough for being such great young adults.

To my wonderful children, Marison, Maric, Miara and Marai, know that words are not enough to express my love for you. I chose to have children along this journey because I wanted you to have each other. I realize that at times I may have had to substitute “me” with daycare and babysitters but know that you always came first. So, indeed, once in a while you were the baby or toddler with mom in the PSU grad class. To my “young scholar” Marison, you are intelligent beyond your years, you have taught me that it is okay to make mistakes because they are fixable. To my “big handsome me” Maric, you are a math whiz, you have taught me to laugh at myself because it is part of living a happy life. To my “baby girl” Miara, you are happiest when you are learning; you taught me that it is okay to wear socks that do not match because there are more important things to worry about in life. And to my “little handsome me” Marai, you analyze the world from below, you taught me that when a person teaches you to do something, you do learn it but by doing it your own way. I have always made the time to read to all of you before bed and to sing together, so I hope that you will remember this the most and the many activities we did together while at PSU. It is because of you I did not give up; you all were a constant reminder for finishing this degree.

To my brother, Brent Engle, Jr. and his wife, Patricia Tsinnie-Engle, I want to thank you for the years of encouragement and support. Your stories always made me laugh and alleviated the stress. To my niece, Shy, the hardest thing to learn was that you cried for two weeks when we moved away. You always made me smile and laugh with your wit and crazy antics. To my nephew, Ty, you became a stellar athlete in my absence; you were always helpful when I needed help around the house or with your little cousins. Thank you. Tyra and Trenton, thank you for being the big sister and brother to Miara and Marai and playing with them when they asked.

To my sisters, Patonya and Patricia Engle, thank you for your support and encouragement. To my nephew, Chad Engle, thank you for being the computer tech you are and the willingness to always use your savviness to assist me. Thanks to all of my nephews and nieces who helped out when asked, like babysitting on a last minutes notice.

I want to acknowledge my father, Brent B. Engle, Sr. for being proud of me for all that I have accomplished in life and sharing your stories with me.

I want to thank my in-laws for the times you wish me well and congratulated me along the way when achieving in steps to completing this degree. To Luvina, you are the nicest person I know. Thank you for being such a great sister-in-law and never refusing to help but also offering to help with the kids. To Rita, thank you for the encouragement and for the advice when we needed someone to listen to us.

Thanks to the many family members and friends who encouraged me and expressed their best wishes for me along this journey. Your words helped me sustain my goal and carried me to completing my degree.

I would like to thank Rosemary Musandipa and Candace Head-Dylia for your continued support and words of encouragement. We shared the journey to obtaining our PhDs and you both were always more than willing to take the time to answer my questions or to provide moral support, I hope that I was able to return this to you as well.

And last but not least, I would like to thank my AILP family for your support and encouragement. To Marlin and Sha Toyekoya and family, Jane Harstad and kids, Deanna Dugi and Joey, Carol Allen and Jaina Allen, Duane Reeder, and Taff Brown, you were always there for my family and kids and you made the holidays and birthdays complete as family. Ahee'he.

Chapter 1

Introduction

English language learners (ELL) are a growing population among elementary school students today and represent an increasing proportion of United States (U.S.) elementary school enrollment (Meltzer & Hamann, 2005). Waxman and Tellez (2002) suggest that there are 4.5 million “limited English Proficient” students in K-12 schools in the U.S. Kindler (2002) asserts that this figure will increase annually by three percent. As a consequence, many elementary school teachers are bound to teach ELL students whether or not they possess the skills and knowledge base to employ specific teaching techniques that should accommodate ELLs. The term English language learners (ELL) is used to refer to students who are less than proficient in English (Rivera, 1994). English language learner (ELL) is the preferred term today replacing earlier terms such as limited English proficient and English as a Second Language (Gersten & Baker, 2000).

Advocates of ELL students reiterate that such terms of the past may carry a negative connotation or perhaps label such a student as being less than academically capable.

The Center on Education Policy (2007) states that there are differences among ELL students in skills and needs. “English language learners are not a homogenous group, although many state, districts, and school policies treat them as such. Some ELLs are literate in their native language and have an excellent educational background, while

others are not literate or have limited literacy, have breaks in formal schooling, or have experienced educational failure” (p.2).

Studies (Brock, 2001; Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005; Keenan, 2004; Echevarria, 2006; and Johnson, 2005) have analyzed the subject of ELLs relative to a specific cultural group (e.g. Hispanic, Asian, African American) in areas such as content-area learning and literacy development, but none are specific to the improvement of the academic abilities of American Indian ELL students. Furthermore, it appears that few, if any, studies have been done with American Indian ELL students in regards to successful instructional practices for improving learning. Overall, empirical research studies are limited or nonexistent in the area of ELLs in regards to any American Indian student population. Furthermore, there are approximately 624,000 American Indian and Alaskan Native students enrolled in elementary and secondary schools in the U.S. (Tippeconnic & Faircloth, 2006) and studies are lacking in reference to improving the academic abilities of American Indian students who are identified as ELL.

Autobiographical Introduction

I grew up on and off the Navajo reservation. My American Indian tribal affiliations are: Navajo, Yavapai-Apache, and Hualapai. From a young age I knew that I wanted to be a teacher. I began kindergarten at a public school in Arizona where I was the only Native American student. When I was in the first grade, my teacher announced that each student would have to stand in front of the class and tell what he/she wanted to be. I waited anxiously for my turn. I was so excited to tell everyone that I wanted to be a

teacher. When I stood up and told the class that I wanted to be a teacher, my teacher interrupted me and said that I could not be a teacher. I was puzzled and asked why. She said, "Because Indians are not teachers, now go sit down." I was hurt and dumbfounded. I remember crying as I walked home afterschool.

I attended Fort Lewis College on an academic scholarship. I was fortunate to get a scholarship that would allow me to obtain my Elementary Education degree along with an endorsement in English as a Second Language. My first teaching job was as a Native American Studies teacher for Junior High students in my hometown on the Navajo reservation. I was astounded to learn that many of the students had reading scores equivalent to first and second grade. I wondered how I could help them. I decided that if I could teach at the elementary level, then I would be able to help students improve in reading and writing.

I was a third grade teacher for five years. In that time, I noticed that many of the students who had the lowest state assessment scores were the ELL students. I was curious to find out how other teachers were addressing this issue. Some of the teachers did not know who their ELL students were. This led me to believe that if teachers do not know who their ELL students are, then certainly they are not making accommodations to lessons. I felt that this issue was important because if the ELL student population's learning needs were not being addressed then they were not being offered an equal learning opportunity. I obtained a masters in Educational Leadership with an emphasis in bilingual education. I wanted to become a principal. I had the desire to initiate change for ELL students in the school district where I was employed. I realized that I had to get my PhD in order for people to listen and validate my concerns in regards to American

Indian ELL learning needs. I want to create an English Language Development (ELD) curriculum that adequately addresses American Indian ELL learning needs.

The Need to Study American Indian ELL Students

When parents of American Indian students enroll their children in school, they are required to complete a home language survey. In Arizona, this survey is referred to as the Primary Home Language Other Than English (PHLOTE). If parents indicate on the home language survey that their child speaks another language other than English at home, then their child is given a language proficiency test. The Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) is a standards based assessment that measures a student's proficiency in English. If their child's test results fall within pre-emergent, emergent, or basic, then their child will be categorized as an ELL student. Their child becomes eligible for English Language Learner services. However, often when a child is classified as an ELL student, teachers rarely modify their lessons to meet their learning needs.

When ELL student's learning needs are ignored and they are left to fend for themselves in the classroom, they usually will not perform well on state assessments at the end of the year. For some schools, the result will be that their school will not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP); which is required for most schools in Arizona. Achieving AYP means means that 95% of the students in a school are meeting or exceeding state standards. Teachers who remain oblivious to the type of instruction which ELL students require are only allowing these students to fall further behind in

achievement. Echevarria (2006) states “To have effective instructional programs, educators must be prepared with the knowledge and skills necessary for meeting these students’ unique needs” (p. 20).

There is no demographic information available identifying the total number of American Indian ELLs. “Crucial demographic indicators do not appear to be accurately coded; there is limited confidence in year-to-year tracking of students within the dataset; and serious empirical questions exist as to the validity of the academic achievement measures for ELL students” states Mahoney, Thompson, and MacSwan (2004, p.317) in regards to the overall quality of available data for ELLs. The schools that American Indian ELLs attend are public schools and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools on and off American Indian reservations. Schools will generally identify and report their ELL population for federal funding purposes, but rarely will they disaggregate the ELL population by race. Furthermore, schools that do identify ELL students usually underserve them as well. Although there is no data to identify the number of American Indian ELLs in schools, the school district where this study was conducted consisted of 45% American Indian ELL students.

Solano-Flores (2008) contends that “some difficulties for properly defining and classifying ELLs derive from the intrinsic complexity of the condition of being bilingual” (p.190). He states that ELL students are not properly understood and that each ELL student has a “unique set of strengths and weaknesses in each language mode in L1 and L2” (p. 190) which makes it impossible for assessments to accurately measure proficiency in language. “Also, different tests used by states to measure English proficiency, different criteria used for defining ELLs, and different capabilities of schools

to adequately provide testing accommodations for these students are some of the many factors that limit our ability to make valid interpretations of their test scores” (p.189).

National assessments and state assessments are the only measuring tools that have been used to measure American Indian academic achievement. Recently, such data is only relevant within the context of school progress and No Child Left Behind’s (NCLB) mandated adequate yearly progress for schools. Prior to NCLB, it was uncommon to analyze test scores at a national or state level for American Indian students. However, schools that possess high numbers of American Indian students and concern for academic achievement compared American Indian students’ test results to the state or national norm before NCLB.

The academic performance of American Indian ELL students is not gauged on a regular basis, with the exception of NCLB’s initiative of Title I which requires schools to improve the performance of ELL students on reading and mathematics assessments beginning in third grade (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Schools typically do not disaggregate tests scores among ELL and non-ELL students, nor do state standardized tests. In some states (e.g. Arizona), schools do identify ELL students who take standardized tests, but test scores are not reflective of this. Due to a lack of test data that are pertinent to American Indian ELL students, there exists no significant numbers upon which to draw conclusions about their academic progress.

The National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 2006) released a statistical analysis report about the performance of American Indian and Alaska Native students on the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading and math for students in grades 4 and 8. Nationally, 7,200 American

Indian students participated in the reading assessment and 7,330 participated in the mathematics assessment. This was the first federal report of its kind in which an in-depth analysis of such test scores of American Indian students' performance is provided to educators (Klein, 2006). The American Indian population sampled statistically showed that they are behind white and Asian American peers, but ahead of African American students and even with Hispanics. The results of NAEP allows for educators, as well as policymakers, to measure American Indian performance in reading and math. The data from NAEP is vital to educators for making decisions and conclusions in regards to improving American Indian academic abilities, but again no real inferences can be drawn in regards to the American Indian ELL student population that took the NAEP assessments.

The phenomenon of American Indian student academic failure is a research area that is still unclear. The factors of American Indian student success are ambiguous. One important factor to being successful in school is that an American Indian student's Native language and culture should be reflected in the curriculum (Reyhner, 1992; Gipp & Fox, 1991; Yazzie, 1999; Skinner, 1999). Another factor is that American Indian students' motivation to learning is key (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997) and extend beyond cultural background. Ogbu (1992) suggests that individuals come to society readily willing to accept the larger society not defined by their own culture. Erickson (1987) suggests a sense of cultural conflict in that the way American Indian parents rear their children in both a social and learning context have salient differences to the interactions in school.

It is important to examine the subject of American Indian ELL students' performance and how teachers make accommodations to their learning. It is important

for teachers to know that American Indian ELL students differ from Hispanic ELL students in that they are not making an initial attempt to learn English. Many American Indian ELL students speak English fluently and some also speak their native language. If schools overlook or ignore American Indian ELL students' as unique learners from their non-ELL peers, then they often are not able to provide the type of curricula that ELL students require (Meltzer & Hamann, 2006). According to Meltzer and Hamann (2006, p.4), ELL students "are being placed in mainstream classrooms with teachers who have little or no training in how to be responsive to their needs". American Indian ELL students may not be an exception to this notion about teachers being responsive to their learning needs. American Indian ELL students are already speakers of the English language, they need an adapted ELD curriculum that addresses their needs, and not a generic ELD curriculum that is intended for ELLs that are just beginning to learn to speak English.

Purpose and Research Questions

The overall purpose of this study was to address the perceptions of parents, teachers, and principals about instructional strategies to support teaching of American Indian ELL students. The intended outcomes are multifaceted. The first major goal of this inquiry was to generate recommendations and implications for improving instructional strategies for teachers and principals who work in schools with a high American Indian ELL population. The second goal of this study was the issue of whether or not American Indian ELL students' learning needs can be met by implementing

instructional strategies that address ELL learning differences. The third goal of this study was to encourage and promote discourse in the area of American Indian ELL students and how to best serve their needs.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following question: What instructional strategies might be most effective for American Indian ELL students? In addition, sub-questions addressed the perspectives of various stakeholders:

- (a.) What knowledge and skills do teachers of American Indian ELL students need to ensure learning?
- (b) How can instructional strategies recommended by the literature of ELLs (non-American Indian) be used to improve American Indian ELL students' learning?
- (c.) How do principals characterize the implications for supporting and fostering the implementation of instructional strategies?
- (d. .) To what extent do parents perceive their child's teacher provides a suitable environment for ELL?

Framework

As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact factors that hinder American Indian students' success in school. The phenomenon of academic failure

among American Indian students lacks in-depth studies, as well as research pertaining to American Indian ELLs; it is for this reason a multi-vocal synthesis method was used (Ogawa & Malen, 1991, Gersten & Baker, 2000, and Neely, 2005).

According to Gersten & Baker (2000), Ogawa and Malen introduced the multi-vocal synthesis as a means for its use for topics “characterized by a preponderance of diverse writings and a paucity of systemic investigations . . .” (p. 5). They further state that “researchers evaluate the methods and results of a given set of studies and use rigorous qualitative procedures to analyze “the words . . . in these diverse writings (Gerstan & Baker quote Ogawa & Malen, 1991) to determine potential underlying belief systems and biases” (p. 5).

Ogawa and Malen (1991) used the multi-vocal synthesis method by synthesizing literature based on site-based management. They referred to each piece of literature as a “data point” or “data set” (Ogawa & Malen, 1991). Very few empirical studies had been done on the topic of site-based management as is the case with the topic of the delineation of instructional methods for how to teach American Indian ELLs successfully.

Gersten and Baker’s (2000) study was based on instructional practices for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. They used the multi-vocal method to obtain the professional knowledge of educators’ instructional strategies because there was a lack of literature that addressed their topic. They used work groups consisting of professionals who instructed LEP students to conduct discussion groups. The work groups were a way of obtaining the knowledge of the professionals which could not be addressed through the literature review.

Neely (2005) used the multi-vocal method to examine conflict management strategies between school personnel and parents of children with disabilities regarding issues of special education delivery. She conducted an initial literature review. Based on the literature review she conducted interviews with parents of children with disabilities. As a result of the parent interviews, she constructed two scenarios based on the conflicts experienced by the parents. Next, she conducted three teachers work groups in which each teacher individually read the scenarios and came up with recommendations. Afterwards, the teacher groups compiled their recommendations and came up with collective recommendations or six themes. The recommendations were further used in interviews with administrators.

Neely (2005) states “the result of a multi-vocal synthesis is not intended to reach definitive conclusions, but rather to obtain a wide range of perspectives about a phenomenon of interest” (p 5), in this study’s case American Indian ELL students’ and instructional strategies that are adequate for their learning needs. This study will be guided by Ogawa and Malen (1991), Gersten and Baker (2000) and Neely (2005) studies in the multi-vocal approach. Each data set and their subsequent outcome in this study will be explained in further detail in Chapter three.

Significance of the Study

American Indian students are a unique population in the academic arena, both within the American public education sector and the federally operated Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) school system. The overall picture of “Indian education” has been

obscured by mandates that are poorly implemented and teaching that is chartered by unclear standards. American Indian students come from a unique heritage in which often their native language is still a dominant aspect of their culture (Reyhner, 1992).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), there are 78,000 American Indian/Alaska Native students in K-12 schools that speak a language other than English at home. Schools must not only recognize this uniqueness that American Indian students possess, but must find positive ways of using this attribute that resides within how students learn (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Tharp & Yamauchi, 1994). They do not come to school with an empty slate, nor should schools wipe their slates clean. Schools need to utilize this language skill to complement their learning. The lack of studies in the area of American Indian education continues to contribute to the confusion in curricula and what works best for American Indian students.

This study is important because it highlights the fact that American Indian ELL students may be overlooked and need special attention as far as teaching strategies are concerned. American Indian ELL students differ from other ELL (e.g. Hispanic, Asian) students in that they are not the traditional ELL student who enters school unable to speak English. Instead, American Indian ELLs are unique in that they are either monolinguisitic speakers of English coming from home and community environments where their particular Native language is spoken or they are bilingual speakers of both English and their Native language. They differ from traditional ELL students in the aspect that they already speak English. Hollie (2001) contends that minority students bring many different forms of English to school and that some Native American students

speak a nonstandard form of English. According to NCES (Department of Education, 2005), 2,184 American Indian/Alaska Native elementary and secondary students spoke English with difficulty.

It is important to examine American Indian ELL students because there is a need to delineate instructional methods which are appropriate for them to be successful in school. “There are currently no types of ELL services that are specifically designed for this population of ELLs. There are, therefore, no types of ELL services that are proven to be effective in bridging this population of students from the non-standard variety of English to Standard English” (Holbrook, 2011). They are such a small proportion of the total elementary and secondary school population whose learning needs are often ignored and data and research is also lacking to support policy implementation for regulating the education of American Indian ELLs. Providing equal educational opportunities to American Indian ELLs is only a fraction of the solution to the phenomenon of American Indian students’ academic failure in schools. This study may assist educators of American Indian ELL students to recognize that they require adaptations to meeting their learning demands which may enable their academic achievement to flourish.

Limitations

This study consisted of a volunteer sample who are American Indian parents of children who are identified as ELL, teachers of American Indian ELLs, and principals who possess the experience in working in a school that has American Indian ELLs. Access to information concerning other American Indian parents of ELLs, and teachers

who work with American Indian ELLs who did not volunteer cannot be retrieved. The limited number of participants cannot ensure generalizability. This study cannot be generalized to other student populations that are not defined as American Indian ELL and who live on the Navajo reservation.

Delimitations

The study is intentionally limited to American Indian ELL students in grades fourth through sixth grade, teachers of American Indian ELL students, and principals of American Indian ELL students in a specific region of a southwestern state on an American Indian reservation.

Definitions

The following terms are defined to ensure that the intended meaning is clear:

American Indian: any person who is a member of a federally-recognized tribe

English Language Learner (ELL): a student who does not pass a state adopted English proficiency exam, possibly this individual's first language is not English

English as a Second Language (ESL): an individual whose first language is his/her native language and is learning English as a second language

Second Language Acquisition: the process involved in learning a second language

Successful Instructional Methods: teaching strategies that are used to ensure that students are learning, thus can be measured by testing modes

Literacy: the ability to read and write in a target language

Academic achievement: the growth of learning that can be measured through various testing modes

Non-ELL: a student who has not been designated by a school as an ELL

Teaching style: one's personal preference of chosen strategies and methods that they employ when teaching

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The literature review was an ongoing process throughout the study. Its purpose is to provide insight into the current status of ELL research and to allow for placement of this study into current ELL pedagogy. Topics examined were English language learners (ELLs), American Indian English language learners (ELLs), successful instruction for ELLs, literacy recommendations for ELLs, programs for ELLs, and other studies providing the basis for the multi-vocal synthesis approach. An emphasis on the teacher's and principal's role in the instruction of ELLs is reflected throughout the literature review. The fact that few, if any, studies pertaining to American Indian ELLs seems to suggest that further inquiry is needed in this area.

American Indian English Language Learners

In *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), the U.S. Supreme Court decision ruled that treating ELL students the same as other students is not equal or fair treatment. It is unconstitutional to expect students who do not possess an English background to be subjected to instruction in English only. The *Lau* decision was a major victory for sustaining bilingual education and broke the barrier for many bilingual education programs implemented in schools across the U.S. A majority of the literature and

commentary was subject to Hispanic, African American, and/or Asian ELL students. No literature was specific to American Indian ELL students.

In this study, the theoretical base identifying successful instructional strategies for American Indian ELLs in the literature was explored. This study then sought to determine if principals, teachers, and parents of American Indian ELLs identified the same recommended instructional strategies of English language learners. Gerstain and Baker (2000) note that in order to improve the education of ELLs, “it is critical to shift the focus of discourse away from broad sociological and political issues towards specific instructional issues” (p. 454).

Identifying the Needs of American Indian English Language Learners

It was apparent throughout the literature reviewed that the ELL students’ needs are not being met in classrooms. Most schools across the United States do not identify their ELL student population, unless they are receiving federal money. It is due to this reason that the American Indian ELL population is difficult to establish. Nevertheless, American Indian ELL student count is being determined because of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). NCLB mandated that all children would learn and no child would be left behind. However, advocates of ELL students argue that NCLB is more harmful than helpful for children who are classified as ELL. Tinajero (2005) states “however, well intended, this law neglects the special situation of ELLs and the educators who teach them . . . the high stakes that NCLB attaches to English language learners’ scores on English achievement tests are damaging to bilingual programs” (p. 18).

American Indian ELL students are no better off when it comes to scoring at or above proficiency when compared to the national norm across the U.S. (National Assessment of Educational Progress, (NAEP) 2005). NCLB has evoked accountability for student learning, but most importantly, it has ignited the whole discourse focused around achievement gaps, especially pertaining to ELLs and American Indian students. Reyhner (2001) indicates that only 43 percent of American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) students read at or above a basic level. Furthermore, these scores illustrate that American Indian students are below the national norm when it comes to reading.

Many American Indian students, who are identified as ELL, receive no supportive services within the classroom or the school. Research indicates that most students who encounter reading difficulties will continue to have trouble for the rest of their school years (Reyhner, 2000). Teachers who do not adapt lessons for ELLs (e.g., clearer explanations of the task with concrete examples) are ignoring the learning needs of such students which could lead to an increase in frustration and failure on the student's part (Gerstain, 1999). It is critical that all ELL students, especially American Indians, be able to read and write in English and achieve at levels comparable to those of their non-ELL peers. It is also imperative that teachers of ELL become aware of the learning needs of ELLs and help them develop the skills necessary to do so (Echevarria, 2006). Teachers are seeing more and more ELL students in their classrooms, many lack the adequate training in how to address their needs, but some choose to ignore their needs or do not realize that they are not allowing them the equal learning environment they are entitled to in schools. Meltzer and Hammon (2005) assert that "ELLs have an equal right to and

need to become independent learners. Schools must support their literacy development in ways relevant to their current and future circumstances” (p. 3).

Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) state that “responsive schools recognize the need to learn about the cultures, experiences, and needs of ELLs and thus they support listening to and learning from ELLs and their parents” (p. 20). An important factor which must not be ignored is an American Indian student’s home language. Schools must recognize a student’s dominant home language because influence of the home language on the student’s academic English proficiency may exist.

Instructional Strategies Across the Curriculum

Second Language Acquisition Strategies and More

Brock’s (2001) research has allowed her to spend time in classrooms observing the teaching strategies of teachers whose classrooms are comprised of ELL students. She believes that “learning to serve English language learners involves: (a) knowing about the second language acquisition process, (b) maintaining high expectations for English language learners, and (c) valuing the linguistic and cultural backgrounds that English language learners bring to the classroom” (p. 467). She contends that teachers must place ELLs’ learning on center stage. Furthermore, she articulates that there are important domains for determining best practices for working with ELL students that include: attending to who we teach, attending to how we teach, attending to what we teach, and attending to community context in educating ELLs.

Attending to who we teach is based on the premise that teachers must not only possess knowledge of the second language acquisition process but possess knowledge of their particular students' cultural backgrounds and life experiences. A means to acquiring knowledge of children's life experiences is to allow them opportunities to express themselves and to thoughtfully listen. Attending to how we teach is reliant on the strategies and the methods teachers choose to use in their teaching but also paying close attention to facilitating learning for each individual child. Attending to what we teach is the notion that teachers' personal beliefs shape their instruction and their perceptions of who their students are. Attending to community context in educating ELL students is best described by Brock (2001) as "effective classroom communities for English language learners are caring, collaborative, and supportive places where taking risks is okay- and even encouraged" (p. 473). Brock's study will be further discussed in the literacy component of the literature review later in the chapter.

In a study conducted by Facella, Rampino, and Shea (2005), their findings in regards to successful teaching strategies included similar strategies (e.g. knowledge of second language acquisition) but also included a myriad of strategies that teachers incorporated while teaching ELL students.

Facella's et al. (2005) study was conducted with early childhood educators from two school districts in Massachusetts with large populations of ELL students. They interviewed 10 teachers from each school (grades Pre-K to 2nd) to find out what teaching strategies they use with ELLs by asking two open-ended questions. "The first question asked what strategies they found to be effective in promoting language acquisition with

their ELL students. The second question asked why they felt these strategies worked” (p. 210).

Farcella et al. reported that most teachers used “the natural approach” theory (Krashen & Terrell, as cited by Farcella et al., 2005) which is a framework for children who are ELLs that “provides a practical structure for teachers juggling the needs of native speakers of English and multilevel ELLs” (Facella et al., p. 211). The following table was constructed by Facella et al. which they adapted from Krashen and Terrell (1993) and Lake and Pappamihiel (2003) to show the strategies of second language acquisition:

Table 2-1 Strategies of Second Language Acquisition

<p>A. Preproduction</p> <p>Characteristics</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening 2. Student responds nonverbally 3. Ten hours to 6 months of exposure to English <p>Teaching strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ninety percent teacher talk 2. Total Physical Response(TPR) 3. Modeling 4. Active student involvement 5. Yes/no questions 6. Use of pictures 7. Use of props and hands-on activities 	<p>B. Early Production</p> <p>Characteristics</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued listening 2. Student responds with one or two words, and nonverbally 3. Three to 6 months to 1 year of exposure to English <p>Teaching Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fifty percent to 60% teacher talk 2. TPR with responses- verbal and non-verbal 3. Answering who, what, where, and either/or questions with one-word answers 4. Role-playing 5. Completing sentences 6. Questions to be answered with phrases (e.g., Where . . ? In the house.) 7. Labeling (older learners)
<p>C. Speech emergence</p> <p>Characteristics</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sight vocabulary (older learners) 2. Students speak in phrases and sentences 3. One to 3 years of exposure to English <p>Teaching strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forty percent teacher talk 2. Scaffolding and expansion 3. Poetry, songs, and chants 4. Predicting 5. Comparing 6. Describing 7. Social interaction (cooperative learning with information gaps) 8. How and why questions 9. Language experience approach 10. Problem solving 11. Group discussions 12. Labeling 13. Listing, charting, graphing 	<p>D. Intermediate fluency</p> <p>Characteristics</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May seem fluent, but needs to expand vocabulary and Cognitive Academic Proficiency 2. Engages in dialogue 3. Three to 4 years of exposure to English <p>Teaching strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ten percent teacher talk 2. Essay writing 3. Analyzing charts and graphs 4. More complex problem solving and evaluating 5. Continuing with how and why questions, student must research and support their answers 6. Pre-writing activities- writing process, peer critiquing, etc. 7. Literacy analysis

(Facella et al., 2005, adopted from Krashen & Terrell, 1983)

ELLs progress through the stages at varying rates and in the sequential order. Facella et al. (2005) state that teachers can incorporate the appropriate strategies into their regular instruction if they are able to understand ELLs learning characteristics. Throughout the interviews many of the teachers did mention that they use “the natural approach” strategies, with some of the strategies being greatly used, but also a total of 28 other strategies were used by the teachers. These strategies were summarized in the following manner:

Strategies for Engaging English Language Learners Emotionally- connect with parents, familiarity with native language to increase child’s comfort level, positive reinforcement, and personal conversations (p. 214)

Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners Language

Specifically- adding to language to build longer utterances, encouraging kids to use words in context, target a few specific words within a story, opportunities to speak and listen, and preview books before reading (p. 215)

Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners in General-

repetition/opportunities for practicing skills, gestures/sign language/visual cues, music and movement, use of objects/real props/hands-on materials, adhere to routine, task breakdown/step-by-step directions, partners/role modeling/peer modeling, appropriate wait time to allow for language processing, use of highly emotional language/dramatics, direct teaching/skill-drill, thematic units, multisensory approaches,

reflective/check back on children's learning, small groups, one-on-one support, questioning for clarification and comprehension, build off children's past experiences and prior knowledge, technology/videos, and engage learners emotionally (Facella et al., 2005, p. 216-217)

Facella et al. also found the following:

Four strategies were named by the majority of the teachers as being effective in general: gestures and visual cues; repetition and opportunities for practicing skills; use of objects, real props, and hands-on materials; and multisensory approaches. The teachers collectively pointed out that they found the most success in working with ELLs when they varied their strategies (p. 211).

In summation, Facella et al. indicated that the teachers interviewed felt that many of the strategies used were successful for all students in the classroom, ELLs and non-ELLs.

Embedded, Comprehension and Speaking Strategies

Keenan (2004), an ESL-certified middle school teacher, shared similar strategies which she employs when she teaches science. Keenan believes that the teaching strategies she uses help all students in her class achieve- ELLs and non-ELLs. Some "basics" that she discusses include: conduct collaborative group work, use visuals, and build on students' prior knowledge (p. 49). She also discusses some of the embedded strategies, comprehension strategies and speaking strategies that she often uses to assist ELLs' learning. The embedded strategies "help ELL students increase language and

comprehension knowledge” (p. 50). There are four strategies: use instructional conversations, emphasize students’ cultural concerns, foster students’ cognitive monitoring, and provide students with technology-enriched instruction” (Waxman & Tellez, as cited by Keenan, 2004). Techniques that she uses to help students’ comprehension include having a “science talk” or brainstorming at the start of a new unit to allow students to contribute their experiences and knowledge. She also uses scaffolding to help students express their thoughts by using statements and questions to guide discussions. Keenan also believes that it is important for teachers to modify words and to use sequencing words (e.g., first, second, then) when speaking to students. “The way we speak to students also influences how much they learn” (p. 51).

Concept-Based Instruction

A case study conducted by Twyman, Ketterlin-Geller, McCoy, and Tindal (2003) reports the findings of one ELL student’s improved learning through the use of concept-based instruction, which utilizes some of the aforementioned teaching strategies (e.g. scaffolding & graphic organizers).

Concept based instruction (CBI) aligns curriculum and instruction with assessment. It has three distinct phases. In the first phase, information is organized into critical knowledge forms (i.e. facts, concepts, attributes, and principles) that reflect the depth and breadth of a content domain. In the second phase, instruction on declarative and procedural knowledge is delivered. The use of graphical presentations of information help enrich learning along with scaffolding activities and interactive

discussions. In the third phase, critical-thinking measures are administered that encourage students to transfer knowledge to new situations and problem solving events (Twyman et al., 2003).

Twymann et al. (2003) state that facts are hard for ELL students to learn because they are typically taught in “dense” language and students are made to memorize them. CBI allows for isolated facts to be arranged into context by planning the curriculum around common attributes. CBI uses graphic organizers in instruction as a means of providing a conceptual framework in hopes that this will assist ELL students in accessing prior knowledge and being able to create new schemata.

Twymann’s et al. (2003) case study of one seventh grade ELL student was part of a larger study they conducted in which CBI was incorporated with low-performing middle school students. They compared two classrooms of ELL students’ performances- one class using CBI (the experimental group) and the other not using CBI (the control group). The experimental group’s lessons consisted of using CBI strategies to teach the concepts, worksheets were modified and graphic organizers were used. The control group used the traditional teaching from the textbook and worksheets were not modified. The students then had to write an extended-response essay based on the lesson. The data showed that the experimental group did better on the essay, thus the researchers concluded that because their lessons used CBI, they outperformed the control group that did not have CBI lessons.

The SIOP Model

Echevarria (2006) believes that instruction for ELLs “should focus on ways to make students successful and make the rigorous content understandable” (p. 18). Her research in the area of sheltered instruction is consistent with the previously mentioned strategies and techniques that are applicable to teaching ELL students (e.g., graphic organizers, cooperative learning, slower speech, etc.).

Echevarria’s (2006) research has also led to her participation in the development of the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) Model (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, as cited by Echevarria, 2006). She believes that this particular model provides the means for teachers to be able to deliver a high-quality sheltered lesson. Sheltered instruction is a way to teach content concepts to ELLs, what was lacking was the model (Echevarria, 2006). The SIOP Model will be elaborated upon in greater detail in the literacy component below.

Instructional Strategies Used to Teach Literacy

The SIOP Model (School Reform & Standards Based Education)

“The SIOP Model describes specific features of teaching that have been shown to improve the academic literacy of ELLs” (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, as cited by Echevarria, 2006, p. 19). It is a framework that allows teachers to use strategies that help students develop their language skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking. There are eight components to the observation protocol (consisting of 30 items) for making

content comprehensible for ELLs: (a) Preparation, (b) Building Background, (c) Comprehensible Input, (d) Strategies, (e) Interaction, (f) Practice/Applications, (g) Lesson Delivery, and (h) Review/Assessment (Echevarria, 2006). Teachers are not required to follow a specific routine when implementing the SIOP model, however, a language objective and contextual language practice are required to contribute to students' literacy development.

Echevarria, Short, and Powers (2006) trained a group of teachers to implement the SIOP model and their classrooms became the setting for further research into student achievement from 1998 to 2000. The participants consisted of 346 ELL students in grades 6-8, with 237 students from a west coast school district and 109 from two east coast school districts. Among the participants: 56% were Hispanic, 41% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% Caucasian, and 1% African American. This group of students was identified as the intervention students. The researchers also identified a comparison group of ELL students from different schools on each coast. These students participated in sheltered classes for core subjects, just as the intervention students did at their particular schools. The comparison group's ethnic makeup consisted of: 69% Hispanic and 31% Asian/Pacific Islander. The language spoken by fifty percent of the students in both groups was Spanish, "also, a large number of students spoke Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Korean. Some students spoke other Asian, Caribbean, European, or Native American languages" (Echevarria et al., 2006, p. 203).

Each intervention teacher implemented the SIOP lessons in their teaching and was videotaped three times per year. The researchers used the SIOP Model to rate the videotaped lessons and provided feedback to each teacher. They videotaped the

comparison teachers twice a year but did not provide feedback to them. The SIOP project teachers had a mean SIOP score of 77 and the comparison teachers had a mean SIOP score of 51. The researchers state that “although the comparison teachers were rated highly on certain features, they did not exhibit consistent use of best practices for ELLs that the intervention teachers used, as reflected in the SIOP model” (Echevarria et al., 2006, p. 204).

The researchers used an expository writing assessment to measure students’ academic literacy development for all of the participants. They administered the Illinois Measurement of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) test in an untimed setting twice, within six weeks of class and within the last six weeks of class. The pre- and posttest writing samples from both groups were evaluated by an outside rater; 640 writing samples were scored using the IMAGE writing rubric which includes the following items:

1. Language Production. Degree to which English-language acquisition is demonstrated in the written passage.
2. Focus. Degree to which the main idea is clear and maintained.
3. Support or elaboration. Extent that the main idea is explained or elaborated with specific evidence and supporting details.
4. Organization. Extent that the flow of ideas is logical and the text is connected.
5. Mechanics. A measure of use for standard English conventions (grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation). (p. 205)

The analysis was based on 315 students that had a pretest and a posttest score. “Students in the SIOP classes performed less well on all pretests when compared with the comparison students, but they performed better on the posttests” (Echevarria et al., 2006, p. 205). The intervention students outscored the comparison group in the areas of language production, organization, and mechanics. But did not outscore the comparison group in the areas of writing focus or elaboration. Overall, the researchers found that the intervention students made significantly better gains in writing than the comparison group (Echevarria et al., 2006). The researchers “determined that certain features must be present in instruction so that content concepts are made comprehensible at the same time that academic English-language development is promoted” (Echevarria, Vogt, et al., as cited by Echevarria, Short, et al., 2006). The SIOP Model complements high-quality instruction that can be used in a regular classroom and contains all of the necessary features that need to be present in instruction as previously mentioned by Echevarria et al. Furthermore, “teachers report that having a well-articulated model of high-quality instruction empowers them to work more effectively with ELLs” (Short & Echevarria, as cited by Echevarria et al., 2006, p. 207).

In another study conducted by Echevarria (2005), teachers used the SIOP Model in an elementary school that was comprised of underachieving students. The principal and the literacy coach were able to provide feedback to teachers by using the observation protocol. “As a result, 86% of the students in grade 3 who had been enrolled in the school during the three years the SIOP Model was implemented scored at or above grade level on the state standards assessment” (Echevarria, as cited by Echevarria, 2006, p. 19).

Echevarria (2006) discusses the importance of academic language for ELL students. She insists it is important for teachers to understand the distinction between social/conversational ability and academic language ability. And furthermore, teachers should not assume because a student can converse well in English, the student can also complete academic assignments. Her argument is that academic English goes beyond vocabulary development and includes the following elements:

Language functions: for example, formulate questions and ask predictions

Language skills: for example, scan a reading passage and draft a report

Grammar and language structures: for example, root words and adverbs

Tasks needed to complete work: for example, share with a partner and count off by twos (p. 19)

Echevarria (2006) further states that helping ELL students succeed must come through focused, sustained professional development programs, such as the SIOP Model, that allow for focused instruction, explicit vocabulary development and opportunities for interaction. “To have effective instructional programs, educators must be prepared with the knowledge and skills necessary for meeting these students’ unique needs” (p. 20).

Lessons from Children

Brock, whom was mentioned earlier, shares the same views about the importance of supporting ELLs in the area of academic English. Brock (2001) cites Cummins in her discussion about the “distinction between conversational competence and academic competence in second language acquisition” (p. 468). She states that conversational

competence can be acquired within a year of learning the new language, but it takes many more years for children to acquire academic competence. Academic competence is required in order for students to understand the concepts in most subject areas of the curriculum. Furthermore, Brock states “without sustained and adequate support, English language learners can fall behind in subject matter learning while they are in the long process of acquiring academic competence in their new language” (p. 468).

Brock shares two stories from her field experiences. The first, is about a Vietnamese girl named, Mei, who enters the public school system in the United States during third grade, who spoke only Vietnamese. The literature-based program the class used was called Book Club. One day, while in small peer-led discussions, Mei began to share her experiences in Vietnam, which interested the children. Instead of the teacher stopping her and making the students get back to the Book Club schedule, the teacher allowed her to continue sharing. This opportunity allowed Mei to step into the role of teacher and utilize her knowledge as a learning moment for all of the students, thus the teacher placed value on her culture and this strength. Brock (2001) states “valuing children’s languages and cultures can facilitate their learning opportunities” (p. 469).

The second story Deng, a Hmong from Laos, whose family escaped to live in a Thai refugee camp began school in the United States in third grade, he spoke Hmong, Lao, Thai and few words of English. As part of a Social Studies lesson, the teacher was reading a novel to the class about black and white people in America. After reading a certain passage about people of color, she wanted to illustrate a point by having the students stand up and put out their hands, so that they could see the different shades of skin colors (the class had a variety of different ethnic backgrounds). Deng, did not

understand why the teacher wanted them to put out their hands. He did not understand the concept of racism in America. His teacher assumed that this activity of seeing the different colors of hands was a teaching moment, but for Deng whose cultural experiences are different from most American children, was confused. The teacher asking the students to put out their hand may have been a learning experience for the children, but not for Deng. Brock (2001) concludes with the following:

First, best practices for second language learners do not take the teacher out of teaching by placing emphasis primarily on materials, curriculums, frameworks, and strategies. Second, best practices do not equate teaching with learning. That is, what I do as a teacher is only useful if it facilitates the learning of my students. Third, best practices do focus on individual learners learning. This means I must know and attend to the language acquisition process that my English language learners are undergoing. Moreover, I must strive to understand their individual backgrounds and respective cultures. (p. 474)

Brock's (2001) discussion of the key domains to consider as best practices for ELLs, was presented earlier in the chapter. These "domains include attending to (a) who we teach, (b) how we teach, (c) what we teach, as well as (d) the nature of the educational community we construct with our students and others" (p. 473).

Instructional Congruency

Johnson (2005) shares insight in regards to making instruction relevant for language minority students. She also believes that instruction must not exclude the students' language and cultural experiences or literacy development.

Johnson agrees that "it is vital for middle level teachers to play a key role in developing not only ELL students' content knowledge, but also their English language literacy" (2005, p. 10). Her belief is that if Latino students do not see a connection, either cultural or with language, then they are at an educational disadvantage. A successful instructional method which she used in teaching science at the middle school level is the instructional congruence model. (Johnson, 2005) "Instructional congruence occurs when teachers mediate the nature of academic content and inquiry with language and cultural experiences of diverse students" (p. 11). The components of this model include (in relation to teaching science): helping students learn concepts and vocabulary, engaging students in cooperative investigations, developing thinking skills that are related to science, and encouraging students to talk about science with others. (Johnson, 2005)

Instructional congruence depends on the interaction of four important factors.

First, teachers must integrate knowledge of students' languages and cultures with the nature of science...the second factor emphasizes the need to give equal emphasis to the nature of academic content knowledge and inquiry and issues of language and culture . . .the third factor relating to instructional congruence is the promotion of student learning in both science and literacy . . .the fourth factor is putting constructivism at the core of instructional congruence. (p. 12)

Johnson (2005) cites Lee and Fradd's three year study with Latino students' increase in science learning in which pre- and post-unit tests' mean scores doubled. She states that this model has enabled Latino students to experience science learning in a more personal way and that science becomes more relevant to them.

Standard English Language Learners

Hollie (2001) presents LeMoine's theory on Standard English Language Learners and appropriate instructional methods for minority students who come to school speaking nonstandard academic English. She states that many minority students bring various forms of English to the classroom when they come to school, e.g. African American students and their form of African American Language (AAL). Hollie discusses a program that was developed by LeMoine which is targeted to "serve the language needs of African American, Mexican American, Hawaiian American, and Native American students who are not proficient in Standard American English (SAE)" (p. 54). The Linguistic Affirmation Program (LAP) is a comprehensive nonstandard language awareness program whose goal is to assist students in using SAE proficiently and to also increase literacy success and academic achievement without devaluing the language or culture of students.

The Linguistic Affirmation Program revolves around six research-based critical instructional approaches:

1. Build teachers' knowledge, understanding, and positive attitude toward nonstandard languages and the students who use them.
2. Integrate linguistic knowledge about non-standard language into instruction.
3. Utilize second language acquisition methodologies to support the acquisition of school language and literacy.
4. Employ a balance approach to literacy acquisition that incorporates phonics and language experience.
5. Design instruction around the learning styles and strengths of Standard English language learners.
6. Infuse the history and culture of Standard English language learners into the instructional curriculum. (p. 55)

LAP provides teachers with professional development that is centered on increasing teachers' knowledge of instructional strategies for students who speak nonstandard language forms. Hollie states that LAP makes the point, "black students, as well as other speakers of nonstandard language varieties (Chicano English, Native American Dialects, and Hawaiian Pidgin), come to school "language different or diverse," not language deficient" (2001, p. 56).

Cultural Alignment

Ladson-Billings (1994) termed "cultural relevancy" as way of teaching that "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using culture to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes." She believes that teachers should apply the

best of teaching methods to teaching students whose culture is different from the dominant culture. The following are key components of culturally responsive practices (CRP): (a.) teachers who are culturally competent about their students' cultural beliefs and practices; (b.) teachers who think of all of their students as capable learners, have high expectations for them, and help students set short and long term goals for themselves; (c.) teachers who know each student and draw on the students' own experiences to help them learn; (d.) teachers who can create a bridge between the students' home and school lives while meeting district and state curricular requirements; (e.) teachers who have a wide variety of teaching strategies and skills to engage the students; and (f.) teachers who can help the students deal with the inequitable treatment of students of color and other underserved populations by helping them become critically conscious and knowledgeable about the students' culture. (wisconsinrticenter.org)

Ladson-Billings (1995) also states that “culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (p. 160).

Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy

The Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE, 2003) issued a technical report that implies that the Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy is

“critical for improving learning outcomes for all students, and especially those of diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or economic backgrounds”. The Five Standards are:

Standard I- Teachers and Students Producing Together

Facilitate learning through joint productive activity among teacher and students

Standard II- Developing Language and Literacy Across the Curriculum

Develop competence in the language and literacy of instruction across the curriculum.

Standard III- Making Meaning; Connecting School to Students’ Lives

Contextualizing teaching and curriculum in the experiences and skills of students’ homes and communities.

