

ABSTRACT

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U.S. SCHOOLING: PERCEPTIONS OF
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT & BIO-
ECOLOGICAL CHALLENGES FOR
CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS

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The purpose of this study was to understand the factors shaping the language learning and schooling experiences of nine fourth-grade elementary school students initially classified as English Language Learners (ELLs) when they first enrolled in school in the Mid-Atlantic region. While a growing body of research exists on factors shaping the language learning and schooling experiences of children of immigrants, and particularly in middle and high school levels, few studies have focused on the language learning and schooling experiences of students particularly at the

elementary level. Three research questions guided this study: How do students originally classified as ELLs understand their English language learning experiences and schooling? What school factors contributed to students' ELL classification/ESOL placement/maintenance? How do the home and school environment interaction influence students' language learning and schooling experiences?

In this qualitative study, I used a case study design and employed the use of ethnographic techniques for data collection. The cases were nine fourth grade students attending one elementary school (Maravilla) in a Mid-Atlantic state. Additionally, they met the following criteria: 1) from Spanish speaking household; 2) classified ELL when they began school; and 3) Salvadoran or Mexican heritage. Students' respective parent(s), teachers (fourth grade classroom and ESOL), the principal and parent liaison served as secondary participants.

Several conclusions were drawn from this study about the nine participants' language learning and schooling experiences, most who continued with an ELL classification beyond the fourth grade: 1) several macro factors including immigration and state education policies shape the experiences of the participant's language learning and schooling experiences; 2) home environments foster the transmission of various funds of knowledge but also present several social, cultural and economic challenges which hindered participants' language learning and schooling experiences; 3) school environments prescribe state mandates addressing ELL students, but various factors limit the services provided and supports perceived; and 4) home-school collaborations are sustained by, but primarily limited to, a bilingual parent liaison at Maravilla. Language barriers, parents' formal schooling, immigration

policies, and racial tensions are among several factors limiting partnerships between home and school as well as limiting access to information pertaining to participants' language learning and schooling experiences.

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By

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2013

DEDICATION

To the students, families and educators for sharing your stories.

Para mi papá, José Julio González y mi mamá, Felicita Andrade González, por dar todo para que mis hermanos y yo salgamos adelante.

Para mis hermanos Carlos y Edwin por todo su apoyo e inspiración.

Para mi sobrina Angelique por motivarme.

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Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while and leave footprints on our hearts and we are never ever the same. –Flavia Weedn

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
Description of the Problem	1
Significance of the Study	2
Purpose of the Study	5
Research Questions	5
Background to the Study	5
Children of Immigrants in the Mid-Atlantic State	7
Definition of Terms	10
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND LITERATURE REVIEW ON LATINO/A EDUCATION	12
Theoretical Frameworks	12
Bio-ecological Systems Model: Bronfenbrenner	12
Social Capital: Bourdieu	16
Social Capital: Coleman	18
Social Capital: Bourdieu and Coleman	20
Funds of Knowledge: Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez	20
Theoretical Framework Summary	21
Latinos in the United States: Diversity of Histories and Experiences	22
Who are the “New” Latino/a immigrants?	23
Why did they migrate to the United States?	25
Why did Latinos/as particularly choose to migrate to the Mid-Atlantic area?	28
Recent Immigration to Mid-Atlantic State	31
Social Policies Affecting Immigrant Families in Mid-Atlantic State	32
Contemporary Challenges/Issues Affecting Latinos/as	34
Challenges at Home/Family	35
Immigration Status and Impact	40
High School Dropout Rate	45
Family and Home	45
Neighborhoods and Environment	47
Schools	48
Focus on Central Americans and Mexican Education	49
English Language Learners	50
Summary	56

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	58
Research Site.....	59
Selection of Cases and Background.....	59
School Overview.....	60
Sample Selection of Participants:	61
Researcher’s Entry, Reciprocity, Ethics	64
Data Collection	66
Sources of Data	66
Observations	69
Documents	70
Field Notes & Memos	70
Data Management Strategies	71
Data Analysis Strategies	72
Trustworthiness.....	74
Transferability.....	77
Ethics.....	78
Limitations	80
Positionality	81

CHAPTER 4: MARAVILLA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND THE PARTICIPANTS	85
School: Maravilla Elementary School	85
Overview of Primary Participants- ELL and Former ELL Students	89
The Students as Participants	89
Student Participants	92
Pepé.....	92
Roger.....	92
Mary	93
Estela.....	93
Yasmin	93
Juan	94
Guadalupe	94
Nathalie.....	95
Selena.....	95
Secondary Participants- Home.....	96
Pepé’s Mother, Señora Lorena.....	98
Roger’s Mother, Señora Nohemi	99
Mary’s Mother and Father, Señora Lucero and Señor Jorge	99
Estela’s Mother, Señora Gladys.....	100
Yasmin’s Mother, Doña Elsa	101
Juan’s Mother, Doña Alejandra	102
Guadalupe’s Mother, Señora Milagros	103
Nathalie’s Mother, Señora Cristina.....	103

Selena’s Mother, Señora Rosa	104
Secondary Participants- School	104
Fourth Grade Teachers.....	105
Ms. Laressa	105
Ms. Macken.....	105
Ms. Olivia	106
The ESOL Teachers	106
Ms. Murriquillo.....	106
Ms. Simms	107
The ESOL Parent Liaison	108
The Principal.....	108
Summary	109

CHAPTER 5: TRAVELING THE ELL JOURNEY: A POLICY POINT OF VIEW

.....	110
Mid-Atlantic State: Title III & ELL Inclusion.....	111
ELL Pathway within the State	113
Pre-Kindergarten.....	113
Kindergarten and Beyond	113
Home Language Survey (HLS)	114
LAS: The ESOL Placement Factor.....	114
Parent Notification of ELL Status.....	116
ELL Instruction.....	118
Additional Supports for ESOL Students.....	119
ELL Pathway at Maravilla.....	119
Invisible ELLs in Pre-Kindergarten.....	119
Kindergarten: The ELL Starting Line.....	120
Home Language Survey (HLS) Mismatch	120
ESOL Assessments: English Proficiency Inconsistencies	123
Documenting ELL Classification: the “NCLB” Letter.....	125
ESOL Instruction	128
Additional Supports for ELLs at Maravilla	129
After School Program Perceived as “Day Care”	129
Summer School.....	132
Translation Services.....	132
Summary.....	133

CHAPTER 6: EXPERIENCING TEACHING ELLs: A TEACHER’S POINT OF VIEW

.....	135
“When you are in ESOL you are <i>already</i> out of the Interior”	135
ESOL Teachers as Support Staff and Conflicting Assignments.....	137
ESOL is the Lowest Rank.....	139
ESOL Class on the Periphery: Scheduling and Space issues.....	140

Fourth Grade ESOL Levels 3 and 4: Read Rehearse, Present, Repeat	143
ESOL Level 2: Tracing Letters “Mira y Repite” –“Look and Repeat”	146
ESOL Instruction for High ELL Determined by Low ELL.....	148
Fourth Grade Classroom Supports for ELLs	152
Formulating Mediocre Expectations and ELL Retention	156
Summary	161
CHAPTER 7: Experiencing ESOL: A Parent’s Point of View	163
ELL Parents and Home Support	163
Parental Support at All Costs	164
The ESOL Parent Liaison “She is One of Us”	169
The Missing ELL Piece in School Activities.....	173
ELL and Advocacy	176
Home-School: A Tenuous Relationship	178
Summary	184
CHAPTER 8: Experiencing ESOL: The Student Point of View	185
Student Overview.....	185
Pepé: Honor Roll Student and Recurring ELL	187
Roger: “Pending Exit Status”: Classified ELL without ESOL Instruction.....	189
Mary the Resistant: The ELL Student Hoping to Exit ESOL.....	192
Estela: The Second Generation ESOL Student.....	197
Yasmin: The “I Don’t Tell No One” ELL	200
Juan: The “Passed Up” Fourth Grader	206
Guadalupe: The Content ESOL Student and Self Taught Spanish Reader.....	210
Nathalie: The “Highly Bilingual” and Gifted Former ELL	213
Selena: The Two World Navigator And Former ELL	216
Summary	219
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION, POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH.....	220
Research Question 1	222
Research Question 2	229
Research Question 3	235
Bronfenbrenner, Funds of Knowledge and Social Capital	238
Micro Home:	239
Funds of knowledge At Home	241
Micro: School.....	244
Meso: Home-School	246
Macro: Title III and School implementation.....	249
Macro: Immigration	251
Policy Recommendation	254

Future Research	256
Appendix 1	258
Appendix 2	259
Appendix 3	260
Appendix 4	274
Bibliography	276

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Student Participant Characteristics	91
Table 2: Parent’s Characteristics and Knowledge about ESOL Program.....	98
Table 3: Ms. Simms' 4th grade Language Assessment Report	125
Table 4: Interview Length and Location.....	258
Table 5: Student Maximum Variation	259

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Student Enrollment at Maravilla, 1993-2010	87
Figure 2: ELL Classification, Placement and Exit.....	112

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Description of the Problem

In *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), the United States Supreme Court established that: [a]ny ability grouping or tracking system employed by a school system to deal with the special language skill needs of a national origin-minority group must be designed to meet such language skill needs as soon as possible and must not operate as an educational dead end of permanent track.