Standard IV- Teaching Complex Thinking

Challenge students toward cognitive complexity.

Standard V- Teaching Through Conversation

Engage students through dialogue, especially the Instructional Conversation. (p.1)

Principals as Leaders

Vanderhaar, Muñoz, and Rodosky (2006) cite Waters et al. in identifying the three most effective leadership practices: (a) situational awareness (the principal is aware of details and undercurrents in running the school and uses information to address current and potential problems); (b) intellectual stimulation (the principal ensures that faculty and staff are made aware of the most current theories and practices and incorporates discussion of these as aspect of school culture); and, (c) input (teachers are involved in the design and implementation of important decisions) (p.18). They also state “in the

current era of accountability for achievement, school principals play the pivotal role of instructional leader” (p.17).

Fullan (2002) states that “characterizing instructional leadership as the principal’s central role has been a valuable first step in increasing student learning, but it does not go far enough” (p.17). He believes that what is needed are principals that lead cultural change. “Cultural Change Principals display palpable energy, enthusiasm, and hope. In addition, five essential components characterize leaders in the knowledge society: moral purpose, an understanding of the change process, the ability to improve relationships, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making” (p.17).

Gardiner and Enomoto (2006) conducted a study on principals in six urban schools. The premise of the study was to examine multicultural leadership. Gardiner and Enomoto cite Bennett as they define multicultural leadership as “that which enables principals to address diversity within a school setting through affirming cultural pluralism and educational equity” (p.561). All of the principals in the study were Caucasian. The English Language Learner (ELL) program included students from 56 different languages.

Gardiner and Enomoto (2006) contend that principals have a critical role in ensuring that “inclusive teaching and learning are encouraged or that culturally relevant teaching practices are explored . . . principals can maintain high expectations for all while advocating for appropriate pedagogical approaches for each student” (p.561).

The framework of their study was based on Riehl’s three multicultural tasks. Their findings were as follows: Multicultural Task 1: Fostering new meaning about diversity- high expectations for all, changing the cultural deficiency perspective, understanding through communication, socializing new immigrants to U.S. schools.

Multicultural Task 2: Promoting inclusive instructional practices within schools- hiring practice, multicultural display, peer tutoring and inclusive educational practices, multiculturally proficient instruction. Multicultural Task 3: Building connections between schools and communities- early educational opportunities and interventions, parent involvement, community involvement.

Mendoza-Reis and Reveles (2004) advocate that there is a need for re-framing the leadership skills of principals in bilingual schools. “They must be instructional leaders who fully understand the complexities of effective education for English language learners . . . they must be skilled communicators who know how to lead school improvement efforts through the lens of best practices for English language learners” (p.34). They offer the follow guiding questions to consider when re-framing school leadership of bilingual schools:

1. What is your vision for the achievement and learning of English language learners?
2. Who are your students really?
3. What is your plan for recruiting and developing staff to provide high quality teaching to English language learners?
4. In what ways do you build a learning community around issues of educating culturally and linguistically diverse students?
5. What is your public relations plan?

Conclusion

Studies (Brock, 2001; Facella et al., 2005; Keenan, 2004, Twyman et al., 2003 and Echevarria, 2006) that were based on instructional strategies used across the curriculum had the following commonalities: knowing about the second language acquisition process, valuing the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of ELLs, and providing multiple representations. Studies (Echevarria, 2006; Echevarria et al., 2005; Brock, 2001; Johnson, 2005; and Hollie, 2001) that were instructional strategies used to promote literacy also shared the same commonalities as the strategies methods used across the curriculum. The SIOP Model (Echevarria, 2006), instructional congruency (Johnson, 2005), and the Linguistic Affirmation Program (Hollie, 2001) all took into consideration ELL students' prior knowledge, created a customized learning environment, and called for school-wide support. Most the studies stated that leadership and professional development are essential to improving ELL students' learning and implementing models such as the SIOP Model.

Based on the literature review, table 2-2 below contains some of the characteristics and teaching strategies that might be applicable to the learning needs of American Indian ELLs:

Table 2-2 Characteristics and Strategies for ELL teaching

<p><u>Common Characteristics of ELL Intervention Strategies:</u></p> <p>Knowing about the SLA process, maintaining high expectations, valuing the linguistic & cultural background, connect with parents, familiarity with native language to increase child's comfort level, positive reinforcement, personal conversations, sustained professional development, focused instruction, opportunities for interaction, customized learning environment, school-wide support, leadership is essential</p>
<p><u>Second Language Acquisition Strategies:</u></p> <p>repetition, practicing skills, gestures, task breakdown, appropriate wait time, thematic units, check back on learning, questioning for clarification, build off children's past experiences & prior knowledge, peer modeling, dramatics, small groups, preview books before reading, opportunities to speak & listen, visual cues, use of objects/real props/hands-on materials, step-by-step directions, role modeling (Facella, et al)</p>
<p><u>Concept Based Instruction Strategies:</u></p> <p>Aligns curriculum & instruction w/ assessment in 3 distinct phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) information is organized into critical knowledge forms (facts, concepts, attributes, and principles) 2) instruction on declarative & procedural knowledge is delivered using graphical presentations of information enriched with scaffolding activities & interactive discussions 3) critical-thinking measures are administered that encourage students to transfer knowledge (Twyman, et al)
<p><u>Structured Immersion Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model:</u></p> <p>A framework that allows for teachers to use strategies that help students develop their language skills in reading, writing, listening, & speaking. It includes the following 8 components: Preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice/applications, lesson delivery, & review/assessment. (Echevarria, et al)</p>
<p><u>Instructional Congruence Model:</u></p> <p>Helping students learn concepts & vocabulary, engaging students in cooperative investigations, developing thinking skills that are related to science, encouraging students to talk about science with others. 4 Factors: 1. teachers must integrate knowledge of students' culture with science; 2. give equal emphasis to academic content knowledge & language & culture; 3. promotion of learning in both science & literacy; and 4. constructivism is key (Johnson)</p>
<p><u>5 Standards for Effective Pedagogy:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Teachers & students producing together II. Developing language & literacy across the curriculum III. Making meaning; connecting school to students' lives IV. Teaching complex thinking V. Teaching through conversations (CREDE)

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The research design used to conduct this qualitative study is presented in this chapter; including an explanation of the multi-vocal method, selection of the participants, data collection, and data analysis. This study is designed to examine the question: What instructional strategies might be most effective for American Indian ELL students? In addition, sub-questions included: (a) What knowledge and skills do teachers of American Indian ELL students need to ensure learning?, (b) How can strategies recommended by the literature of ELLs (non-American Indian) be used to improve American Indian ELL students' learning?, and (c) How do principals characterize the implications for supporting and fostering the implementation of instructional strategies for ELL students? (d.) To what extent do parents perceive their child's teacher provides a suitable environment for ELL?

Qualitative Research

Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p.15).

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) state that there are five characteristics of qualitative research which include: naturalistic, descriptive data, concern with process, inductive, and meaning. Naturalistic implies that the researcher is immersed in the direct source of data and becomes instrumental to the process as the key data gatherer. Qualitative data is descriptive data that comes in the form of words and pictures as opposed to numbers. Such data can include interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, videotapes, personal documents, memos, and other official records. “The written word is very important in the qualitative approach, both in recording data and disseminating the findings” (Bogdan & Biklen, p.5). Qualitative researchers are equally concerned with process as with the outcomes. They analyze their data inductively, and are interested in how people make sense of their lives.

Maxwell (1996) states these five purposes of qualitative research: understanding the meaning, understanding the particular context, identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences, understanding the process, and developing causal explanations. (p. 17-20) He also attributes the strengths in qualitative research “from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers” (p. 17).

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) assert that qualitative research is guided by theoretical orientation, “a way of looking at the world, the assumptions people have about what is important and what makes the world work” (p. 22). Data are often rich descriptions of people, places, and conversations that do not become statistical interpretations. Research questions are often open-ended type questions that are formulated to investigate a topic of

interest. The researcher tends to analyze data inductively. The researcher is most interested in understanding behavior from the participants' own frame of reference.

Multi-vocal Method

According to Gersten & Baker (2000), Ogawa and Malen introduced the multi-vocal synthesis as a means for its use for topics “characterized by a preponderance of diverse writings and a paucity of systemic investigations . . .” (p. 5). They further state that “researchers evaluate the methods and results of a given set of studies and use rigorous qualitative procedures to analyze “the words . . . in these diverse writings (Gerstan & Baker quote Ogawa & Malen, 1991) to determine potential underlying belief systems and biases” (p. 5).

“Multi-vocal synthesis is a research method that incorporates multiple data sets from various sources, such as professional literature and the perspectives of different types of stakeholders who are knowledgeable about the studied topic” (Neely, 2005, p. 50). The multi-vocal qualitative method is a method that is used when very little research exists in a specific area of interest. No studies have been done in the area of successful instructional strategies for American Indian ELL students, thus this study, based on the multi-vocal synthesis method, is deemed an appropriate avenue for garnering such perspectives from relevant stakeholders.

Ogawa and Malen (1991), Gersten and Baker (2000), and Neely (2005) conducted multi-vocal synthesis research to address the lack of studies that were relevant to their

respective topics. The result of a multi-vocal synthesis is not intended to reach definitive conclusions, but rather to obtain a wide range of perspectives about a phenomenon of interest (Neely, 2005). It allows for researchers to obtain the specialized knowledge that professionals have through literature synthesis and other qualitative procedures of interviews, surveys, collaborative work groups, and participant sharing which contributes to the lack of literature in a topic of interest. The multi-vocal method is a method that is still being developed. There is no established experimental design for the multi-vocal method. This method is used to assist researchers in conducting a study when there is very limited literature about their research topic.

Ogawa and Malen (1991) suggest a strategy for the multi-vocal synthesis.

This strategy enables researchers to conduct . . . open ended search for relevant information, identify the major patterns associated with the phenomenon of interest, develop or adapt constructs that embrace the patterns, articulate tentative hypotheses about the meanings of the constructs and their relations, and refine questions and/or suggest conceptual perspectives that might serve as fruitful guides for subsequent investigations. (p. 271)

Ogawa and Malen (1991) used the multi-vocal synthesis method by synthesizing literature based on site-based management. They referred to each piece of literature as a “data point” or “data set”. They did not limit their literature review to studies only written and published as juried articles because this would present only the perspectives from writers who are associated with journals. And because there was very little

literature about school site-based management, they reviewed all writings from many different sources- and from diverse writers' perspectives- e.g., academicians, practitioners, policymakers, journalists, and state officers of education.

Gersten and Baker (2000) convey that “in a multivocal synthesis, researchers evaluate the methods and results of a given set of documents and use rigorous qualitative procedures to analyze the findings and the diverse writings” (p. 455). Ogawa and Malen, as cited by Gersten and Baker (2000), state the multi-vocal method includes “perceptions acquired from a rich mix of informants representing different positions in the system and different perspectives of the phenomenon (e.g., practitioners and academics, participants and observers)” (p. 455).

Gersten and Baker's (2000) study was based on instructional practices for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. They used the multi-vocal method to obtain the professional knowledge of educators' instructional strategies because there was a lack of literature that addressed their topic. They used work groups consisting of professionals who instructed LEP students to conduct discussion groups. The work groups were a way of obtaining the knowledge of the professionals which could not be addressed through the literature review. Gersten and Baker (2000) also state that an “important feature of multivocal synthesis is its ability to make comparisons within and among data sources (e.g., studies, professional work groups, and school district documents)” (p.458).

Neely (2005) used the multi-vocal method to examine conflict management strategies between school personnel and parents of children with disabilities regarding issues of special education delivery. She employed the concept of using the literature review as a data set from Ogawa and Malen's (1991) study and the concept of

professional work groups from Gersten and Baker's (2000) study. She conducted an initial literature review, which was her initial data set. Based on the literature review she conducted interviews with parents of children with disabilities. As a result of the parent interviews, she constructed two scenarios based on the conflicts experienced by the parents. Next, she conducted three teachers work groups in which each teacher individually read the scenarios and came up with recommendations. Afterwards, the teacher groups compiled their recommendations and came up with collective recommendations or six themes. The recommendations were further used in interviews with administrators.

Pugach (2001) states that multi-vocal texts gives voice to those who have been marginalized:

The development of qualitative research in education does not end with its initial legitimization as a mode of scholarly inquiry. Instead, scholars continue to attempt to shed light on the educational system, one of the primary characteristics of contemporary, postmodern qualitative research is the commitment to bring to the surface stories of those whose voices have not been heard, those who have been oppressed or disenfranchised in schools. (p.443)

Pugach (2001) contends that there exists a lack of studies due to the importance perceived by researchers to study a specific topic or because "education researchers are still reluctant to take on the issues of race, class, culture, and language" (p. 450). She further states that the researchers who do are usually researchers of color.

Denzin and Lincoln as cited by Pugach (2001) termed this "crisis of representation" in the context of social justice. "As a result of crisis representation we

are now likely to hear the voices of individuals of color, those in lower socioeconomic classes, or those of women- speaking for themselves-rising to the forefront of qualitative research, enabling us to hear stories until recently have been suppressed in mainstream educational research” (p. 443).

Pugach (2001) further states, “context and the representation of multiple voices, especially as they relate to a critical or ideological framework for the conduct of qualitative research, signify a challenge to push continually at the edges of what we are comfortable with, to stretch ourselves to consider complex aspects of contexts we study that might otherwise be unattainable methodologically” (p. 447).

Guiding Principles

Neely (2005) applied Gersten and Baker’s (2000) six guiding principles in the development of her multi-vocal synthesis; these six principles were used in this study.

They are:

- (1) Significant input from practitioners for generation and refinement of interpretations (Ogawa & Malen, 1991). Practitioners have a valuable role in shaping and honing the interpretations of researchers.
- (2) Triangulation across various data sources (Patton, 1990). Information is collected from a variety of individuals, sources, and settings.
- (3) Constant-comparative method of traversing data sources to develop and refine interpretations (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Several different sources of information are used to develop and to

corroborate research interpretations.

- (4) Conscious juxtaposition of disparate studies (Noblit & Hare, 1988).
Studies with diverse findings are compared and contrasted to help develop and refine researcher interpretations.
- (5) Serious entertaining of rival hypotheses (Noblit & Hare, 1988). Not only must researchers be open to rival hypotheses; researchers must actively search for rival interpretations and attempt to understand the basis for these interpretations.
- (6) Reciprocal translation (Noblit & Hare, 1988). Each study read and analyzed helps us interpret and understand the next study, as well as helping us to reanalyze what was previously read and discussed.
(p.457-458)

Neely (2005) cites Gersten and Baker “as making reference to using propositions from published research and significant input from practitioners for generation and refinement of interpretations” (p. 54). This study’s literature review produced propositions (instructional strategies) used to inform the sources of data that followed.

Practitioner’s input was used to inform each step of the process illustrated in Figure 3-1. The parent interviews generated recommendations for improving instruction. The teacher focus groups reviewed the recommendations, and refined and developed further recommendations for improving and implementing teaching strategies for American Indian ELL students. The principals were given the opportunity to review and comment on the recommendations for improving instructional strategies and refine them in their interviews.

The refinement of the recommendation of instructional strategies throughout the flow of data collection relates to Gersten and Baker's "reciprocal translation".

"Reciprocal translation is the notion that each body of information collected at each step of the study serves to inform the remaining elements in the study" (Neely, p. 61).

A Framework for Multi-vocal Synthesis for the Present Study¹

Ogawa and Malen (1991) and Gersten and Baker (2000) conducted multi-vocal synthesis research to address the lack of studies that were relevant to their respective topics. Neely (2005) used their studies as a source in providing guidance to conduct a multi-vocal synthesis and a framework for her study on special education delivery management. This study is modeled after Neely's study (2005), the framework is shown below in Figure 3-1:

¹ It is important to note that the present study is guided by Neely's (2005) study entitled "Special Education Conflict Management at the School Building Level: A Multi-Vocal Synthesis".

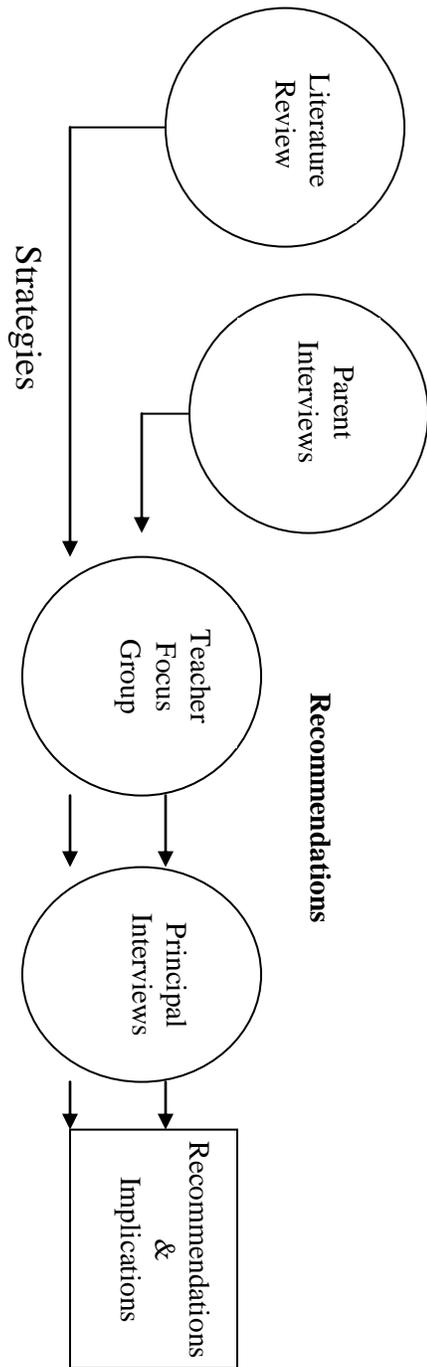


Figure 3.1 Flow of data collection across the multivocal synthesis.

The first set of data came from the literature review- the research-based instructional strategies. The second set of data came from the parent interviews. The data from the parent interview transcripts were organized into themes. Parents also offered recommendations for improving learning for their children. Data was collected from the three teacher focus groups who responded to the research-based instructional strategies from the literature review and the parent recommendations. Information from the focus groups was analyzed using the researched-based instructional strategies from the literature review. The fourth set of data was obtained from the principal/assistant principal interviews. Each data set was analyzed for a specific purpose and integrated themes emerged as the collection of data from the literature review, the parent interviews, the teacher focus groups and the principal interviews were obtained. The outcome of the process was to be able to refine recommendations and implications for teaching American Indian ELL students from the “voices” of parents, teachers, and principals.

It allowed for data collection to begin with the review of literature. Neely began by choosing literature that was most relevant for her topic which looked at the management of problems in special education delivery services for children. Likewise, with this study, the literature review is part of the initial data collection of the study. The literature review was a means for obtaining some of the research-based teaching strategies used with ELL students. However, because there was a lack of studies pertinent to American Indian ELL students, the literature from other cultural groups was used to identify successful teaching methods for ELL students (Brock, 2001; Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005; Keenan, 2004; Echevarria, 2006; and Johnson, 2005).

Using Professional Groups Work

Neely (2005) used professional work groups to obtain the perspective of the teacher, which in her opinion was absent from the literature in regards to her topic. She used three teacher work groups, who were teachers in an administrators' program. Neely modeled her employment of professional work groups after Gersten and Baker's (2000) concept of professional work groups. Gersten and Baker used five professional work groups to solicit input from as representatives of a specific professional community. They used the professional work groups as a means of gathering their knowledge relative to their topic.

We consider the input from these end-users a high priority and believe their contributions helped us develop an informed sense of the propositions and practice issues considered important by the most knowledgeable groups in the field. We believe that their participation strengthens the validity of the interpretations that emerged and provides an important linkage between practice and research. (Gersten & Baker, 1999, p.6)

Thus Neely's (2005) teacher group brought to her study the teacher's voice and likewise, Gersten and Baker's (2000) study obtained the unpublished document voice of members who belonged to the same professional community. The parents', teachers', and principals' voices will be obtained through interviews and focus groups in this study.

Participants

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) state that "qualitative researchers are concerned

with what are called “participant perspectives” and “set up strategies and procedures to enable them to consider experiences from the informants’ perspectives” (p.7). The multi-vocal qualitative method was the best way to capture participant perspectives through a volunteer sampling. The parent and professional participants were not chosen at random but were selected because they volunteered and had experience in working with American Indian ELL students. Furthermore, the professional participants volunteered and had experience with teaching methods they used with American Indian ELL students.

Parent Participants

The parents were selected from a mailing list of American Indian ELL students from a public elementary school comprised of grades 4-6, in a southwestern state on an American Indian reservation. I had access to the mailing list because I was a former teacher at this elementary school. All seven participants were a parent to an American Indian student who had been identified as an ELL by the school. Three parents were chosen from each grade level, which would have been nine parents participating, however, two declined to be interviewed. They were not confident that participating in such an interview was a good idea for their child, as repercussions might happen. Each parent was interviewed individually. The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 60 minutes. Table 3-1 summarizes their demographics. The parents all resided within the same community of their child’s school. The parents all spoke English and their native language to varying degrees. Parents were an important component to the study in that

their voice was important to improving the academic abilities of American Indian ELL students.

Table 3-1 Demographics of Mothers Who Participated in Study

Participant	Post High School Education	Marital Status	Employment Status	Grade Level of Child(ren)
Mother 1	Yes	Single	Special Ed Aid	Fifth Grade
Mother 2	Yes	Unmarried	Teacher	Fourth Grade
Mother 3	Yes	Married	Secretary	Fourth & Sixth Grade
Mother 4	No	Separated	Teacher Aid	Fifth & Sixth Grade
Mother 5	Yes	Common Law	Field Support Specialist	Fourth & Fifth Grade
Mother 6	Yes	Common Law	Administrative Assistant	Fifth Grade
Mother 7	No	Married	Homemaker	Fourth & Sixth Grade

The school district is comprised of seven schools, which are situated in three different neighboring communities, which are less than 20 miles apart. Each community is on the same American Indian reservation; and each school is a public school and not a Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) school. The total school district student enrollment was 2,287 students. The elementary school where the study was conducted had a total student population of 348 students in grades 4-6; of this number 130 students were identified as ELL. The school staffing consisted of: 1 principal, 1 assistant principal, 27 teachers and 13 teacher aides. The school was comprised of 98% American Indian students. The school district uses the AZELLA testing instrument to test students' English proficiency.