Today English Language Learners (ELLs) make up approximately 5 million or 10% of all students enrolled across U.S. schools (NCES, 2012). ELLs are found at every level of the educational pipeline. Although the greatest concentration is at early grade levels, 74% of ELLs remain with such classification in the fourth grade, 72% remain in eighth grade and 54% in the twelfth grade (Mazzeo, Carlson, Voelkl, & Lutkus, 2000). The majority of ELLs are children of immigrants who speak a language other than English at home. Of the ELL population, approximately 80% speak Spanish (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2012). The children of immigrant populations increased steadily from 13% in 1990 to 23% in 2009 (Fortuny and Chaudry, 2011). Additionally, the majority of children of immigrants are US-born citizens (Capps, 2001). Unlike previous ELLs, a growing percentage of students classified English Learners (ELs) are therefore U.S.-born, yet the instructional services provided predominantly target students of immigrant backgrounds (Callahan, 2013; Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann 2002).

The consequences for not addressing the linguistic and academic needs of

ELLs are many. More specifically, 80% to 91% of middle school and high school ELL students were born in the US (Calderon, 2007). The long-term ELL (LTELL) classification and often ESL placement for seven years of schooling or more (Freeman & Freeman, 2002; Olsen & Jaramillo, 1999) is not only problematic but merits further study. Students with an ELL classification significantly underperform on state standards (Moss & Puma, 1995; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003; Wainer, 2004). Long-term placement in such programs may further affect their equitable access to quality education, thereby limiting their access to higher education, upward mobility, civic and political engagement, and overall full participation in a democratic society.

Significance of the Study

The main provision specifically addressing the education for children who enroll in schools from households where a language other than English is spoken is Title III: The English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Title III established accountability measures for the education of English Learners (EL), officially replacing Title VII, the Bilingual Education Act (1968) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). This transition occurred despite numerous studies suggesting the positive effects of bilingual education programs, when done appropriately, (Cummins, 2001, 2000, 1997, 1980; Garcia, 2001) particularly for students entering schools with limited to no English. Studies found that not only do students who are consistently exposed to both their first language, L1, and a second language, L2, become proficient in both languages (Goodz, 1994; Hakuta, 1986; Harding & Riley, 2003; Hatch, 1978;

McLaughlin, 1984) but they may in fact eventually outperform monolinguals academically (Bialystok, 1991; Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994; Diaz & Klinger, 1991; Genesee, 1987; Hakuta, 1986). Additionally, fostering additive approaches for children to learn English while maintaining their native language have also been found of importance for students' personal development and sense of identity (Cazabon, Lambert, & Hall, 1993; Lambert & Cazabon, 1994). Nonetheless, the programmatic response for providing language instruction for students shifted from the additive approach using students' native language to programs solely focusing on English acquisition as the predominant method for language instruction.

Since passage of NCLB, each state developed English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards, assessments, and accountability measures for monitoring progress for ELs. However, there are several inconsistencies. Although several states collaborated to establish their state requirements, criteria selected in one state for EL services may differ from criteria, assessment, and accountability measures selected in another state (Rivera, 1987; Ramsey & O'Day, 2010). Services provided can differ significantly by district and even by school. The consequences for the lack of accountability at the national level for the services provided at the state and local levels are significant. The literature reports severe academic underperformance by ELLs across all grade levels (Abedi & Gandara, 2007; Lee, Grig, & Donahue, 2007). However the data is not representative of all ELL's performance because of the diverse assessments which are used across states.

As a result of the diverse criteria established across states, it is important to look more closely within each state. According to *Education Week's* Quality Counts

(2009) report, several states in the Mid-Atlantic region have demonstrated leadership for providing quality education (p.44). This research will therefore highlight ELL's performance of nine fourth graders at one elementary school within a state in the Mid-Atlantic area during the 2010-2011 academic year. Fourth graders were selected in this study for many reasons. First, students in this age group reportedly encounter more academic challenges in school (CDC, 2013; Suarez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suarez-Orozco, 2011). In the middle childhood years, students become more independent from family and are at a critical point in their emotional as well as social development (CDC, 2013). Additionally, there is no research conducted for children in the middle childhood years with parents who have an unauthorized immigration status, ELL classification and how such factors affect their schooling.

Of particular concern is that many of these students have been unable to exit the ELL classification by the fourth grade and are therefore on track for becoming a Long-term English language learner (LTELL) (Freeman & Freeman, 2002; Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2009; Olsen & Jaramillo, 1999). These are students who remain with an ELL classification for more than seven years, in other words sometimes beyond their elementary schooling and into their secondary education. Despite their growing presence, LTELLs are underrepresented in the literature (Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2012).

This study adds a contemporary understanding of the English learning and schooling experiences of nine fourth grade students initially classified ELL. It presents the participants' different language learning and schooling trajectories.

Purpose of the Study

As a result of the different applications of Title III across states and within districts and schools, it is important to take a closer look at the educational experiences of children who were initially classified ELL and who may either remain or have exited their classification. The purpose of this study was to understand the language learning and schooling experiences of nine children initially classified ELL attending the fourth grade at Maravilla Elementary School.

Research Questions

This qualitative case study examined the following:

- 1) How do students originally classified ELL understand their English language learning experiences and schooling?
- 2) What school factors contributed to students' ELL classification/ESOL placement/maintenance?
- 3) How do the home and school environment interaction influence students' language learning and schooling experiences?

Background to the Study

This study focused on an increasingly large segment of students entering schools: students who were born in the United States who are classified as English language learners when enrolling in US schools. Prior to NCLB, as mentioned earlier, various programs were used to educate ELLs. Previous studies have often looked at the language-learning performance of students comparing instructional methods or programs such as ESL versus bilingual programs. Studies have found that ELLs or students enrolling in school from households speaking a language other than English

develop oral English proficiency on average in four or more years, regardless of whether the instructional program is bilingual (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Howard, Christian & Genesee, 2003; Thomas & Collier, 2002) or English only (Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000). Academically speaking, ELLs receiving some type of specialized English program performed better than those without any services (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Bilingual education, regardless of (late exit or early exit) model promote greater achievement among ELLs (Collier, 1992; Ramirez, 1992; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Additionally, students in bilingual programs were found to have more positive attitudes about themselves and their schooling and aspired to further their education by attending college (Lindholm-Leary and Borsato, 2001).

Although bilingual education programs have been found useful, of these bilingual programs, ESL pullout programs have specifically been the most implemented and least effective model across schools (Thomas & Collier, 1997; Ovando, 2006). Research on students in ESL programs finds limited to no academic rigor, students' marginalization from English-speaking peers, teachers with varying levels of preparation to teach second-language acquisition, and the student permanence in "ESL ghettos" (Gibson, 1988; Olsen, 1997; Suarez-Orozco, 1991; Valdez, 1998; Walker, 1991). Most recently, as the number of children of immigrants entering schools is increasing, the overwhelming response to address the needs for ELLs is instructional models focusing on English language instruction. This study sought to understand the contemporary experiences of nine English learners, at one school within one Mid-Atlantic region state, hereafter referred to as The Mid-Atlantic State for reasons of confidentiality.

Children of immigrants in The Mid-Atlantic State. The Mid-Atlantic State focused on in this study has experienced an influx of immigrants, a growth of 41% between 2000 and 2006. Latin Americans make up the largest share of immigrants in the state at 37% of the immigrant population, followed by Asians at 32.6%, Africans at 15.3%, Europeans at 13.5%, and others, 1.6% (MPI, 2010). This increase in the immigrant population has been especially noted in the state's public schools.

According to The Mid-Atlantic State Department of Education's website, hereafter, (MASDE), the ELL student population in the state grew from approximately 30,000 to 45,000 students in a five year period. The percentage of ELLs in the Mid-Atlantic State now totals 5.2% of the school population, yet immigrant presence has increased exponentially in certain school districts. The ELL student population is also significantly growing as the total student population for the state is decreasing. Additionally, over half of the Mid-Atlantic States' ELL students, 58%, were born in the United States. This suggests that the United States is the leading country of origin for ELL students in The Mid-Atlantic State. Given the large percentages of Salvadoran immigrants to the Mid-Atlantic State and of Mexican immigrants across the nation, it is not surprising that state data reported that El Salvador is the second and Mexico is the third country of origin for most ELL students. The state data does not disaggregate the heritage country for the US-born ELL students, but a significant percentage may also be children of Salvadoran and Mexican immigrants. Additionally, over 65% of ELL students in the Mid-Atlantic State speak Spanish.