Professional Participants

The three teacher focus groups were comprised of individuals who were teachers at the elementary school. I used to teach at this school, so three of the teachers who volunteered were my former colleagues. The researcher presented details of the study at a staff meeting and solicited participants. If teachers were interested in participating in the focus groups, they meet with me after the staff meeting for further details. The teachers already have a common prep hour, so this was the time that was agreed upon to use for the focus group meeting for each grade level. The teacher focus groups were conducted at the school according to the teacher prep times by grade level. The three teacher focus groups consisted of four teachers from each grade level, a total of 12

teachers. Their demographics are presented in Table 3-2. Of the fourth grade teachers, one teacher had 28 years of teaching, another one had 11 years, one had four years and the last had two years of teaching experience. Of the fifth grade teachers, one teacher had 30 years of teaching, another one had nine years of teaching, one had eight years of teaching and the last had five years of teaching experience. Of the sixth grade teachers, one teacher had 29 years of teaching, another one had 22 years, one had 11 years and the last had eight years of teaching experience. All of the teachers were American Indian with the exception of one. Each teacher participant had experience in working with American Indian ELL students. The teacher participants were from the same community as the parents.

Table 3-2 Composition of Teacher Participants

Participant	Female	Male	Native American	ESL Endorsement	Teaching Years
4 th Grade Teacher 1	X		X	In progress	2
4 th Grade Teacher 2		X	X	No	4
4 th Grade Teacher 3	X		X	Yes	11
4 th Grade Teacher 4	X		X	Yes	28
5 th Grade Teacher 1	X		X	Yes	5
5 th Grade Teacher 2	X		X	Yes	8
5 th Grade Teacher 3	X		X	Yes	9
5 th Grade Teacher 4	X		X	Yes	30
6 th Grade Teacher 1	X		X	Yes	8

6 th Grade Teacher 2	X		X	In Progress	11
6 th Grade Teacher 3	X		½	Yes	22
6 th Grade Teacher 4	X		No	No	29

Principals were the second professional work group. Five elementary school principals/assistant principals were interviewed individually at their school site. Each was practicing within the local school district, but not at the same elementary school. Of the five principals, two had been the principal at the elementary school where this study was conducted. Each principal/assistant principal had experience in working with American Indian ELL students at the elementary school level. Four of the principals were American Indian and one was Caucasian. The demographics for the principals are presented in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3 Composition of Principals

Participant	Native American	Principal	Assistant Principal
Principal One	Yes	X	
Principal Two	Yes		X
Principal Three	No	X	
Principal Four	Yes	X	
Principal Five	Yes		X

Data Collection

The first set of data came from the literature review- the research-based instructional strategies. The second set of data came from the parent interviews. The data from the parent interview transcripts were organized into themes. Parents also made recommendations for improving learning for their child. Data was collected from the three teacher focus groups who responded to the research-based instructional strategies from the literature review and the parent recommendations. Information from the focus groups was analyzed using the instructional strategies from the literature. The fourth set of data was obtained from the principal/assistant principal interviews. Each data set was analyzed for a specific purpose and integrated themes emerged as the collection of data from the literature review, the parent interviews, the teacher focus groups and the principal interviews were obtained.

Means of Collecting Data: Instrument Selection/Construction

Propositions Generated From Published Research

Neely (2005) purposely put parameters around her literature review, as with this study parameters were also put around the literature review. Studies from 2000 on were reviewed if they included an ELL population in grades K-8, and if they were literacy-based strategies across the curriculum. “Because researchers and scholars were not included in the interviews or the work groups, a logical way to gain their perspective was acquired through the method of literature synthesis” (p. 62). The data obtained from the

literature synthesis was placed into a table that displayed teaching strategies and characteristics (see Table 2).

Parent Interviews

The parent interviews consisted of seven parents of American Indian ELL students. Their child(ren) had been identified by the elementary school as an ELL student. The interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. The goal was to get a rich description of possible learning challenges their child may have experienced in school. The parents responded to the following inquiries: What knowledge and skills does your child's teacher need in order to ensure that he/she is learning? ? To what extent do you perceive that your child's teacher provides a suitable environment for ELL? The parent interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Recommendations

Research-based instructional strategies were presented to the teachers as constructs in which they were able to have a discussion. The teachers were also able to view parent recommendations on improving teaching for American Indian ELL students. Neely (2005) states that this "procedure follows Gersten and Baker's (2000) major principle of reciprocal translation with one step of the process informing the next step" (p. 63).

The recommendations included significant input from the academic community through the literature synthesis and from the parents through their interviews. The recommendations from the parent interviews generated a set of interpretations that were refined by the teacher groups.

Teacher Focus Groups

The teacher groups used the research-based instructional strategies in the focus group discussions and made refinements of parent recommendations to improve instruction for American Indian ELL students. Neely (2005) cites Gersten and Baker as stating “work group participants could identify what they saw as themes and problems in current practice, or problems with recommendations as best practices” (p.66). There were three teacher focus groups. They were asked to consider the following question: How can successful practices recommended by the literature of ELLs (non-American Indian) be used to improve American Indian ELL students’ learning? They individually read the parent recommendations and viewed the table of research-based teaching strategies and wrote down their recommendations. Each group then had a group discussion. Each group made suggestions for refining the recommendations. The data collected (the list of recommendations) would be used in the principal interviews.

The teacher focus groups provided rich input from practitioners in the teaching field. Their development of the recommendations met the major objective of generating and refining interpretations of data provided earlier by parents. By virtue of conducting three focus groups, triangulation was present at the teacher focus group stage and when

the responses of the parents were considered. The technique of reciprocal translation was utilized throughout this multi-vocal synthesis. (Neely, 2005)

Principal Interview Procedures

Principals/assistant principals were interviewed at their respective schools. They were asked to respond to the following question: How can teachers of American Indian ELL students enhance their teaching style in order to ensure that they are meeting the needs of such students? They were given the opportunity to comment on the recommendations made by the teacher groups. The principals/assistant principals also responded to the following sub-questions: (a) What knowledge and skills do teachers of American Indian ELL students need to ensure learning?, (b) How can successful practices recommended by the literature of ELLs (non-American Indian) be used to improve American Indian ELL students' learning?, and (c) How would you characterize the implications for supporting and fostering the implementation of successful instructional practices for ELL students? The principal interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis Procedures²

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 3.1 orchestrated the collection in four sequentially dependent steps: (a) the literature synthesis, (b) parents' interviews, (c)

² The data analysis procedures used in the present study is a replication of Neely's (2005) study. For formatting reasons, APA style of paragraph indentation was omitted only from this section.

teacher focus groups, and (d) principals' interviews. The data sets collected from the reviews of literature, interviews with parents, and administrators were analyzed by the researcher. The teacher focus groups were involved in the interpretation of the data from the parent interviews and by refining the recommendations for improving instruction for American Indian ELL students and generating more recommendations.

Analysis of the data from the literature, parent interviews, the three teacher focus groups, and the principal interviews was completed following the steps outlined by Tesch as cited by Creswell (1994):

1. Get a sense of the whole. Read through all of the transcripts carefully.

Perhaps jot down some ideas as they come to mind.

2. Pick one document (one interview) - the most interesting, the shortest, the one on the top of the pile. Go through it, asking yourself, "What is this about?" Do not think about the "substance" of the information, but rather its underlying meaning. Write thoughts in the margin.

3. When you have completed this task for several informants, make a list of all topics. Cluster together simple topics. Form these topics into columns that might be arrayed as major topics, unique topics, and leftovers.

4. Now take this list and go back to your data. Abbreviate your topics as codes and write the code next to the appropriate segments in the text. Try out this preliminary organizing scheme to see whether new categories and codes emerge.

5. Find the most descriptive wording for your topics and turn them into categories. Look for reducing your total list of categories by grouping topics that

relate to each other. Perhaps draw a line between your categories to show interrelationships.

6. Make a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetize these codes.

7. Assemble the data material belonging to each category in one place and perform a preliminary analysis.

8. If necessary, recode your existing data. (p.155)

In this study, a topic was determined important if it emerged at least three times. Those sub-topics were collapsed into broader topics until a manageable set of categories were developed. Neely (2005) cites Gersten and Baker's major principle of traversing data across sources. This study incorporated this same principle and clustered categories together across the groups. (p. 69-70)

Validity

Creswell (1998) states that validity can be determined by the following verification procedures: (a) prolonged engagement and persistent observation, (b) triangulation, (c) peer review or debriefing, (d) negative case analysis, (e) clarifying researcher bias, (f) member checks, (g) rich, thick description, and (h) external audits.

Creswell recommends that a researcher engage in at least two of the procedures. In this study, data were collected over a period of nine months, "data sources were iterative and interactive, and participants were involved in member checking to assure that their perspectives were portrayed with accuracy" (Neely, 2005). In this study, by

sharing the parent recommendations with the teachers and allowing them to refine or add their recommendations, allowed the opinions and feelings of the parents to be validated.

Triangulation

Creswell (1998) defines triangulation as “an approach in which the researcher tests one source of information against another to strip away alternative rival explanations” (p. 210). Neely (2005) stated that triangulation was intentionally present in her study. In keeping with her methodology, the following procedures were incorporated into this study:

The interviews and the work groups provided the sources necessary for comparing the multiple data sets. Examples of the presence of triangulation are: (a) triangulation across the literature sources, (b) triangulation across the responses to the parents’ interviews, (c) triangulation across the three work groups, and (d) triangulation across the administrator interviews. (p.71)

Conclusion

This study is a partial replication of Neely’s (2005) methodology that used the multi-vocal synthesis, which is a qualitative approach used to obtain the knowledge of professionals from a specific area, when a lack of research studies exist. This study’s inquiry into the teaching strategies for American Indian ELL students used the literature to create a table of research-based instructional strategies that were used as an initial data

source, interviews of parents occurred, data from the interviews were used to construct recommendations for teacher work group analysis and refinement of recommendations, the recommendations were used in interviews with principals/assistant principals. The principals/assistant principals' interviews produced implications for improving practice in teaching for American Indian ELL students and policy.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter presents the overall findings of the study. It will first discuss the multi-vocal qualitative method as the conceptual framework and as embodied in the research questions. The framework illustrates how the data were collected from different groups of people who possess a vested interest in improving teaching and learning for American Indian ELL students. The outcomes from each data set, including (a.) parent interviews, (b.) teacher focus groups, and (c.) principal interviews will be analyzed in relationship to the data derived from the literature review and how each proposition informs the next group.

The discussions will go accordingly; first I will start with the results of the interviews conducted with the parents, immediately followed by a brief analysis of the results and a summary of the results. The next discussion will be the results of the teacher focus groups conducted, followed by a brief analysis of the findings followed with a brief summary. The last segment of this chapter will present and discuss the results of the interviews conducted with the principals, followed by an analysis of the results and summary. Each set of data is analyzed and integrated with the next set of data so that the data is refined and each group helps identify relevant and irrelevant concepts for the integrative synthesis.

Overview of the Multi-vocal Qualitative Method

The purpose of this inquiry was to develop recommended teaching strategies that are most effective for American Indian ELL students. In order to address the research questions it was necessary to obtain the perceptions of parents, teachers and principals about instructional strategies that support the teaching of American Indian ELL students. To do so, a multi-vocal qualitative methodology was used.

According to Gersten & Baker (2000), Ogawa and Malen introduced the multi-vocal synthesis as a means for its use for topics which have a scarcity of investigations. They further state that this method is used to evaluate the methods and results of a set of studies about the topic of interest and then rigorous qualitative procedures are used to analyze “the words . . . in these diverse writings (Gerstan & Baker quote Ogawa & Malen, 1991) to determine potential underlying belief systems and biases” (p. 5).

“Multi-vocal synthesis is a research method that incorporates multiple data sets from various sources, such as professional literature and the perspectives of different types of stakeholders who are knowledgeable about the studied topic” (Neely, 2005, p. 50). The multi-vocal qualitative method is a method that is used when very little research exists in a specific area of interest. No studies have been done in the area of successful instructional strategies for American Indian ELL students, thus this study, based on the multi-vocal synthesis method, is deemed an appropriate avenue for garnering such perspectives from relevant stakeholders.

The intended outcome of any multi-vocal synthesis is to gain perspectives from a variety of stakeholders surrounding a specific topic. The findings in this study were

derived from a parent interview data set, teacher focus group data set, and principal interview data set. Literature provided an additional data set. Each of these data sets produced a specific outcome. (Neeley, 2002) Data from the parent interviews were analyzed and organized into themes. Parents also provided recommendations for improving the instruction of American Indian ELL students. The teacher focus groups reviewed the chart of research-based instructional strategies for ELL students (see Table 2-2) which was derived from the literature review. The teachers used the research-based instructional strategies to open up dialogue and share their experiences and challenges in using such strategies. Furthermore, the teacher focus groups reviewed the 36 recommendations from the parent interviews and were given the opportunity to refine the recommendations. Elementary principals then discussed the implications of the research-based teaching strategies with regard to improving teaching for American Indian ELL students in relation to policy and practices used in their schools. These recommendations comprise the central findings for this study.

Overview of the Findings

The stakeholders indicated that the school should consider the following areas: (a.) student background; (b.) teacher skills and knowledge; (c.) appropriate accommodations; (d.) effective communication; (e.) a culturally responsive curriculum; and (f.) accountability in regards to improving learning for American Indian ELL students. Synthesizing the responses across all data sources resulted in the identification of four major themes regarding improving instructional practices for American Indian

ELL students. These themes are (a.) providing specialized training for all instructional staff; (b.) engaging and promoting parental involvement; (c.) maintaining consistency in delivery of curriculum; and (d.) communication. These themes and their implications for teaching will be discussed in the conclusion of Chapter 5.

Parent Interviews

As discussed in Chapter 3, seven parents of ELL students were interviewed. The parents were contacted by phone after a letter was sent to their address to inquire about their interest and willingness to voluntarily participate in an interview. The interviews took place at the location of the parent's choice, four were conducted at their child's school, one was conducted at their home, and two were conducted at the local coffee shop. They shared the learning challenges and problems their child had encountered as an ELL student during the interview. Parents were also given the opportunity to share recommendations they had for improving learning for their child. The 36 recommendations were collapsed into themes. Table 4-1 lists the themes that emerged out of the parents recommendations.

Parent Perceptions

Student background

“Parents have long been acknowledged as the first teacher of their children” (Gitelman Brilliant, 2001, p. 251). Parents possess the detailed insight of their children

which they are willing to share if given the opportunity. I found this to be true when interviewing parents of ELL students. A majority of the parents who were interviewed felt that it is highly important for teachers to know the students' background. Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) state that "responsive schools recognize the need to learn about the cultures, experiences, and needs of ELLs and thus they support listening to and learning from ELLs and their parents" (p. 20). Along this line, when parents spoke about knowing a student's background it also included: home life, culture, language, and social issues. First and foremost is that parents strongly advocated that teachers must know who the students are, where they come from, and what the students' culture is. Here is what Mother Two shared:

I feel that they need to be pretty knowledgeable in the child's background, like their home life, their cultural, they come with cultural entity, their religion. As for us being Navajo, I feel that the teacher really needs to look at how a Navajo family raises their children and also the language that is used. Um, I know that a lot of parents they tend to code switch from Navajo to English. And a lot of times they speak to their kids in Navajo, so it really leaves them being limited. And I know for me personally when I think about a teacher for my children I try to think of somebody who will understand that they are limited in English and that they do need to build that as they are in school.

Mother Three stated:

I feel that a teacher should know about the culture of a Navajo child, so that they can better understand. Even now just working here and observing, I feel sometimes that some of these kids are labeled as SPED students, in actuality I feel

like they are just labeled that because their main part of their language is Navajo. There's teachers that don't understand them or they're not Navajo speaking. I feel that's where I see when I see these kids when they come into the office, when you speak to them in Navajo, they understand they obey. When they go back to the teachers I feel they're not getting that same attention. I guess in a way you should really learn about your students and where they come from and what language they speak most. I do speak Navajo to my children but they don't understand, but I always explain but also I guess there's confusion because of that because you're speaking English to them, you're speaking Navajo to them. They're like which one should I understand. And I think that a teacher should get to know their students very well to better educate them.

Mother Four had this comment:

If you have a teacher who knows where you come from, your background, who you are, like some kids for instance live in the city, some live out there on the reservation without water and electricity. To know where they're coming and how to approach them how they are, or being a happy person. To let a child see you happy, to see who you are, not being like stubborn or being mean all the time. But smiling, happy, and looking forward to educating the child.

Mother Five said, "She has to be able to respect the cultural background, the teacher has to understand where the child is coming from because they live in a culture society where it is White and Native American."

It was clearly indicated by the mothers that they not only desire that the teachers of their children obtain enough background knowledge about their children, especially regarding their language background, in order to be effective teachers. Parents seemed to have a preference for their child to have a Navajo teacher, but in some cases their children did not, and by their own experiences with non-Navajo teachers, some parents felt that this was not an ideal learning situation for their child. Giambo and Szezi (2005) state that “[f]requently, the home language and culture of ELLs are not reflected in the background of their teachers, among whom the demographic change has not kept pace” (p. 108).

Teacher skills/ knowledge

Quiñones-Benitez (2003) cites Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, “teaching ELLs requires sophisticated instructional strategies for drawing connections between students’ experiences and ambitious curriculum ideas”. Many of the mothers were aware that the teachers should be certified and possess a degree, however, a few did not know what type of degree or certification is relevant to teachers who teach ELL students. It was apparent in Mother Seven’s response, “I don’t even know what to say. They have to be certified, they have to have a degree.” Mother Five stated, “First of all she has to be certified teacher to be able to teach my child and she also has to be certified in English criteria and the background in culture.” Mother One had this reply, “Well first it would be the general education requirements, a bachelor’s degree and if they could maybe have a master’s degree.”

The two parents, who have a college degree, were more aware of the specific type of degree and certification teachers of ELLs should possess. One such parent, Mother Two responded:

They need to be pretty knowledgeable in what they are going to teach and bring a lot of hands-on activities, different approaches because they're not going to learn the traditional standard [way] . . . they really need to be involved and engaged in what they are doing in order to really understand the concept they are being taught.

These two parents in particular might be an atypical sample to my study, because of the fact that they have a college degree; which might be indicative of a particular level of English language proficiency in the home. However, it must also be noted that these two parents are also bilingual speakers and do speak Navajo to their children at home as well.

Mother Six, whom also has a degree, replied, "I would like my child's teacher to know how best my sons learns, that would probably be more hands-on and visual."

Some parents were not sure what this question was asking and let me know, so I explained to try to present a clear understanding of the question. One parent might have misinterpreted the question because she responded in the following manner, "I would want a teacher who is outgoing, very energetic and have a connection with the kids. If you don't have the connection, how are you supposed to connect with the kids?"

Another perception that parents had of a skill that a teacher should possess is the ability to speak Navajo. Mother Two stated:

It would be nice to have a teacher that kind of spoke the language because I know a lot of times with these kids if you explain something to them in English, they really don't understand, but when you kind of explain it and refer it to something that has to do with their everyday life, like as for doing a skill at home to bring that into the classroom and refer to it in both languages I think that would help a child understand.

Mother Four shared her observation of a teacher:

I see different teachers how they teach their children, like for instance a couple years ago I saw a teacher where she would explain in English however she would also explain it in Navajo. I asked her, this particular teacher, why do you do this? You don't know if a child only listens to Navajo at home. So it's better you say it in English and Navajo, either way they'll get it.

Furthermore, Mother Five said, "A teacher has to be able to speak Navajo in order to teach a student Navajo and English. If a white person were to come into my daughter's classroom, and she was not able to speak Navajo, I would have a problem with that."

I believe that many of the parents in their understanding of what ELL is and knowing that they do not want to compromise the Navajo language and probably even the style of learning that comes along with Navajo teachings, they seemed to allude to the idea of employing bilingual education methodology into the classroom for their ELL student. "A solid understanding of the interconnectedness of language and culture is fundamental for teachers of ELLs" state Giambo & Szecsi (2006, p. 108).

All students in this school take a Navajo class every day for about 40 minutes. The Navajo teacher employs a curriculum which attempts to have students read, speak,

and write in the Navajo language. This was a mandate from the Navajo Nation that all schools on the Navajo reservation offer Navajo language classes. In this school district, students are required to take a Navajo language class beginning in Kindergarten and continually until the end of 8th grade. High school students have the option of taking Navajo in order to satisfy the Foreign Language credit requirement, or students can choose to take Spanish or Hopi language.

Not all parents support the school in teaching Navajo, some feel that this is the responsibility of the parents and should be left out of the curriculum. Some parents have been influenced by their parents who went to boarding schools. Boarding schools used to forbid Navajo students from speaking Navajo and if students were caught, they often were dealt a harsh punishment. Such experiences have lingering effects that influence today's Navajo students. The issue of whether or not Navajo should be taught in the schools was a contentious one. Now that it has become a mandate from the Navajo Nation, as a means to revitalize the language because so few students speak the language, the fear of language loss is real. Also there are parents who feel that they only want their child to speak English because it is seen as a way to ensure success off the reservation and future success in college.

Appropriate accommodations

At the time the interviews were conducted the school district was in its first year of implementing a state mandated English language development (ELD) program for ELL students. Students are assessed by the Arizona English Language Assessment

(AZELLA), and if they do not meet the Arizona English Language Proficiency Standards then they will be classified as an ELL student. According to the AZELLA Reference Manual, parents fill out a Home Language Survey and if they indicate that their child speaks another language other than English at home as the primary language, then the student will take the AZELLA.

The Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) is a standards based assessment that measures a student's proficiency of the Arizona *English Language Proficiency Standards*. The AZELLA is administered to students who have a language other than English listed on any of the three questions on the Primary Home Language Other Than English (PHLOTE) survey. AZELLA meets both state and federal requirements for assessing the language proficiency of students identified as second language learners and determines placement for appropriate instruction.

(AZELLA Reference Manual, 2012, p.1)

The students who are classified as ELL are required to have instruction in the English Language Development (ELD) curriculum. Due to the fact that this is a mandated program by the Arizona Department of Education, school districts are required to identify the teachers who will be teaching this curriculum to the ELL students and provide the ELD program training to them. ELL students, who are placed in the ELD program, have an ELD teacher at their specific grade level. These students have intense English language development lessons on a daily basis for a maximum of four hours.

Parents shared that they received a letter in the mail that notified them that their child, because they are classified as ELL, would be put into the ELD program. The letter explained that the ELL student would be put into a classroom with an ELD teacher who would deliver English instruction in this four hour block program. At the time of interviewing the parents, they were aware of the ELD program that would begin that year

so they felt that now their child would be receiving the appropriate education as an ELL student.

Here's what Mother Three shared:

I believe that the teacher should know other skills because this new ELL coming into effect. I feel like I can say it's about time. From the beginning, I notice with my child with the reading and the writing, I keep bringing these up with the teacher in the past, and I felt like maybe they didn't know the skill that my child needed. Didn't even improve at all and when she left from here she still needed more. And then finally this year, I was like "Wow!" Maybe now learning this new skill my daughter will improve in these areas especially reading and writing and actually speaking too.

Mother Five commented:

I thought this is what they were supposed to be doing a long time ago. You think, we hire these teachers here at this school district so they can teach our kids but it just seems like they're just now waking up and realizing what their job is supposed to be. And maybe that's the reason why our school district is just falling apart. They're just so into themselves and they're not even thinking about the kids. That's what gets me really upset. Now the school district is trying to find ways to keep kids within the school districts. A lot of these parents are pulling their kids from the schools districts and sending them to the boarding school because their curriculum is so much better than the public school. And that's just really upsetting that it has to take something like this for them to realize

hey we're not doing something right. They should have been doing this a long time ago. When I was in public school, they should have started this already.

Mother Six acknowledged that she felt that most teachers at the school had the skills to teach ELL students already. She said:

I think the teachers do have those skills; it's just having the time to utilize those skills for the students who really need it. I think sometimes they focus on the children who are excelling and the children who are below grade level whose skills fall far below. But the children who are in between I think they get left behind sometimes. And I think they do have those skills, it's just having the time, managing the time, the activities to help the students who really need it. Plus I think the student-teacher ratio can be a concern.

Parents feel that teachers should already possess the skills required for ELL students. I think that parents are familiar with the teachers and know that many of them are veteran teachers. So there is the assumption that veteran teachers are equipped to teach ELL students because most teachers have had experience in teaching ELLs in the past. Some of the parents felt frustrated because they could see that their child is struggling and has been struggling. Parents expect for teachers to become prepared if they are not. Parents most likely also expect that the school district should provide training to the teachers to make sure that they are using ELL teaching methodology . Parents do not want their children to fail.

Effective Communication

Parents consistently talked about the need to be more informed about what goes on at the school, i.e. regarding curriculum changes, classroom events. Most parents said that they are only contacted by the school when “negative” things occur, i.e. a discipline issue, or informed about absences. They are never contacted when “positive” things occur. Mother One talked about how she felt in regards to the parents who live in the rural areas who are often left in the dark and not really provided any information. Her comment:

I feel a lot of them are just left in the dark and a lot of them have to work, leave early in the morning, and come back in the evening. This is my opinion, they place the trust in the school and some of them don't have any other choice.

There's no other school to provide this service around here so they just have to go with what's going on.

This parent expressed her frustration with the school because it is not doing a good job in keeping her informed about what is happening at the school. Some homes do not have electricity or the landlines for telephones. Most families cannot afford a laptop or computer. Internet service is not available in some of the remote areas where students live. These families are deprived of the most common avenue of communication, which is email, because of the history of politics among the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Nation and the Federal government. The land surrounding the community is part of the Bennett Freeze. The Bennett Freeze, which was enacted in 1934, authorized a construction freeze

in the western portion of the Navajo reservation. It was a result of the ongoing land dispute between the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Nation. For more than 40 years, no construction or development was allowed. In 2006, the freeze was lifted, however, development is slow to occur.

This parent also expressed that because she really does not have a choice in schools, she has no other option than to allow it to happen. Parents who feel frustrated usually will not go to the school with this concern because they are busy with work and cannot afford to take the time off to go to the school.

Mother Three stated:

Even now I feel as a parent, we should really explain to the parent about their child being labeled as ELL. Because even now we're not letting them know, we are just sending out letters. We should bring these parents in and say, "Hey this is what's going on" and explain to them. Like I said most of these are Navajo, some of them are still traditional. They're just like my child has to go to school. They just go to school. . . Like I said we're putting everything on paper in English, and we have a lot of parents out there who don't speak English and they don't understand English, so we should educate them. Maybe find a person, go out there and interpret what this actually means. . . Educate our parents, really. I know it's hard to get our parents to come here. But I know before when I went to school here, the home visitor was always everywhere. Now, I don't see that. It's like the only time the home visitor comes is if your child did something. Most of the parents say, "Oh no, it's the home visitor. What did my child do?" I think that there should be some people going out and explaining what the real purpose

of ELL is. Even now I just feel they are not being informed, we are just putting their children in these classes.

Mother Four felt that it would be best if the concept of ELL and what it means when your child is classified as ELL is explained in Navajo. Her reason was based on the fact that her first language is Navajo and for many of the other parents whose first language is also Navajo. Simply put she said, “You could understand it more.”

In the Navajo language, when translation occurs, especially if it is translating from English to Navajo, meaning is lost in translation. This is because in the Navajo language there are some words that do not exist in Navajo, i.e. computer. So in conversing in Navajo, in order for the person to understand computer, it is necessary for the speaker to describe the physical attributes of a computer. For many grandparents, whom are the guardians of ELL students, they prefer for Navajo to be spoken by school officials. For this reason, when the school sends out letters written in English, it is not understood by grandparents. Also some parents of ELL students are dropouts and their own school experiences are limited, so they might be challenged by comprehending written English also.

Other areas of concern for the parents had to do with communicating with parents in ways parents can support their ELL student at home with activities and the importance of notifying parents in a timely fashion when missing assignments occur.

Culturally responsive curriculum

Some parents mentioned that because their child is Native American the curriculum should be more reflective of that and when their heritage is not reflected within the curriculum, parents felt like their child's cultural background was being compromised. Here is what Mother One offered:

Like history, we read about the Holocaust, we read about how the colonies were established. But it's never really this is what happened to Native Americans or this is what you know, they were originally from here but they got moved to here. This is how they succeeded or this how they've overcome certain things. Or even just having more Native American literature included in the reading. There's a lot of Native American authors, poems, songs, stories that are not included and not maybe seriously taken to be of that caliber of some of the authors.

Mother Two commented:

I feel like the Navajo language program is very good. There's two schools here in our community which my children could go to. But I choose to put them at the school they're in because of the Navajo language program. It helps them with their identity. At this point they really need to know, them being Navajo and having a language, that's a positive for them. That's something that can help them accelerate and succeed; it might take them farther in life. But I really feel that a lot of parents need to know that because we have a lot of families that are "absent-parent", children raising their siblings. I feel that when you use and teach with the Navajo language, you're instilling some those clanship, how to identify

one another, respect among brother, sister, mother, child, and even authority. You get to teach that and that has to do with a lot of the language and how you address the kids. How they earn that respect for you. That goes along with the teaching. If you don't have that respect for the child, they're not going to trust to learn from you, or to give that valuable time in the classroom. You'll spend a lot of your time disciplining, you know trying to get the kids to be in conduct.

Mother Three had this to say:

I know we're told that we should be English proficient but we're also told that we should know our own language too at the same time. To me it would work if these kids that are spoken Navajo to, if you explain to them in Navajo what the lesson is about, they'll comprehend in that way. Then in English this is what it means. Just like us talking to our kids we're saying this Navajo word, it actually in English this is what it means. If maybe, if we teach it that way, they'll understand better. Instead of just saying it in English and they don't understand, it's like we're confusing the child.

Some parents do not fully understand the ELL regulations which school districts must follow in the state of Arizona and the mandated ELD curriculum that their ELL child will receive. The school district also requires that their child take a Navajo language class because it is mandated by the Navajo Nation. This becomes confusing for parents because they are receiving the message, that on one hand, their child must become English proficient, and on the other hand, their child should learn to speak Navajo as well. For many families, the memories of boarding schools, which prohibited

Navajo students from speaking their native language, are still very vivid. Parents often say that they remember when they were told to speak only English and now their children or grandchildren are told they should speak Navajo. Parents want to their children to be able to hold on to as much of their cultural identity as possible.

Ladson-Billing's (1995) culturally responsive practices (CRP) could be applicable to Navajo students' learning in school. Ladson-Billings states that CRP takes the best of teaching methods and applies them to teaching students whose culture differs from the dominant culture in our society and school system. The premise of this theory is that the student is in the minority population of the school. Navajo students are not the minority population at this school, it is 98% American Indian, and so they are the dominant population. However, this theory can be applicable because one of the components of CRP is that teachers can help the students deal with the inequitable treatment of students of color and other underserved populations by them becoming critically conscious and knowledgeable about the students' culture. When Navajo students graduate and if they go on to college, then they become part of the minority population. So components of CRP can prepare them for this transition.

Parents are not saying that they feel that the curriculum has been insensitive to their children as Navajo students. I think parents are advocating that they want the curriculum to be more reflective of students' culture so that they have a sense that the school is not a place that devalues their cultural heritage. One way to do achieve this is by simply incorporating books that are written by American Indian authors, this was a comment by one parent. Parents are not saying that there is cultural misalignment that is responsible for students' learning challenges.

Accountability

Mother One was very frustrated with the learning experience of her son. She admitted to being a very vocal parent who spoke up and voiced her opinions and concerns to the administration and at school board meetings. This is what she had to say:

That's where I had to step in. No, I did not feel that my child was learning what he could be learning, what he had the potential to be learning. As far as what they taught him I think he kind of slacked off. That's what I learned here, there's no discipline . . . He still needs that training and discipline to say, "This is what is expected of you. You are expected to turn in your homework, you are expected to be at school on time, and you are expected to behave regardless of who your parents or grandparents are or what your test scores are." There are things that he needs to learn as a child that will help him the rest of his life and he wasn't getting that here.

Mother Two shared that she has the expectation that the teacher will employ teaching strategies that are most benefitting for ELL students. She had this to say:

I feel that I'm pretty involved with the teachers that I select for my children every year. I try to look at someone that will foster their needs. I know that my kids are not the typical- a desk, a child, and a teacher directed classroom. I try to get my kids engaged in someone who is very enriching in their environment, someone that uses . . . with our children being ELL it's good to bring in that background knowledge and enhancing that, but we can't neglect the technological aspect of it. In the past, the teachers that I selected are the teachers that tie back their lessons

to the culture, also add in where they can, use what they know, bring in different types of technology and hands-on activities, which do keep them engaged, real life situation teaching. I know that teachers that my children have had in the past have always incorporated real-life situation, they used technology. My son learned how to use PowerPoint. They do a lot of internet, internet activities on the internet. He's done a lot of Google mapping, Google world, so he brings a lot of that outside world I know they'll never see into the classroom. So they're exposing the kids way beyond what is just here.

Mother Three expressed her concern of students being underserved who are labeled ELL.

Her comments:

I mean we're trying to make them English proficient. If you explain to your child what it means, they're like, "What I'm this?" It's true, I feel they were underserved. They didn't, I don't think the teachers really had a curriculum how to teach these kids to get English proficient until now. Teachers were like, "Wow we could have done this." I know one particular teacher, I really like her, she was my daughter's teacher. She was like, "I could have done this, I could do this better." That's the kind of teachers we need, they're saying we could do better. Not teachers that say, "Oh another thing to do." I am really hoping that this really brings eyes to some parents.

Mother Five shared her daughter's experience in learning that showed increased reading scores and she feels that these are the types of teachers that ELL students require. She said:

Like I said last year when she was in this particular teacher's classroom, her teacher was more, she taught like the, what did she say the block method style of learning. The reason why I really questioned her on her teaching methods were because of the increased reading score levels that my daughter received from the beginning and the end of the school year. And I was so proud and I was impressed with my daughter that she could do this. That's when I sat down with her teacher and I said what kind of teaching methods do you have and she told me that she had the block method style. And I really complimented her and I just thanked her for being that way with my daughter.

Mother Six felt that by her son being labeled ELL then the teachers would focus more on the type of learner he is and he would benefit most from this. Mother Six commented:

I thought that okay, if they're going to put him into tutoring or into this type of program, then the teachers are going to find out what type of learner his is and how best to teach him. So I didn't think when he was placed in tutoring or labeled with his English as not proficient, I knew that his English skills were low but I also know that he is a bright child.

Parents have the expectation that the school will implement a curriculum that is going to help their children learn. They realize that because teachers are educated and have degrees they will make decisions based on pedagogy and best practices. Many parents are not aware that some teachers do not know how to apply such methodologies to ELL learners. Yet some parents shared stories in which their child learning needs as an ELL student improved because a teacher was using methodologies appropriate for

ELL learners. Their stories substantiate different learning outcomes for ELL students.

Depending on the teacher an ELL student has, one who has the background in Bilingual Education or Structured English Immersion or one who does not, an ELL student's learning will vary and parents will either see learning gains in their child or their child falls farther behind. Many of the parents hold the school accountable for their ELL child's learning solely based on the fact that teachers are professionals and they have earned degrees.

Table 4-1 Parent Recommendations

<p>Providing specialized training for all instructional staff-</p> <p>teachers need to possess skills relating to a lot of social issues teachers need to be aware of their district policies and procedures teachers need to know how to use Navajo in the classroom teachers need to better handle students' behavior students need to be challenged more need a mentoring program for new teachers teachers need to be trained to teach ELL, trained on how to reflect- what worked and why all teachers need to be trained in the ELD curriculum method</p>
<p>Engaging and promoting parental involvement-</p> <p>need to educate parents- ELL, AIMS, NCLB need parent committee that is informative parents need a voice administration should honor parental requests for teachers need an interpreter for Navajo parents it would be better to explain what ELL means in Navajo for some parents parents' input needs to be heard and valued parents should be able to voice a concern with a teacher and/or an administrator without feeling intimidated</p>
<p>Maintaining consistency in delivery of curriculum-</p> <p>more culturally relevant curricula- more Native American literature teachers need to modify curriculum to fit students' needs teachers need to go that extra for kids so they can get a quality education teachers need to be risk takers need positive teachers</p>

teachers need to be able to accommodate every child tutoring needs to more focused teachers should look forward to educating the child curriculum needs to be more consistent teachers need to have high expectations of all students
Communication-
administrators should work with teachers instead of running them over better communication with parents and community administrator and teacher should not have verbal confrontations in front of students administrators need to be more consistent with district policies inform parents more school board needs to listen to parent concerns teachers need to be knowledgeable about child's background, their family, lifestyle teachers need a presence in the community know about the culture of a Navajo child administration needs to have more of an open door policy

Analysis of Parent Perceptions

Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) state that “responsive schools recognize the need to learn about the cultures, experiences, and needs of ELLs and thus they support listening to and learning from ELLs and their parents” (p. 20). Schools must recognize a student’s dominant home language because influence of the home language on the student’s academic English proficiency may exist. In the interviews conducted, parents expressed the desire for schools to be responsive to their children’s needs. Many of the mothers stated that they had hoped that their child’s language and culture would not be overlooked but taken into account when teaching. Mothers seemed to understand that their children come to school with language and cultural influences from home that teachers need to recognize and be aware of. ELL students have learning needs which some of the mothers expressed and their desire is that teachers would recognize their child’s needs and be able to provide the type of specialized teaching they require.

Mothers expressed how the school is accountable for ELL student learning. For instance, one mother said that she felt that her ELL child was underserved, another parent talked about how if they are going to require her child to go to tutoring then they should be able to pinpoint her child's weaknesses and how her child learns best, and a third mother said that when she sees her child's test scores go up, she knows that her child is learning.

Teacher Focus Groups

According to Garcia-Nevarez (2005), "Teachers play a vital role in the teaching and learning processes of students. They have the power to be agents of change and are empowered to become proactive in their students' lives" (p. 295). The three teacher focus groups were comprised of the teachers of the elementary school where this study was completed. The researcher presented details of the study at a staff meeting and solicited participants. The teacher focus groups were conducted at the school, at different times, and by grade level. The three teacher focus groups consisted of four teachers from each grade level, a total of twelve teachers volunteered. Their demographics are presented in Table 3-2. Of the fourth grade teachers, one teacher had twenty-eight years of teaching, another one had eleven years, one had four years and the last had two years of teaching experience. Of the fifth grade teachers, one teacher had thirty years of teaching, another one had nine years of teaching, one had eight years of teaching and the last had five years of teaching experience. Of the sixth grade teachers, one teacher had twenty-nine years of teaching, another one had twenty-two years, one

had eleven years and the last had eight years of teaching experience. All of the teachers were American Indian with the exception of one. Each teacher participant had experience in working with American Indian ELL students. The teacher participants are from the same community as the parents.

Each teacher focus group ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour with two sessions for each grade level. The teachers assembled around a conference table and viewed Table 2-2 *Characteristics and Strategies for ELL teaching* as a means to promoting dialogue about strategies they incorporate into their teaching and what has been successful for them.

Research-Based Teaching Strategies for ELL students

Second Language Acquisition Strategies

Brock's (2001) research has allowed her to spend time in classrooms observing the teaching strategies of teachers whose classrooms are comprised of ELL students. She believes that "learning to serve English language learners involves: (a) knowing about the second language acquisition process, (b) maintaining high expectations for English language learners, and (c) valuing the linguistic and cultural backgrounds that English language learners bring to the classroom" (p. 467). She contends that teachers must place ELLs' learning on center stage.

Most of the teachers agreed that Second Language Acquisition (SLA) strategies were important and that training in bilingual education methodologies has helped them

employ teaching strategies that are essential to student understanding and comprehension. Ten of the twelve teachers had either a Master's degree in Bilingual Education and/or an endorsement in English as a Second Language (ESL), or Structured English Immersion (SEI). The school district requires teachers to have an endorsement in one of the areas or to be in the process of acquiring one. However, all agreed that the knowledge of the actual stages of second language acquisition (preproduction, early production, speech emergence and intermediate fluency) were not necessarily applicable to their specific students because they are all fluent speakers of English; nonetheless, the teaching strategies incorporated into the SLA stages were still relevant to their students' learning. For example, all agreed that the use of modeling, hands-on activities, Total Physical Response (TPR), scaffolding, and the use of pictures/graphs within their lessons helps to engage their students in learning and they have had success in doing so.

Concept-Based Instruction

Concept based instruction (CBI) aligns curriculum and instruction with assessment. It has three distinct phases. In the first phase, information is organized into critical knowledge forms (i.e. facts, concepts, attributes, and principles) that reflect the depth and breadth of a content domain. In the second phase, instruction on declarative and procedural knowledge is delivered. The use of graphical presentations of information help enrich learning along with scaffolding activities and interactive discussions. In the third phase, critical-thinking measures are administered that

encourage students to transfer knowledge to new situations and problem solving events. (Twyman et al., 2003)

Among the veteran teachers within the three focus groups, they seemed to relate Concept-Based Instruction (CBI) with the district's attempt to align standards with instruction and the district assessments that were used in past years. The teachers who had five or less years of teaching were not as familiar with the district assessments that were created by curriculum committees within the various schools. Four of the teachers said that they have used CBI at other schools or have some knowledge of what it is. Other than relating CBI to past practices used within the school district to align instruction with assessment, none of the teachers were able to give any other examples of how they have used CBI.

The SIOP Model

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model was the most recognized strategy by the teacher focus groups. The school district was currently in the process of implementing a new English Language Development (ELD) curriculum for the ELL population; therefore, some of the teachers had received in-service training on the SIOP model. For those teachers, who had not, it was likely they would receive training because one of the school's goals is to have all teachers become trained in the SIOP model.

“The SIOP Model describes specific features of teaching that have been shown to improve the academic literacy of ELLs” (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, as cited by

Echevarria, 2006, p. 19). It is a framework that allows teachers to use strategies that help students develop their language skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking. There are eight components to the observation protocol (consisting of 30 items) for making content comprehensible for ELLs: (a) Preparation, (b) Building Background, (c) Comprehensible Input, (d) Strategies, (e) Interaction, (f) Practice/Applications, (g) Lesson Delivery, and (h) Review/Assessment (Echevarria, 2006). Teachers are not required to follow a specific routine when implementing the SIOP model, however, a language objective and contextual language practice are required to contribute to students' literacy development.

The teachers, who had implemented the use of the SIOP model, stated that it was very appropriate for the ELL and non-ELL students alike. Teachers felt that this avenue to lesson planning was best when addressing all learning needs in the classroom. Teachers liked the fact that part of the components to the SIOP model includes background building and a means to assess, which helps teachers gauge learning for all students. Although the SIOP model was the most recognizable, not all teachers had used it. Some teachers were considering incorporating it into their teaching. Yet, some teachers felt that it would be very time consuming to use.

Instructional Congruence Model:

Johnson (2005) shares insight with regards to making instruction relevant for language minority students. She also believes that instruction must not exclude the students' language and cultural experiences or literacy development.

Instructional congruence depends on the interaction of four important factors.

First, teachers must integrate knowledge of students' languages and cultures with the nature of science...the second factor emphasizes the need to give equal emphasis to the nature of academic content knowledge and inquiry and issues of language and culture . . . the third factor relating to instructional congruence is the promotion of student learning in both science and literacy . . . the fourth factor is putting constructivism at the core of instructional congruence. (p. 12)

Most of the teachers incorporated aspects of this teaching strategy in their own manner. Some of the teachers expressed that although they did not term it "instructional congruence", it is always their goal to integrate knowledge of students' language and culture with academic content knowledge. A few teachers mentioned that they use tribal resources or culturally relevant sources (books, lesson plans, & the Office of Science, Math & Technology) to focus on science lessons which integrate culture and language. Teachers expressed that they really did not have a lot of time in the daily schedule to teach science, but that when they do teach it, they always try to be cognizant of culture and how it might be applicable to science inquiry.

Refining Parent Recommendations

The teacher focus groups viewed a list of the parents' recommendations for improving learning for ELL students. This allowed for parental input and teacher insight into concerns that parents have when it comes to instruction for their children. Teachers

were given time to refine any recommendations or to add their own recommendations. Due to the meeting time drawing to an end, the teachers were allowed to finish on their own time and submit when completed. Table 4-2 shows the recommendations according to themes. Not all teachers who were a part of the teacher focus groups submitted recommendations. For those who did not submit recommendations, they were reminded and allowed to email the recommendations, however, no other recommendations were submitted. Two teachers said that they did not have any recommendations to make.

Table 4-2 Teacher Recommendations

Providing specialized training for all instructional staff-
<p>Better ELL testing for students Administration and office staff need to understand the classification- ELL/ELD teachers need to know when to use Navajo in the classroom teachers need to better handle students' behavior students need to be challenged more need a mentoring program for new teachers teachers need to be trained to teach ELL, trained on how to reflect- what worked and why during staff meetings, teachers need time to share what is working with ELL learners</p>
Engaging and promoting parental involvement-
<p>need to educate parents- ELL, AIMS, NCLB need parent committee that is informative parents need a voice administration should honor parental requests for teachers need an interpreter for Navajo parents it would be better to explain what ELL means in Navajo for some parents parents' input needs to be heard and valued parents should be able to voice a concern with a teacher and/or an administrator without feeling intimidated need more parent involvement- with curriculum input, classroom input, homework input, staying top of child's progress and behavior parent training on how to help/reinforce student learning at home strengthen parent/teacher relationship parents need to be enthusiastic about their children's learning</p>
Maintaining consistency in delivery of curriculum-

<p>more culturally relevant curricula- more Native American literature teachers need to modify curriculum to fit students' needs teachers need to go that extra for kids so they can get a quality education teachers need to be risk takers smaller class size for ELL classrooms teachers need to be able to accommodate every child- include art, music, drama, visuals tutoring needs to more focused teachers should look forward to educating the child curriculum needs to be more consistent teachers need to have high expectations of all students- higher level thinking skills</p>
<p>Communication-</p>
<p>administrators should work with teachers instead of running them over better communication with parents and community administrator and teacher should not have verbal confrontations in front of students administrators need to be more consistent with district policies inform parents more- Home Language Survey form school board needs to listen to parent concerns teachers need to be knowledgeable about child's background, their family, lifestyle teachers need a presence in the community know about the culture of a Navajo child administration needs to have more of an open door policy administrators need to look into research conducted by college students</p>

Analysis of Teacher Perspectives

Brock (2001) articulates that there are important domains for determining best practices for working with ELL students that include: attending to who we teach, attending to what we teach, and attending to community context in educating ELLs. Attending to who we teach is based on the premise that teachers must not only possess knowledge of the second language acquisition process but possess knowledge of their particular students' cultural backgrounds and life experiences. The teachers in the focus groups had acquired knowledge in their educational backgrounds to be able to connect with students' language background. Ten of the teachers in the focus group are

American Indian and have lived on the reservation for a majority of their lives, so it is apparent that they have been able to relate to the students' life experiences.

Attending to how we teach is reliant on the strategies and the methods teachers choose to use in their teaching and on paying close attention to facilitating learning for each individual child. The following strategies which have been used by teachers with success as reported within the focus groups include: connecting with parents, encouraging students to use words in context, previewing books before reading, repetition, visual cues, movement, use of objects/real props/hands-on materials, adhere to routine, task breakdown/step-by-step directions, partners/role modeling/ peer modeling, appropriate wait time, direct teaching/skill-drill, thematic units, multisensory approaches, reflective/check back on learning, small groups, one-on-one support, questioning for clarification and comprehension, building off student's past experiences and prior knowledge, use of technology and videos.

Attending to what we teach is the notion that teachers' personal beliefs shape their instruction and their perceptions of who their students are. The teachers in the focus groups all agreed that their students require methodologies in ELL, ESL, or SEI to meet their learning needs. The teachers also agreed that some of the instructional approaches are relevant while others are irrelevant for the American Indian students because they are fluent speakers of English and are not new to learning English, as a traditional ELL student would be. Brock (2001), states that "effective classroom communities for English language learners are caring, collaborative, and supportive places where taking risks is okay- and even encouraged" (p. 473). Attending to community context in educating ELL students is relative to providing a learning environment in which ELL

students feel welcomed, supported and encouraged. All of the teachers alluded to attempting to make ELL learners contributors and supporting their efforts. The overall consensus of the teacher focus groups was that the strategies presented, which were successful for other minority groups, tend to be successful for American Indian ELL students as well. Most of the teachers shared their success in using some of the strategies. Other than the SIOP model, teachers did not use the SLA strategies, CBI strategies, or Instructional Congruence in the same manner as the studies reviewed in the literature. However, all of the teachers did have experience in using SLA, CBI and Instructional Congruence strategies in their own teaching. Furthermore, all of the teachers agreed that adapting these strategies to their teaching style would be appropriate for American Indian ELLs.

Principal Interviews

Providing Implications for Policies and Practices Related to the Findings

Teachers knowing their students' background-

All five of the principals interviewed talked about the importance of teachers knowing their students' background (Facella, Rampino, and Shea, 2005 & Echevarria, 2006). Due to the current mandate in Arizona requiring all schools to offer English Language Development (ELD) classes for ELL students, all of the principals had recently received training for the ELD program that would be implemented in the schools

within this district. All of the principals acknowledged that an ELL student's background is significant to their learning. Principal One stated:

Because a lot of our students come in, like our group of first graders this year, they didn't have Head Start last year. So when they were assessed, we did the Dibbles assessment at beginning of the school year, in the middle of the school year, and the end of the school year. We had a lot of students in intensive because they didn't come with any school background. A majority of the students some of their parents speak Navajo at home and then they're trying to learn English. So they don't come with a firm grasp of language, they don't have a grasp of English, they don't have a grasp of Navajo, so they're coming kind of like with no language. And the teachers have to work with that.

Principal One suggests that teachers should learn about the kinds of experiences students were exposed to prior to school in order to be able to have a better understanding of their language experiences. She mentioned Head Start, a federal funded program for families with low income. Due to budget cuts, Head Start did not operate for several years. For many students, Head Start is the starting point for language experiences in reading and writing. Therefore, if students did not have that pre-school experience in Head Start, then chances are that their language experiences in relation to reading and writing were near zero.

Principal Two talked about how the administrators purposely chose teachers that were bilingual because this would be ideal for ELL students:

One of the things in our school is we picked teachers that are bilingual. We wanted teachers that know how it is to learn a second language. And how it is to think with your mind thinking in that first language and transferring it to the second language. One of our teachers is Spanish speaking and English, so she's not Native but she is a bilingual person.

Principal Three commented in regards to teachers knowing students' backgrounds:

I think most of them have that knowledge, they know that most of them don't have a solid language, it's not strong in English or Navajo. So they understand that concept . . . It's just really right now getting to know the individual students, their work habits. AZELLA doesn't tell you everything, so they really need to give the students more opportunity to talk. I still see in some classrooms, maybe too much paper and pencil.

Principal Four's response to the question, *How can teachers of American Indian ELL students enhance their teaching style in order to ensure that they are meeting the learning needs of such students?*, she immediately began by talking about students' background:

Well with ELL, probably the first area of concern, first area that teachers need to be a lot more knowledgeable about I think is the students' background. You know, so often now we're finding out that a lot of our children that come into our system, don't have strength in a first language nor strength in English. So you know, it's hard for one thing to prepare the students if you really don't have an idea what the weakness of the child is. And so I think as with all children, we really need to know what is the skill level of our children and what is that we're

going to have to do as teacher to develop that and bring that child up to a higher level. So I think it's really important that they know a little more background on the child including their skill level.

Principal Five felt that native teachers from the area would have no problem in relating to student's background, ". . . but a teacher coming in from the outside would really have to get exposed to the culture, the home style, the student that is coming to their classroom, and get as much information about the children they are getting in their classroom". She further stressed that:

We can't really say that our native language needs to be involved because a majority of our students are coming in as an English speaker, but they really don't have the real foundation of the English language when they come in. They're still having problems communicating since the grandparents are native speakers and the parents are English speakers, so the kids are caught in between. So their English skills are kind of not developed thoroughly, so we need to focus on that, that is just a lot of communication, speaking the English language.

The principals seemed to agree that knowing about a student's background is critical in teaching and learning. This is particularly important for American Indian ELL students because of their Native language. It is important for teachers to know if their ELL students are monolistic English speakers, bilingual speakers, and to what degree the child speaks their Native language at home. Knowing this information will allow teachers to decide whether or not they should infuse bilingual methodologies into the ELD curriculum; which would tailor the ELD curriculum to reflect the ELL learner.

Teachers applying skills and knowledge to ensure student learning

It was apparent among the principals that they were aware that teachers already possessed many of the skills and practices that were expressed in the literature (Facella, et al., 2005; Keenan, 2004, Twyman et al., 2003 and Echevarria, 2006). Principals mentioned that many of the teachers' credentials included a degree in Bilingual Education or an endorsement in Structured English Immersion (SEI) or English as a Second Language (ESL), therefore, they would have acquired and would be implementing teaching skills such as Second Language Acquisition (Facell, et al) methods and/or other bilingual methodologies. Principals talked about the appropriate pedagogy for ELL students and how practices in this area might be lacking because the students within the schools are not immigrant students for which much of the English Language Development (ELD) curricula is designed. In essence, principals were saying that teachers have the experience in addressing Native American ELL learning needs and some of what they practice has come from trial and error teaching thus allowing them to find out what methods are successful for students.

Here are Principal Four's comments:

I think this is where you get into that pedagogy. As a teacher, I got to realize too that developing the language skills, I need to have a lot more information about how children learn. I also need to address what are the standards that we have now that have been put in place for what ELL students need to achieve. So teachers need to be aware of that, there needs to be a lot more training in the pedagogy they feel is very appropriate for ELLs. There also needs to be a lot

more information about the structured language approach and how that . . . you know we've been doing a lot of training in last few years about becoming more aware of the way children learn in terms of how the brain works. And now it's come down to a lot of what we learned on how the brain works and how that applies to how teachers teach. Again it comes down to that level of what does the teacher take from the skills they have as a teacher to reach that student that has that English language deficiency.

Principal One shared this:

The SIOP model is the model I believe the state is going with. They provide a list of trainers that can offer the SEI classes, this is the model they use. So when we had their representative from one of the local universities come up, they presented exactly on the SIOP model . . . Here, I've already shared that with the teachers, just because they're not a labeled ELL student doesn't mean you throw out your two or three classes on SEI you still use those strategies cuz they're best teaching strategies. You still use them with your students.

Principal Two shared her thoughts in regards to teachers using skills and knowledge for ELL students learning, however, she shared her own personal successes as a classroom teacher:

I just personally think, just in terms of what I've done in teaching, kids learn more concept-based. I think they really learn more if you're trying to teach a concept as opposed to isolated skills. I've always had more success with holistic type teaching, not isolating things. We don't think that way. Our concept of thinking is not that way, whether you're native or not. You're more experience oriented. I

think we need more problem solving. I don't think we expect enough from a lot of our kids. I don't like to say it, but I think just the fact that you're labeling ELL, there's this feeling like well if they're ELL, then they can't do this and they can.

Principal Three believed that ELL students need to be engaged and involved in a lot of conversational opportunities:

Okay. well number one, I think students need to use language. They can't be passive. So it's important, since we're using the ELD classrooms . . . they're following a language program which when they're doing phonemic awareness, certain areas of that, they want to make sure that they're hearing the sounds. So there's a lot of engagement, but through the whole program it needs to be highly engaging and that means a lot of interaction. I believe that the teachers need to do some talking but a majority of the talking should be coming from the students, so they use the language. And that vocabulary is emphasized, no assumptions that they know it. That they continually use different strategies too and give the students opportunities to use the vocabulary. It can't be passive it has to be total engagement. With our students, I think it's really important to do cooperative learning, that they not just learn language from the teacher but they're using it with other students.

Principal Five also mentioned the importance of having students communicate and using the language as much as possible:

From my understanding, and the training that I went to this past summer, it would encompass a lot of verbal. The kids need to verbalize what they're learning, they need a lot of repeating of choral reading. They just need to verbalize what they

are learning, “Today I am learning this. . .” To talk among each other in the classroom, partner, discussing some of the activities they are doing. Right now I am encouraging a lot of the teachers to do singing, choral reading, role playing because our emphasis is a lot on talking, communicating.

According to the principals’ responses, they shared either a teaching method (i.e. the SIOP method) or some of the other strategies that are used with ELL learners in relation to what they observe teachers doing or from their own experiences as a teacher. The principals were cognizant that American Indian ELL learners require adaptations to their learning and that teachers need to apply the knowledge they have gained from staff development or college courses to benefit such learners. Principals did mention that the ELD curriculum uses the SIOP method for lesson delivery.

Students are receiving the appropriate accommodations

It is school district policy for all parents to fill out a Home Language Survey in which they list their primary language usage at home. If a parent indicates that a language other than English is the dominant language used at home, then their child(ren) is given the AZELLA test. The results of the AZELLA test indicates which category the child falls into: pre-emergent, emergent, basic, intermediate or proficient. If a child falls into the pre-emergent, emergent, basic and intermediate categories then they are placed into an ELD class. .

Principal Two stated:

English language development the model we're using, is the first time it's going to be used within our district, so we're counting on the qualifications of, so a lot of these ELD teachers are already our ESL teachers so they have that strong background. And then we're lucky that most of them are bilingual. As far as instruction, they need to provide instruction that ensures that kids are given comprehensible input. Comprehensible input is language that they can understand. It's got to be vocabulary that kids understand, it can't be too high for them. It's just basically the word comprehension, something that they can understand.

Principal Four discussed how the ELD curriculum's strategies are familiar to teachers of ELL and appropriately accommodate these students:

The teachers have been doing that, so I think it's not so much that it's a whole new process, it's just laying out a lot of the strategies they already used but having a different method of working it through. . . You're looking at what are the needs of these kids and that's where it comes down, what's their level that they've been identified. Are they pre-emergent, emergent, are they basic, intermediate? And so you have to know a lot about the kids. And then the teachers also, a lot of the teachers are telling me how they are struggling with this. We've gotten the training and a lot of it is the training we learned when we were back in college, when we were learning how to teach language arts. But we sort of put that in the back of our minds and never really got back to using that. So now we're pulling them all out and we see how the connection's there but we're still trying to figure out how do I incorporate it all, the listening, the speaking, the writing all of that.

Principals trusted that all ELL students would be receiving appropriate accommodations within an ELD classroom; especially since the adoption of the ELD curriculum by the school district. The ELD curriculum would serve the needs of the ELL population. The principals also acknowledged that many of the teachers have the discreet teaching skills for ELL students because of the training received or due to their educational background. One principal stated that the skills are there in the back of their minds, it's just a matter of accessing them. Principals stressed the importance of teachers knowing where their students are, what category they test at and to plan accordingly.

Communication is consistent and effective

As for communication, there were two areas that the principals touched on when they discussed the importance of communication. The first area dealt with communication between administrators and teachers, and the second dealt with communication with parents. Most of the principals expressed that implementing the ELD curriculum would require teachers to collaborate more, which would entail meetings and sharing data. Teachers would have to try to get parents more involved with their child's education and inform parents about their child's progress. Principals also stated that they, as administrators, would have to communicate more in order to be aware of the ELD curriculum's strengths and weaknesses.

Principal One shared this:

I think with some of the teachers too, when they do work with their ELL students, they do know how to work with them. They have all the strategies and expertise

to do it. Maybe it's just acknowledging it. I know that when I see something good then I do comment on it . . . What we actually have planned for next week is to bring in all of our ELL parents and share with them. I felt the same way, they're not really sure what the label ELL means. And we wanted them to come in and explain to them what the label means and what the expectation is from the state on the school. And from the state what their expectation will be, what they have to do. Being in Arizona and receiving state and federal funds you do have to do what all the mandates are . . . And when you're receiving state funds, you're going to value the mandates you have to put that ahead. But the parents don't understand that. That is our job to educate the parents as well on all of the requirements.

Principal Three talked about collaboration among teachers and parent involvement:

Well we talked about making sure that they have the extra time to collaborate and share, and there's so much research that when teachers collaborate students make gains academically. Because the kids are so low, we do see certain characteristics in the kids, and I think they really need to see that the teachers are there for them and we're really going to put the extra effort into making sure that they're proficient in English. I think we need to make that clear, also with the parents, we need to do a better job with that. That might be even an evening, once a month, every quarter, spending time with the parents, and explaining the importance of supporting the program and what we're trying to do for their child. It seems also that many of the kids in the ELD program are kids that definitely have low skills, but it seems like we need to get the parents involved and be more committed to

education . . . Administrators just started meeting on Thursday, talking about the Navajo language program and the ELL. Those people over there and they send out letters and they do all the paperwork. I guess there's more communication now than there was, I mean we don't even know the test results, they were out of the program or in the program, sometimes we didn't even hear about it until the next year. But now we're hearing more, I'm calling the coordinator more about questions. I feel that the home visitor could do it if they trained her. If they would train the home visitors to communicate with the parent like that. I do agree with the written letters. I said we're sending these letters home but we're not, they don't understand the labels so what does this letter mean, are they in the program, are they not in the program, or are they in between, what type of service did they get and not getting anymore. Parents have no clue. The question was in May who's going to inform the parents that they're in this ELD program and do the parents understand that they're in this program right now.

Principal Five expressed the need for teachers to communicate with parents:

The teachers also really need to communicate with the parents, get the parents involved. As an administrator I know that we have a lot of problems just getting the parents here but I think with the help of the teacher in promoting different activity and involving the parent. Seeking out the parents is what I like the teachers to do. And I know that time is very limited for them, but a newsletter home, a family meeting now and then would really help these students and the parents to get involved. The parents can help their children as to what's going on and what the children are learning.

Principals expressed how teachers need to communicate more with parents and try to get parents more involved with their child's education. Many parents are not aware of the new ELD program and how it is structured. Principals said that some parents are never present nor have any clue about their child's education. Teachers have to deal with such circumstances and attempts to communicate with parents might go unanswered. When ELL students do not have the support from home, then it seems like they are facing an even bigger obstacle.

Students' cultural background is not compromised

As stated earlier, Johnson (2005) shares insight in regards to making instruction relevant for language minority students. She believes that instruction must not exclude the students' language and cultural experiences. The principals agreed that language and culture are imperative when it comes to lesson design. They conveyed that with most teachers it is highly noticeable that they try to connect their lessons with the language and cultural experiences of their students and once in a while there has to be a reminder to infuse culture to make lessons familiar to students. The principals shared that because it is a mandate from the Navajo Nation to teach the Navajo language within the schools, students are gaining language experiences with the Navajo language at school. However, this might be the only experiences they have because Navajo is no longer the dominant language spoken at home for many Navajo students. The whole premise for teaching Navajo on a daily basis is that it might be a means of revitalizing the Navajo language.

Although many of the ELL students are not proficient Navajo speakers, and Navajo may not be their first language, some do come from homes in which their parents and/or grandparents and relatives are fluent Navajo speakers. So apparently their lives are enriched by the Navajo language and culture and this aspect of their background cannot be overlooked.

Principal Five commented:

I think the expectation, we've been focusing a lot on that, setting high expectations, don't lower your teaching, demand that they set for themselves a good learning. Feedback, whatever they're learning make sure you give them a lot of feedback. And developing background knowledge, since our kids are Native they need to refer a lot of their lessons back to what they're exposed to. A lot of the textbooks that I know, like you I've been a teacher before, and a lot of the reading is based on life in the city or town and our kids are not used to that living. So you have to kind of refer back to our native and bring a lot of that into your teaching.

Principal Three stated:

And I do think that teachers need to talk more about what goes on at home. How connected they are with their culture and bring that more into the classroom. I don't know if I asked all of the teachers, where do your children live? How much do they participate in ceremonies? Could they tell you, could they tell you what's going on in their personal life? And the Native American literature, I know that we had one 5th grade accelerated teacher who used a lot of Native American What literature constantly, there needs to be more of a connection.

Principal Four touched on the importance of knowing a second language and how academically these students excel in regards to the students taking Navajo language on a daily basis from grades K-8th:

But guess who does have success in the years that they are here. The kids that are English speakers. They're the ones that can speak a second language and can do well with it. And so the research that says you have to know the first language before they can do well on the others, it's true, we already have that information.

Principal Two expressed her thoughts on how the ELD curriculum might impact students as they continue to learn the Navajo language:

I mean you're going to have some advantages, but one of the disadvantages is, is it going to increase their fluency in their native language? And I don't have that answer. I think we're caught in a Catch 22. In one situation, we're doing what the state is telling us to do, the ELD, get the kids fluent in English, but down the hall we have Navajo as a Second Language. So we're trying to keep two, we're trying to make our kids true bilinguals in a sense, be fluent in Navajo, keep it going, keep the culture going. But also we're trying to meet the state standards in being fluent in English. I don't know what the answer is, I really don't. . . Our language proficiency deals with learning English as a different language not a language of necessity to stay in America. We're learning the English language because it's something we need to be proficient in, to go to college, to compete with the rest of the U.S. But we don't need it in the sense that we're going to give up our Native languages, we need to be strong in both.

Principal One conveys that a student's home life and the cultural impact on language and identity should remain intact and schools should value their cultural way of living:

It's really, I think, it's good planning, using good teaching strategies that will help our students. Knowing where they come from, having a good understanding of their culture, their background, their home life, Just because they want to have sheep and herd cattle doesn't mean they can't learn, if they want to have a different lifestyle it should be accepted. But on the part of the teachers, it has to go back to planning, realizing that you just can't pull things out of thin air and expect the students to learn.

The schools are accountable for ELL student learning

“Teachers and schools are being held accountable for a variety of educational objectives by many agencies, such as the state and federal government, local school boards, parents, and the larger community” (Helman, 2005, p 668). When principals were asked to share how they would support and foster the implementation of successful instructional practices for ELL students most of the principals discussed the requirements of the new ELD curriculum. All of the principals shared that their school has an ELD classroom designated specifically for ELL students at each grade level. Therefore each grade level has a teacher who teaches the ELD class. The ELD teacher will be implementing the state mandated ELD curriculum for the ELL students. The way the program is designed is that ELL students receive four hours of intense language teaching in the areas of reading, writing and speaking.

Principal One shared how teachers would be accountable for ELL students' learning:

If you have more than 20 students per grade level span, you have to have a completely separate class for the ELL students. If you have less than 20 students, we have exactly 20 in our school. What we are doing, the teachers are using the Individual Learning Plans for them, and the state devised an ILP for the teachers to document how they're instructing their ELL students. When I went to training by the state, they said they're going to take the data from the schools using the ILPs and the data from the schools that use the pullout programs, and we do want to see which environment the ELL learns best in.

Principal Two had these comments:

It's an Individual Education Plan, that's at the elementary level. And that's if you have 20 kids or less, you go to the individual plan. If you have 20 kids or more you have to teach the classes and we have to show that we're teaching the discreet skills inventory. And we have to show in our curriculum map how the ELD standards, we're teaching it along with the regular standards. Talking about is having our students get more involved. That's one of the things we're talking about this year, is getting our teachers more involved in teaching the CREDE standards. And it's the same thing, it's engaging students, it's cooperative learning, having academic conversations with kids, academic vocabulary. . . I don't think we have any real bilinguals anymore. I think that we are not in the situation that the immigrant students are, we have students that have both English and Navajo. But it's their fluency in the English language that they need to improve in, but not at the degree level that the ELD program is designed for. But

in terms of how our district is implementing it, it's not going to hurt our kids to go through the model because they're some kids that need the vocabulary development. There are some kids that need the fluency development. Some of the areas that were identified, like the conversational, the reading, the writing, the grammar, that's not going to hurt any student. It's not going to hurt any student who is not proficient in English it can only help them . . . But we do have a plus in the sense that we have highly qualified ELD and their bilingual background. So I think that will help us. We're going to have to go along and revise what we're doing along the way because it's new for us.

Principal Three talked about how teachers volunteered to be an ELD teacher and are dedicated to teaching the program:

Well that Silver West program, there's time for whole language, there's time to do small groups, and then there's constant monitoring, checking, assessments to see how they're doing. And if they're not getting it there's a time when you can differentiate and pull the kids aside and they can go to split up and they can go to different instructors who take certain parts. But it takes a lot of planning and that's one thing they go to learn . . . I'm just glad we have teachers that sincerely want to help them and really do care about the kids, we just got to make sure that comes across to everyone. At this age, it's kind of scary because they've been in the system for nine years at least, they haven't been proficient in English for nine years. And I just hope they don't have the attitude that I give up, I just don't want to do this. And the teachers really want to help them. It's going to have to be more dynamic I guess to get them excited about learning. The language program

is a good program, but it's going to take the teacher to really pull it off. I think we all know it's the teacher any way and not the program anyways that's going to do it.

Principal Four shared her thoughts about how important documentation has to be in order to understand how teaching strategies are being used:

I think that were going to, when it comes to the documentation, we're going to be working in that direction because we certainly have to develop lesson plans and we are using the SIOP template for our lesson plans. The other thing is that we talked about doing more, earlier I was saying, being a Reading First school we've had to really sort of change our way of thinking and also improve our skills as educators because we have the research out there that tells us if you assess students you don't just assess for the purpose of assessing, what are you going to take the results and use them for. And I think that's where it comes into what the teachers are going to be doing here. Not only do they have to look at the planning for the four levels of children that we could possibly have in the school, but they have to start thinking about how do I use the different strategies, the ELD strategies, to help my kids in speaking, reading, writing, listening. How am I going to develop those skills? So they're going to be doing that and they're going to be assessing and they're going to take that data . . . I'm hoping that we're going to be helpful with looking at that data and saying look you guys brought these kids up this far. What were you doing, there was something here that you were doing in your lessons that are working. So not only take what the lesson was about but also take what are the methods the teacher used that are very successful.

I think we need to keep revisiting, like I said whenever we assess we got to use that data, and we got to use that to give us the information. Are we progressing any here, especially with the students, when you assess the students are you looking at that progress? When they're falling back what does that indicate? What do we need to do, is there a need for additional coaching? Is there a need for additional training? We're really trying hard to provide that support for more job-embedded professional development because we can put everybody in a classroom and say well you're going to get some professional development training for one hour and we're going to assume that it teaches you everything you need to know. Well it doesn't and that's the reason why when we met this last week, we talked to the teachers and the teachers said this is what we need to know, are we on the right track? There needs to be that constant monitoring of what we are doing. And then that collaboration needs to happen, cross-grade level, and obviously using what we find out is successful. So we hope to sustain what we are doing.

Principal Five shared her thoughts on accountability for student learning, which was more focused on lesson delivery:

Okay we have a benchmark testing that we do and we also use Dibbles. And then on top of that the teachers need to maintain a record of each individual student's progress that's either from their unit testing of some kind. When they teach a lesson, they need to do an evaluation on the learning. If their students mastered the concept of if they need to do reteaching. And then as an administrator we need to collect those records and monitor, that is an ongoing thing. We have

adopted within the last few years what is called walkthrough. Both myself and my principal we try to do a walkthrough weekly, but sometimes we don't do it, but we try to . . . I think the expectation, we've been focusing a lot on that, setting a high expectation, don't lower what you're teaching, demand that they set for themselves good learning. Feedback, whatever they're learning make sure you give them a lot of feedback. And developing background knowledge, since our kids are Native they need to refer a lot of their lessons back to what they're exposed to. Okay what objective they are teaching, whether they repeat the objective to the students, I guess more or less classroom management is another thing that we look for. We expect the objective to be written on the board, the students will be able to see it with that type of format, and then reiterate the concept as they teach throughout the lesson. And then what kind of activities the students are doing, hands-on, the student engagement is another area that we really look for. And then at the closure, what kind of closure they had.

Recommendations for Principals

Principals were given a list of recommendations that teachers refined from the parent interviews, their recommendations. Principals read over the recommendations, however, none of them had comments. In retrospect, it may have been that the principals were pressed for time and wanted the interview to end or they most likely felt that it was pointless to have a discussion about the recommendations with me, especially since I am not part of the staff.

Analysis of Principal Perspectives

Gardner and Enomoto (2006) contend that principals have a critical role in ensuring that “inclusive teaching and learning are encouraged or that culturally relevant teaching practices are explored . . . principals can maintain high expectations for all while advocating for appropriate pedagogical approaches for each student” (p.561). All of the principals shared their efforts in addressing the learning needs of ELL students and their approach to improving learning them. Principals addressed the following areas: teachers knowing their students’ background, teachers applying certain skills and knowledge to ensure learning, students receiving the appropriate accommodations, communication, not compromising students’ cultural background and how schools are accountable for ELL student learning.

Vanderhaar, Muñoz, and Rodosky (2006), cite Waters et al., in identifying the three most effective leadership practices: (a) situational awareness (the principal is aware of details and undercurrents in running the school and uses information to address current and potential problems); (b) intellectual stimulation (the principal ensures that faculty and staff are made aware of the most current theories and practices and incorporates discussion of these as aspect of school culture); and, (c) input (teachers are involved in the design and implementation of important decisions). (p.18) It was apparent through the interviews that all of the principals had situational awareness pertaining to ELL students’ learning and how to best implement the new ELD curriculum. All of the principals discussed certain trainings (i.e. Structured English Immersion, ELD, and Reading First) which teachers were a part of and the need for teachers to employ the

knowledge gained at such trainings. Intellectual stimulation was apparent by having teachers receive training in the ELD curriculum for the ELD teachers. Principals mentioned that they frequently seek input from teachers and allow teachers opportunities to be involved in important decisions for ELL student learning.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations for Research

This study provided parents, teachers and principals a means to present their perspectives on effective teaching and learning for American Indian ELL students. This chapter examines how the collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing of the data resulted in four major themes: (a) providing specialized training for all instructional staff; (b) engaging and promoting parental involvement; (c) maintaining consistency in delivery of curriculum; and (d) communication. Throughout the literature review it was apparent that studies of effective teaching strategies for American Indian ELL students do not exist. There is a need for research to be conducted in the area of effective teaching strategies for American Indian ELL students. Furthermore, historically, in American Indian education policy there has also been a lack of parental input. Therefore it was important to include the parental “voice” of American Indian ELL students pertaining to teaching and learning. The literature review of successful teaching strategies for ELL students from other cultural groups was used in teacher focus groups as a means to discuss the use of such teaching strategies with American Indian ELLs and whether or not the strategies were successful. Principals provided implications for policies and practices of effective teaching strategies for American Indian ELL students. After the collection of each data set, themes that became apparent were clustered together and ultimately four major themes emerged.

Limitations

As previously mentioned, this study consisted of a volunteer sample who are American Indian parents of children who are identified as ELL, teachers of American Indian ELLs, and principals who possess the experience in working in a school that has American Indian ELLs. Access to information concerning other American Indian parents of ELLs, and teachers who work with American Indian ELLs who did not volunteer cannot be retrieved. The limited number of participants cannot ensure generalizability. This study cannot be generalized to other student populations that are not defined as American Indian ELL and who live on the Navajo reservation. Parent volunteers who participated in this study shared concerns that might be unique to their child's learning situation due of the nature of grade level and teacher at the time. Teachers, who were a part of the focus groups, were not required to have been a teacher to any of the parents' ELL children, but were required to have teaching experience with American Indian ELL students. Principals who were a part of this study were either a principal or an assistant principal of a school which had American Indian ELL students within this school district. Discussion of their collective perspectives resonates with the academic community throughout the literature of successful teaching strategies for ELL students from other cultural groups. In the following section, the following conclusions are discussed: (a) providing specialized training for all instructional staff; (b) engaging and promoting parental involvement; (c) maintaining consistency in delivery of curriculum; and (d) communication.

Improving Learning for ELLs by Providing Specialized Training

Teachers of ELL students, in general, require specialized training in order to meet their students' learning needs. The literature review regarding effective teaching strategies from other cultural groups reiterated that teachers of ELL students must have specialized training. All of the parents interviewed suggested that teachers of ELL students should receive some type of training. Parents are aware that teachers have staff in-service regularly, so they felt that at the very least, staff in-service could provide teachers with some type of training to benefit their ELL students. Parents also stated that most of the teachers their children had in the past lacked knowledge and training specific to ELL learners.

Teachers who were a part of the teacher focus groups, agreed that more ELD training would be necessary in order for teachers to provide the type of thorough teaching the ELD curriculum requires. Teachers also agreed that all teaching staff should have the ELD training because ELL students might encounter a situation where they are taken out of the ELD classroom, i.e. when the ELD teacher is absent and a substitute is not available, students are sent to another teacher's class for the day. Teachers believed that ELL strategies would benefit all American Indian students, regardless if they are identified as ELL or not.

Principals acknowledged the fact that a majority of the teachers' credentials included a degree in Bilingual Education or either an ESL or SEI endorsement. Most of the principals stated that some of the teachers who have such credentials fail to apply the teaching strategies. Principals discussed the ELD training which the designated ELD

teachers received; however, they agreed that the teachers required more training and that all teachers should receive the ELD training. The following are recommendations from parents and teachers that were included under specialized training for instructional staff: (a) better ELL testing for students; (b) administration and office staff need to understand the classification- ELL/ELD; (c) teachers need to know when to use Navajo in the classroom; (d) teachers need to know how to handle student behavior better; (e) students need to be challenged more; (f) need a mentoring program for new teachers; (g) teachers need to be trained to teach ELL, trained on how to reflect- what worked and why; and (h) teachers need time to share what is working with ELL learners. The recommendations will be discussed later under the implications for learning section.

Improving Learning for ELLs by Promoting Parental Involvement

Throughout the literature review of successful teaching strategies for ELL students, one key component to student learning was parent involvement. Parent involvement is an identified factor of student learning in the classroom. All of the parents interviewed, suggested that the school was weak in the area of keeping parents informed, therefore, some missed out on certain parent involvement activities. Parents said that it would be nice to have parent information nights so that they could become educated in areas like AIMS, AYP, and ELL. Parents believed that these opportunities would promote parental involvement.

Teachers reiterated the importance of parent involvement. Teachers indicated that parent involvement is lacking in many respects to school, i.e. helping and checking

student homework, attendance at parent-teacher conferences, and parent volunteerism for fundraising activities. Teachers said they have attempted to promote parent involvement but response to most activities has been low. Many of the teachers agreed that parents of ELL students must become involved in their child's learning. This will allow parents to become more aware of how they can support their child's learning, i.e. reinforcement of English language usage at home and to be able to know their child's performance in school. Teachers expressed that a parent's interest in their child's learning could also help foster self-esteem for their child.

Principals acknowledged the importance of parent involvement and parent responsibility to student learning. Principals said that there is a need to increase parent involvement at their schools. Principals were aware that parents might not see the value of education in the same way that they view the importance of schools sports. School sports, i.e. basketball games, have huge parent turnout and support, yet parent-teacher conferences are attended by less than half of students' parents.

As previously mentioned, American Indian education policy has a long history of excluding parents in decision-making directly impacting their children's education. Promoting parental involvement is key to student success in the classroom. For this reason, many schools on the reservation are taking back this power by attempting to establish strong site-based council teams at their schools. Creating a site-based council is one way to establish parent involvement; however, parental involvement for the particular school in this study has not been strong. The following are recommendations by parents and teachers that were included under promoting parental involvement: (a) need to educate parents- ELL, AIMS, NCLB; (b) need parent committee that is

informative; (c) parents need a voice; (d) administration should honor parental requests for teachers; (e) need an interpreter for Navajo parents; (f) it would be better to explain what ELL means in Navajo for some parents; (g) parents' input needs to be heard and valued; (h) parents should be able to voice a concern with a teacher and/or an administrator without feeling intimidated; (i) need more parent involvement- with curriculum input, classroom input, homework input, staying on top of child's progress and behavior; (j) parent training on how to help/reinforce student learning at home; (k) strengthen parent/teacher relationship; and (l) parents need to be enthusiastic about their children's learning. The recommendations will be discussed later under the implications for learning section.

Improving Learning for ELLs by Maintaining Consistency of Curriculum

Prior to the schools within this school district adopting the mandated English Language Development (ELD) curriculum, there was no consistent curriculum for teachers to follow which addressed the specific learning needs of the ELL population. Therefore, it was teachers' discretion to decide which teaching strategies they should employ to best help ELL students. ELL students had varied educational experiences as they progressed from grade to grade due mostly to the fact that they had different teachers. Some teachers have the educational background because they have a degree in Bilingual Education and/or an endorsement in English as a Second Language (ESL) or Structured English Immersion (SEI), yet others do not. So an ELL student could have such a teacher one year, and the following year might have a teacher who does not have

the credentials to teach ELL students. The adoption of the ELD curriculum might enable teachers to use the specific teaching methodology that ELL students require. An important aspect to the curriculum is the use of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) method.

Parents talked in general about the school's curriculum because at the time of their interviews they were not fully aware of the new ELD curriculum. Parents said that sometimes they are not aware of curriculum changes, for instance, the adoption of a new reading or math program. One parent shared her frustration about how it seemed like the curriculum is always changing. She said that the school should stick to one particular math program so that they can gather enough data to see if the math program is working or not, instead of changing math programs often. The parents who were informed of the new ELD curriculum were particularly happy that their child's learning needs as an ELL student might be met or they would now begin to see improvements in learning in reading and writing. Parents were excited because they were expecting that teachers would now concentrate on their child's learning deficiencies and help their child become English proficient. One parent shared that she felt relief after trying for many years to have past teachers understand that her child needed reinforcements in learning.

Teachers all agreed that there is a need for ELL students to have a consistent curriculum. Not all teachers, who participated in the focus groups, received the ELD training because at the time there was only one designated ELD teacher per grade level who received the training. However, all the teachers did have experience in teaching ELL students. They recognized the importance of effective teaching strategies for these learners, and they also stated that a consistent curriculum needs to be maintained.

Teachers shared their past success in using many of the successful teaching strategies for ELL students. Most shared their experience in using the SIOP method because it is the method they had received training in the Structured English Immersion (SEI) classes and the most familiar. Teachers also mentioned the importance of an ELL curriculum that is beneficial to American Indian ELL students, in particular, because of the fact that they are ELL students who speak English and some of their Native language. Teachers understood that the mandated ELD curriculum by the state was created for immigrant ELL students, who are learning to speak English. A few of the principals indicated that some of the teachers do not apply the training that they received in SEI or the knowledge they have from their ESL endorsement classes.

Principals acknowledged that some ELL students were being overlooked in some classrooms and there existed a need to deliver instruction to ELL students in a more comprehensible fashion. Principals also agreed that the new ELD curriculum might benefit the ELL students but that they were aware that it was for immigrant ELL students, who are learning English as a Second Language. The following are recommendations by parents and teachers that were included under curriculum: (a) more culturally relevant curricula- more Native American literature; (b) teachers need to modify curriculum to fit students' needs; (c) teachers need to go that extra mile for kids so they can get a quality education; (d) teachers need to be risk takers; (e) smaller class size for ELL classrooms; (f) teachers need to be able to accommodate every child- include art, music, drama, visuals; (g) tutoring needs to be more focused; (h) teachers should look forward to educating the child; (i) curriculum needs to be more consistent; and (j) teachers need to

have high expectations of all students- promote higher level thinking skills. The recommendations will be discussed later on.

Improving Learning for ELLs Through Communication

Communication is a vital aspect within any school organization and within the context of school improvement. Communication between students and peers, students and teachers, teachers and colleagues, teachers and administrators are all facets to improving teaching and learning. According to the literature review, one important aspect to ELL learning is something referred to as “academic conversations”. (Keenan, 2004) An academic conversation in the classroom is the ongoing conversation during lessons that incorporates the vocabulary and concepts that students are learning. Research indicates that academic conversations are a way to get ELLs to talk more and use language in the classroom. Parents felt that there was a lack of communication with parents when it concerned the subject of ELL. Parents said that there is a need to better educate all parents about ELL and respond to the questions/concerns they have, i.e. What it means to have a child in the ELL program?; What to expect from the new ELD curriculum?; What exactly does being proficient or not proficient in English mean?. Parents also agreed that the schools should provide such explanations in English and Navajo because some parents and grandparents (who might be the student’s guardian) are Navajo speakers first and English speakers second. Parents also said that most of the letters sent home are written in English, which again makes it hard for parents whose first language is Navajo to comprehend.

Teachers agreed that aspects of communication need improving. Teachers need to know test results for students who take the AZELLA and what category students fall into. One teacher said that they should not just be given a list of ELL students but data along with this information. All teachers said that they needed more time to collaborate and plan, but more specifically time to share information about ELL students. Teachers shared how they incorporate academic conversations within their lessons and how they have had success using this method.

Principals agreed that communication is essential to improving teaching and learning for ELL students. Principals shared that there is a need to allow teachers more time to collaborate among grade level teachers but also across grade levels. Principals acknowledged that parents may need to become more educated about what being classified as ELL means for their child. Principals said that the new ELD curriculum would require more collaboration and communication among administrators as well. The following are recommendations by parents and teachers that were included under communication: (a) administrators should work with teachers instead of running them over; (b) better communication with parents and community; (c) administrator and teacher should not have verbal confrontations in front of students; (d) administrators need to be more consistent with district policies; (e) inform parents more- Home Language Survey form; (f) school board needs to listen to parent concerns; (g) teachers need to be knowledgeable about child's background, their family, lifestyle; (h) teachers need a presence in the community; (i) know about the culture of a Navajo child; (j) administration needs to have more of an open door policy; and (k) administrators need to look into research conducted by college students.

Conclusion for Improving Learning for American Indian ELLs

The main stakeholders for improving learning for American Indian ELLs are parents, teachers, and principals. To begin considering such an endeavor the following four areas must be discussed: (a) providing specialized training for all instructional staff; (b) engaging and promoting parental involvement; (c) maintaining consistency in delivery of curriculum; and (d) communication. In this study it was important to include the perceptions of the parents of American Indian ELL students because they know their children best. Parents have been marginalized by Indian education policy historically and have not had a “voice” in school policy and must now play a greater role in their children’s education. Teachers must make every effort to afford parents the opportunities to become involved. Teachers must also commit to communication with students, fellow teachers, and principals to improve learning for ELLs. Principals must become the stewards in fostering a curriculum that is appropriate for American Indian ELLs. Mendoza-Reis and Reveles (2004), advocate that there is a need for re-framing of the leadership skills of principals in bilingual schools. “They must be instructional leaders who fully understand the complexities of effective education for English language learners . . .they must be skilled communicators who know how to lead school improvement efforts through the lens of best practices for English language learners” (p.34).

Implications for Learning

The themes associated with successful teaching strategies for American Indian ELL students in this study have implications for learning in the areas of professional

development, strengthening parental involvement, curriculum accountability and improving communication.

Professional Development

Conduct an Analysis of the New ELD Curriculum

First and foremost, the principals and assistant principals should make it a priority to gauge the effectiveness of the ELD curriculum for their American Indian ELL students. A means to collecting data needs to occur, i.e. student test scores, Individual Learning Plans, writing samples. Data should be collected throughout the year to be able to have enough data to draw conclusions about the ELD curriculum. Principals must make time to do observations and walk-throughs to be able to see firsthand ELL students immersed in the ELD curriculum. At the end of the year, the principals must meet with the ELD teachers so that they can discuss the teaching experiences they had because of the program. An analysis must be made in areas of strengths and weaknesses of the program and how to make adaptations to the program so that it can best benefit the American Indian ELL students. All teachers and principals were aware that the ELD curriculum was designed for immigrant ELL students; therefore adaptations could be made to better serve the American Indian ELL students.

Professional Development Reflective of Curriculum Changes

Professional development should reflect the needs the teachers require in order to implement the changes to the program. Using the SIOP method was a requirement of the ELD program in their lesson planning approach. Teachers should reflect on some of the challenges they faced when using this method. Professional development could offer teachers insight on how to overcome such challenges when using the SIOP method. Professional development could also offer new structure to the format of applying the ELD curriculum. The ELD teachers could train support staff in the ELD curriculum so that they could be used to cover the ELD classes should it be necessary. Teachers could also offer informal training on how to apply other successful teaching strategies for ELL students and experienced ELD teachers could be a mentor to newly hired ELD teachers.

Consideration of Recommendations

Testing Practices for ELLs

Parents said that they want better testing practices for ELLs. Parents shared that they often feel that the way their child is tested could be changed. Parents expressed that their child does not understand why he/she has to take such a test. All of the parents are unfamiliar with the AZELLA test, they would like to learn more about it. Some of the teachers are unfamiliar with the AZELLA test as well. Teachers also said that they are never given results of the AZELLA test. They are only given a list of students who are identified as ELL students. Teachers want to be trained on how to give the AZELLA test to better understand each ELL student's test outcome. As part of professional

development, teachers could learn how to give the AZELLA test and read data associated with the AZELLA test.

ELL/ELD Classification

A few teachers and parents were under the impression that office staff and some principals really do not understand the ELL classification pertaining to students and ELD as pertaining to the curriculum. They feel that it is important for all people who work at the school to become aware of what each stands for and what each represent. It is important for everyone at the school to become educated as to what is going on with ELL students. Office staff and principals need to participate in ELL professional development so they can have understanding about the subject and be able to answer questions parents might have.

Use of Navajo In The Classroom

Some parents felt that Navajo could be used in the classroom. The schools are mandated by the Navajo Nation to teach Navajo, so students in grades K-8, have a Navajo language class that they attend daily. Parents want teachers to find ways to reinforce the Navajo language in the classroom, regardless, if they are attempting to achieve English proficiency for all students. This is an area that needs more discussion and input from parents, teachers and principals. Some parents fear that the whole concept of ELL might be jeopardizing the Navajo language.

Student Behavior and Expectations

Some parents believed that teachers are not handling student behavior the best way possible. One parent associated her son's behavior of not listening during instruction time due to the instruction being too difficult to comprehend. She added that when her son does not understand something he stops listening and will act out. Teachers might need to analyze similar cases where students are not paying attention and find the root causes. On the other hand, students who may not be challenged enough could display similar behaviors.

Teacher Mentorship Training

A parent, who is also a teacher, recommended not only the need for a mentoring program for new teachers but also that teachers need to be trained to teach ELL, trained on how to reflect- what worked and why; and teachers need time to share what is working with ELL learners. She believed that the ELD teachers are faced with a whole new process and might need training in these areas. Teachers could have professional development in teacher mentoring that includes aspects of reflective teaching and sharing of ELL data.

Strengthening Parental Involvement

Conduct an Analysis of Current Parental Involvement Practices

Administrators could ask teachers to share what they do to get parents involved in their child's learning and find out what kind of activities are producing parent involvement. The school could form a committee that can conduct an analysis and come up with more ideas for parents involvement. It might even be helpful if teachers ask parents how they want to be involved. Parents want to feel that they can contribute to their child's learning if given the chance.

Consideration of Recommendations

Strengthen Parent/Teacher Relationship

The school might want to consider ways in which it can strengthen parent and teacher relationships. A first step might be to form a parent committee, which was a recommendation from a parent. Parents could use the committee as a means of having a voice in school decision-making and concerns. Parents said they want their input to be heard and valued. Parents might feel validated by implementing a parent committee and not feel intimidated to voice concerns in a group setting. Parents might be more willing to contribute their input towards the curriculum, homework, and classroom activities if they have such a committee.

Creating Parent Info Nights

One parent said that there is a need for information nights as a means to educate parents in areas they do not know much about. The schools could create Parent Info Nights, in which they present information on certain topics. Some of the recommendations were in the areas of ELL, AIMS, NCLB and the AZELLA test. Parents want a better explanation of these areas and some even ask that the explanation be in the Navajo language. Parent Info Nights could also include tips on how to reinforce learning at home, homework tips, and monitoring child progress and behaviors.

Curriculum Accountability

Evidence of Accountability

In conducting the interviews with the principals, one area that was not discussed was that of accountability for ensuring that the curriculum is followed. The school needs to discuss ways in which they will monitor accountability of the new ELD curriculum. Often times accountability for a school's curriculum stops at teacher evaluation and test scores. The parents of the ELL students want to ensure that the school is delivering a curriculum that is appropriate for ELL learners. In this school's case, the ELD curriculum would be that specific curriculum. Parents want to be provided with evidence to ensure that the ELD curriculum is being taught to their children. Parents want to hold the school accountable for the curriculum they will offer to their ELL students.

Sharing Curriculum with Parents

One way to promote accountability of the ELD curriculum might be to share the curriculum with parents. This is the first year of its implementation, so parents really have no idea what it entails. It would be a great way to garner parental involvement if parents have knowledge of what their ELL child is learning. After the school conducts the analysis of the ELD curriculum and makes changes, the changes should also be shared with the parents. Keeping the parents informed about the curriculum might be the most important aspect to maintaining parental involvement and sustaining strong parent/teacher relationships.

Considerations of Recommendations

A More Relevant Curriculum

Parents said that the school need more culturally relevant curricula, one that includes American Indian literature. The school could make adaptations to include reading material from a reading list of American Indian authors and stories. Teachers can incorporate such works of literature so as to make the curriculum more culturally relevant to the heritage of the American Indian ELL students. Parents also said that the curriculum needs to be able to accommodate every child- include art, music, drama, visuals. Parents were aware that their children were not going to their specials classes (i.e. P.E., Art, Music) anymore with the current ELD program schedule. They felt that it was unfair. The school could try to incorporate within the ELLs weekly schedule times when they can be offered these special classes. The ELL students could join another

class during a specials class, or the school could have the Art teacher come to the ELD class to do short art lessons. The ELL students need a break from the daily ELL curriculum and an outlet. Most students enjoy these specials classes, the ELL students should not be left out.

Teacher Accountability

Teachers are not only held accountable for teaching the curriculum; parents also hold them accountable for ensuring that their children learn. The following are parents' recommendations for teachers: teachers need to modify curriculum to fit students' needs, teachers need to go that extra mile for kids so they can get a quality education, teachers need to be risk takers, teachers should look forward to educating the child, teachers need to have high expectations of all students- promote higher level thinking skills. It is important for parents to express to teachers that they are entrusting the teacher to their child's education. Parents do have expectations, however, sometimes parents do not know how to convey them to teachers. Parents also want smaller class sizes for ELL classrooms and another recommendation is that tutoring needs to be more focused. A few parents talked about how they felt tutoring was not very beneficial to their child. Teachers could highlight ELL students' weaknesses in a particular subject area and create a plan for tutoring that focuses in on those weaknesses.

Improving Communication

Student Progress Letters

The school could send out a letter to parents every two weeks which indicates their child's progress and concerns that teachers might have. This might help parents stay informed. Parents who are concerned with their child's progress might contact the teacher more regularly. Also the progress letters might initiate more communication between the parents and students, parents might ask their children more questions about school.

Create a Newsletter to Highlight Successes

Teachers could submit information to the school district's ELL Department and they could create a newsletter that highlights successes of ELL students. Any activities that the students are involved in could also be included whether they occur in the classroom or outside the classroom, such as fieldtrips. Students need to feel a sense of accomplishment and pride and should be recognized for their hard work and achievements.

Create a Suggestion Box

Parents felt that there is no convenient way to voice their concerns about school issues. If the school created suggestion boxes where parents could drop their suggestions

whenever they need to, administrators might become aware of some of the concerns that parents have. The parents could even do it anonymously so that they would not fear retaliation of any kind.

Consideration of Recommendations

Creating a True Open Door Policy

Parents are sincere when they say that they want to be heard and their input valued. Administrators should take note of some of the recommendations and review them to see if any issues could be addressed immediately. Some of the recommendations were previously discussed, so a list of them suffices. The recommendations are: need better communication with parents and community; an administrator and teacher should not have verbal confrontations in front of students, administrators need to be more consistent with district policies, inform parents more- about Home Language Survey form, school board needs to listen to parent concerns, teachers need to be knowledgeable about child's background, their family, and lifestyle, teachers need a presence in the community, and know about the culture of a Navajo child.

Administrators might have the tendency to listen to parents when parents come to the school to discuss an issue, however, it is equally important for administrators to listen when teachers have concerns. Teachers had the following recommendations for administrators: administrators should work with teachers instead of running them over, administration needs to have more of an open door policy and administrators need to look into research conducted by college students. Listening reflectively to concerns is one way administrators can improve communication within the school and create an

atmosphere of welcoming parents and teachers to share their concerns thus creating a true open door policy.

Recommendations for Research

American Indian students who speak their Native language

Studies need to be conducted to ascertain how many American Indian students still speak their Native language and to what degree. Data from such studies might help advocate for the creation of a separate ELL category for American Indian ELL students. Presently in Arizona, American Indian ELL students are classified by using the same language assessment and categorical outcomes as immigrant ELL students. It is critical to point out that unlike immigrant students, who are learning to speak English as a Second Language, most American Indian students are English first language speakers.

Using the SIOP method for American Indian ELL learners

The school's newly adopted ELD curriculum incorporates the use of the SIOP method in the lesson plan approach. Again, because the curriculum was created for traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) students, there is no true indication whether or not it is appropriate for American Indian learners. Some teachers within the teacher focus groups shared their perceived successes using the SIOP method, but due to the limited amount of time, teachers were not able to go into great detail. A study could concentrate on the use of the SIOP method for American Indian ELL students at different grade levels.

American Indian ELL students and inclusion

A study could investigate at the learning outcomes of American Indian ELL students who are integrated with non-ELL American Indian students in the classroom and the usage of whole group instruction using ESL or bilingual methodologies. Teachers felt that most of the research-based strategies for ELL students from the literature could be used for all American Indian students. Some teachers did not agree that American Indian ELL students should be placed into one class together, but included within non-ELL students' learning environment.

Recommendations for Further Research

A study could obtain more data in regards to teaching strategies. It could focus more on the research-based ELL teaching strategies from the literature that were effective for other ELL students and ask teachers to apply them to American Indian ELL students. Teachers who participate could choose from the four identified strategies to implement. Teachers could then share detailed information as to whether or not such strategies are appropriate for American Indian ELL students and why.

A study could focus more on the SIOP method as the one teaching strategy for American Indian ELL students and include observations of teachers using the SIOP method in the classroom. The data from the observations might be used in interviews with the principals to further discuss practice and policy of effective teaching strategies for American Indian ELL learners.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to provide parents, teachers and principals an opportunity to present their perspectives on effective teaching and learning for American Indian ELL students. Recommendations and implications for improving learning for American Indian ELL students were also included. Themes that filtered through each data set were collapsed into four conclusions: (a) professional development; (b) strengthening parental involvement; (c) curriculum accountability; and (d) improving communication to address the learning needs of American Indian ELL students with research-based teaching strategies in mind.

American Indian ELL students need more educators advocating for them. The Arizona Indian Education Act (1985) states that collaboration among all educational entities should occur in order to promote and ensure quality education for American Indian people. The Arizona Department of Education has established an office of Indian Education to oversee this policy. The office of Indian Education ought to initiate research in the area of American Indian ELLs and advocate on their behalf because the mandated ELD curriculum for ELLs is not appropriate for this population. In the context of language development, American Indian ELLs are not making initial attempts to learn to speak English. Most American Indian ELLs are fluent speakers of English and may or may not speak their native language.

Arizona is home to 23 federally recognized tribes. Most tribal organizations have created an education committee or a tribal education school board. These committees need to be concerned with state policy which mandates all ELLs to be provided with four

hours of Structured English Immersion (SEI) instruction on a daily basis. American Indian ELL students can and do benefit from SEI instruction, however, four hours of intense English language development is not necessary for a majority of the ELL students. American Indian ELL students' instruction should be reflective of their proficiency level. If a student is at a basic level of English proficiency, as most are; then the type of English language development program could be structured with less time in mind. Another important aspect to this, is that if American Indian ELLs are receiving four hours of intense English language development, other academic areas might be in jeopardy. According to the 2013 Native American Education Annual report, the percent of Native American students passing Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) in either reading or math was the lowest of the race/ethnic groups. Instead of receiving four hours of SEI instruction, American Indian ELLs should be allowed more time to receive high quality instruction in reading and math.

Discourse in Indian education and how to address areas of low academic performance, the achievement gap, and the drop-out rate among American Indian students is ongoing and prevalent. The notion of providing a culturally-relevant curriculum was thought to be an answer for addressing some of these areas. I believe that it goes deeper than the cultural aspect of cultural alignment. Educators need to acknowledge that perhaps the strength that American Indian ELL students bring to the classroom is tied to their acquisition of language(s). According to Holbrook (2011), generally with American Indian ELLs there are two situations: 1.) Students whose first language is a Native American language and they are learning English as a Second Language (ESL) and/or 2.) Students whose parents, and/or grandparents, or guardians

learned English as a second language, but did not fully acquire Standard English and now speak a non-standard variety of English. The key to improving academic performance for all American Indian students, ELL and non-ELL, might be that they require English language development continuously as they progress through school. The impact that their Native language has on their learning is not thoroughly researched or known. Even if American Indian students are not speakers of their native language, for a majority of students their parents and grandparents speak their native language. Thus, there exists the influence of their Native language on their acquisition of language(s). There also is the influence of a non-standard variety of English on their academics if they are hearing non-standard English spoken at home.

It was important to give American Indian parents a "voice" in my study because of the very history in Indian education in America whereby parents' opinions were devalued. Parents want their children's educational experiences to be one of equal educational opportunity. However, when state policy dictates a prescription for all ELLs and does not recognize that perhaps American Indian ELLs require a different program, the consequences are negative. These students are more likely to fail or dropout because school becomes overbearing with four hours of SEI. Should this policy continue to affect American Indian ELLs in this manner, then education policy for American Indian students has not progressed but has only regressed. It is imperative that there exists a need for delineation of instructional methods for how to teach American Indian ELLs successfully.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form (Parents)



Implied Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: The Perceptions of Parents, Teachers, and Principals of American Indian English Language Learners and Teaching Strategies That Address ELL Learning Needs: A Multivocal Qualitative Study

Principal Investigator: Melissa Bilagody, PhD. Candidate
965 Southgate Drive #4, State College, PA 16801
mje181@psu.edu (814) 235-9976

Advisor: Dr. John Tippeconnic, PhD.
300 Rackley Building, University Park, PA 16802
jwt7@psu.edu (814) 863-1626

1. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research is to explore whether teaching strategies/interventions for ELLs (e.g., Asian, Hispanic) recommended by the current literature might be applicable to the learning needs of American Indian ELL students.
2. **Procedures to be followed:** You will be asked to respond to the following: Can you share your child's learning experiences to me as an ELL student. What knowledge and skills does your child's teacher need in order to ensure that he/she is learning? What are some challenges your child has faced? Audio-recording will be used.
3. **Duration:** It will take about 1 hour, 30 minutes to complete the interview.
4. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be stored and secured in 401A Rackley in a locked file. Only the principal investigator and her advisor will have access to the file. The recordings will be destroyed by 2011. The interviewer does not ask for any information that would identify who the responses belong to as pseudonyms will be used. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared because your name is in no way linked to your responses.
5. **Right to Ask Questions:** Please contact Melissa Bilagody at (814) 235-9976 or Dr. John Tippeconnic at (814) 863-1626 with questions or concerns about this study.
6. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Completion of the interview implies your consent to participate in this research. Please keep this form for your records or future reference.

Participant Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Signature

Date

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form (Teachers)



Implied Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: The Perceptions of Parents, Teachers, and Principals of American Indian English Language Learners and Teaching Strategies That Address ELL Learning Needs: A Multivocal Qualitative Study

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Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to explore whether teaching strategies/interventions for ELLs (e.g., Asian, Hispanic) recommended by the current literature might be applicable to the learning needs of American Indian ELL students.

Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to respond to the following questions: How can successful practices recommended by the literature of ELLs (non-American Indian) be used to improve American Indian ELL students' learning? Audio-recording will be used. You will also be asked to give recommendations for improving teaching for American Indian ELL students.

Duration: 1 hour, 30 minutes will be required to complete participation in this research.

Statement of Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be stored and secured in 401A Rackley in a locked file. Only the principal investigator and her advisor will have access to the file. The recordings will be destroyed by 2011. The interviewer does not ask for any information that would identify who the responses belong to as pseudonyms will be used. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared because your name is in no way linked to your responses. If you speak about contents of the focus group outside the group, it is expected that you will not tell others what individual participants said.

Right to Ask Questions: Please contact Melissa Bilagody at (814) 235-9976 or Dr. John Tippeconnic at (814) 863-1626 with questions or concerns about this study.

Voluntary Participation: Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Completion of the focus group implies your consent to participate in this research.
Please keep this form for your records or future reference.

Participant Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Signature

Date

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form (Principals)



Implied Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: The Perceptions of Parents, Teachers, and Principals of American Indian English Language Learners and Teaching Strategies That Address ELL Learning Needs: A Multivocal Qualitative Study

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1. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research is to explore whether teaching strategies/interventions for ELLs (e.g., Asian, Hispanic) recommended by the current literature might be applicable to the learning needs of American Indian ELL students.
2. **Procedures to be followed:** You will be asked to respond to the following questions: How can teachers of American Indian ELL students enhance their teaching style in order to ensure that they are meeting the needs of such students? You will also be asked to respond to the following sub-questions: (a) What knowledge and skills do teachers of American Indian ELL students need to ensure learning?, (b) How can successful practices recommended by the literature of ELLs (non-American Indian) be used to improve American Indian ELL students' learning?, and (c) How would you characterize the implications for supporting and fostering the implementation of successful instructional practices for ELL students? Audio-recording will be used. You will be given the opportunity to comment on the recommendations made by the teacher focus groups.
3. **Duration:** 1 hour, 30 minutes will be required to complete participation in this research.
4. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be stored and secured in 401A Rackley in a locked file. Only the principal investigator and her advisor will have access to the file. The recordings will be destroyed by 2011. The interviewer does not ask for any information that would identify who the responses belong to as pseudonyms will be used. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared because your name is in no way linked to your responses.

- 7. **Right to Ask Questions:** Please contact Melissa Bilagody at (814) 235-9976 or Dr. John Tippeconnic at (814) 863-1626 with questions or concerns about this study.
- 8. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Completion of the interview implies your consent to participate in this research. Please keep this form for your records or future reference.

Participant Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Signature

Date

Appendix D

Request Letter

To'Nanees'Dizi Chapter
P.O. Box 727
Tuba City, Arizona 86045

To the Council of the Nataani,

April 18, 2007

Ya'at'eeh. Shi ei' Melissa J. Bilagody yinishye'. Naasht'e'zhi Tachii'nii ei'nishli, doo Yavapai-Apache/Hualapai bashishchiin. I am a member of the Tuba City community. I grew up and graduated in Tuba City. I am an educator. I had been a teacher in the Tuba City Unified School District for 7 years, prior to my doctoral studies. Currently, I am a PhD candidate at the Pennsylvania State University. I am in the process of obtaining data, through interviews and surveys, for the completion of my dissertation.

I am requesting permission to conduct my research activities with parents, teachers, and administrators within the schools of TCUSD. I am conducting a multi-vocal qualitative study that focuses on teaching methodologies for American Indian English Language Learners (ELL), in this case Navajo students. My intent is to interview five parents of elementary-aged students, who have been identified as English Language Learners, to have teachers of Navajo ELL students respond to a survey, and lastly to interview six administrators of TCUSD. Such approaches to collecting the data will help answer the following research question: How can teachers of American Indian ELL students enhance their teaching style in order to ensure that they are accommodating such students? And also to gain insight and perspectives of various stakeholders by addressing the following sub-questions: (a) What skills do American Indian ELL students need to ensure learning?, (b) Would successful practices recommended by the literature of ELLs (non-American Indian) be applicable to American Indian ELL students?, and (c) How do building administrators characterize the implications for supporting and fostering the implementation of successful instructional practices for ELL students?

The completion of my study will contribute to the absent academic literature that focuses on improving teaching and learning for American Indian students. This study might give insight and guidance to schools who are seeking ways to accommodate Navajo ELLs. It is my hope that this study will bring awareness to the need of delivering an equal and appropriate education for all Navajo ELL students.

Your consideration and approval of my data collection is greatly appreciated.

A yee'he,

Melissa J. Bilagody

Please send correspondences to:
965 Southgate Drive #4
State College, PA 16801

Appendix E
Solicitation Letter

To TCUSD Parent,

July 2008

Hello. My name is Melissa Bilagody. I am currently a doctoral candidate at the Pennsylvania State University. I will be conducting research within the Tuba City Unified School District. My study will be focused on American Indian English Language Learners and teaching strategies.

I am looking for parents to interview as a part of my study. Your child has been identified by the school as an English Language Learner (ELL). I hope to interview parents of ELL students to gather information on appropriate teaching strategies for American Indian ELL students. You will be asked to respond to the following open-ended questions: What knowledge and skills does your child's teacher need in order to ensure that he/she is learning? Do you feel that your child's teacher is providing a learning environment that meets his/her needs? The interview will take approximately 1 ½ hours long. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to and you may stop the interview at any time. The interview will be audio-recorded.

You will not be compensated for your participation in this study; however, your knowledge as a parent of an ELL student within TCUSD is a valuable contribution to my study.

If you would like to participate in my study please contact me at (814) 321-6813 or by email at mje181@psu.edu. If you are not able to contact me by phone or email, please call the Eagles' Nest Intermediate School and leave a message for me.

Thank you,

Melissa J. Bilagody, Ph.D. Candidate
The Pennsylvania State University

Appendix F

Parent Interview Protocol

What grade is your child in?

How many years has your child been a student in this district?

When was your child identified as an ELL student?

Does your child understand Navajo?

Does your child speak Navajo?

Can you share your child's learning experiences as an ELL student?

What knowledge and skills does your child's teacher need in order to ensure that he/she is learning?

What are some challenges your child has faced?

Are there any challenges you have faced in being a parent of an ELL student?

Appendix G
Principal Interview Protocol

How long have you been a principal?

How long have you been a principal at your current school?

How long were you a teacher?

What grades/subjects did you teach?

How can teachers of American Indian ELL students enhance their teaching style in order to ensure that they are meeting the needs of such students?

Ask the following sub-questions: (a) What knowledge and skills do teachers of American Indian ELL students need to ensure learning?,

(b) How can successful practices recommended by the literature of ELLs (non-American Indian) be used to improve American Indian ELL students' learning?, and

(c) How would you characterize the implications for supporting and fostering the implementation of successful instructional practices for ELL students?

VITA
Melissa J. Bilagody
P.O.Box 2042 ♦ Tuba City, AZ 86045
♦ Email: mje181@psu.edu

***E*DUICATION**

- PhD in Education** Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA May 2014
Major: Educational Leadership
- Masters in Education** Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ May 2000
Major: Educational Leadership
- Bachelor of Arts** Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO Dec 1996
Major: Humanities/Elementary Education-ESL Endorsement

***P*ROFESSIONAL *E*XPERIENCE**

- Instructor** 1/11 to 5/11
Dine' College Tuba City, AZ
- English Instructor- taught parts of speech and basic writing skills for remedial English classes
- Graduate Assistant** 08/06 to 5/08
Pennsylvania State University- Education University Park, PA
- Research assistant- conducted research in education for the Center for the Study of American Indian Leadership
- Bunton-Waller Graduate Fellow** 08/03 to 05/06
Pennsylvania State University – Education University Park, PA
- Research assistant- conducted research in American Indian education
- Third Grade Teacher** 08/98 to 05/03
Tuba City Unified School District Tuba City, AZ
- Implemented and taught third grade curriculum, 3rd grade teacher rep, curriculum
- Native American Studies Teacher** 01/98 to 05/98
Tuba City Unified School District Tuba City, AZ
- Created, implemented and taught Native American Studies curriculum to 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in Jr. High

***P*ROFESSIONAL *M*EMBERSHIP**

- Phi Delta Kappa International – 2007, 2008, 2009
- National Indian Education Association – 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010

***U*NIVERSITY *A*CTIVITIES**

- Member, *Educational Policy Studies Student Association, PSU*
- President, *American Indian Tribal Alliance, PSU*
- Presenter & Member, *Interinstitutional Consort. for Indigenous Knowledge, PSU*