The MASDE has adopted Title III in compliance with federal regulations to

address its growing numbers of children of immigrants. Title III primarily focuses on the linguistic needs of both immigrant children and children who come from households with limited English proficiency. The Mid-Atlantic State included in its repertoire an English language proficiency state curriculum which was expected to take effect voluntarily across the local educational agencies. The curriculum was established as a support for those working with ELLs and had been in effect approximately one year by the time this study took place.

The English language proficiency (ELP) state curriculum was created to help schools in The Mid-Atlantic State offer ELLs the services in compliance with Title III: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). English instruction was also selected to address ELLs' needs within the Mid-Atlantic State even though NCLB allows the state and local educational agencies the "flexibility to implement language instruction educational programs, based on scientifically based research on teaching limited English proficient children" (English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act, 2004). Specifically, the state adopted English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) services for ELLs to acquire English proficiency and academic content to meet state standards. The Mid-Atlantic State was one of 14 states to subscribe English as the main language for instruction (Quality Counts 2009, p.26).

The majority of ELL students at The Mid –Atlantic state are in earlier grades. The greatest increase in 2008–2009 was among students in K–5, particularly among K–2. Although the number of ELL student placement drops significantly in middle

school grades 6–8, the number of enrolled ELL participants sharply increases again in ninth grade. The data do not reveal if the increase in the number of ELL students in high school results from recent immigration or is due to other factors. Furthermore, there is very limited information available on exit-level data. This is problematic particularly because research suggests that policies may inadvertently create significant barriers for ELL students from exiting ESL programs (Liquanti, 2001; Valdés, 1998, 2001). Additionally, both national and local data are unclear on average how long students are placed in the program before they exit, nor exit patterns between foreign-born ELL students and those ELL students born in the United States.

In addition to limited information available about the student placement and exit patterns of potential ELL tracks, there are additional academic challenges and social implications affecting ELL students. Reclassifications and exit patterns unquestionably affect the academic accountability for such ELLs, many of whom are also Latino students within the state. For example, 63% of high school ELL students in the state had not attempted or met the four high school assessments (HSAs) required for graduation by their junior year and only 12.5% of those who had taken the four HSAs by their sophomore year passed. In Cabañas County (pseudonym) where the majority of ELL students reside within The Mid-Atlantic State, ELL students have the highest school dropout rate, 5.02% ELL, in comparison with a 1.79% non-ELL high school dropout rate. Within the ELL category, the largest percentage of students who dropped out of school in 2010 was the Latino/a subgroup.

Although students in ESOL are placed to increase their English proficiency and facilitate their integration in US classrooms, a growing number of ESL students

remain in the ESL track several years after they have entered the educational system. Although students need and potentially benefit from language services, there are also several possible failures resulting from this placement. Among these are perceptions by teachers that ELL students are less capable which may limit teacher's consideration of these students for programs such as Gifted and Talented, Advanced Placement, honors classes, or even recommending them to have a program of study that enables them to eventually pursue higher education (Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller, & Frisco, 2009; González, Stoner, & Jovel, 2003; Valdes, 1998; Valdes, 2001).

English language acquisition is obviously an important component for children of immigrants to acquire equitable access to education. However, very little research is available about students' experiences within the schools in light of NCLB and the growing number of long-term English learners.

Definition of terms. In this section, I define some of the terms that are relevant to the student's language learning experiences.

BICS: Basic interpersonal communication skills, or conversational fluency (Cummins, 1981, 1979). For example this refers to language used by children at play.

CALP: Cognitive academic language proficiency. CALP refers to the ability to perform academically in oral and written English (Cummins, 1981, 1979).

EL/ELL: English Learner (EL) and English Language Learner (ELL) are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation when referring to students acquiring English proficiency. Limited English proficient (LEP) continues to be used at the federal level; however, because of its deficit view of students' language, it is not

preferred by many practitioners in the field. Language minority students, linguistic minority students, and heritage language speakers/learners are other terms also used in the literature (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Lenski, Ehlers-Zavala, Daniel & Sun-Irminger, 2006; Thomas, Wayne; & Collier, Virginia, 2002).

ESL/ESOL: English as a second language (ESL)/English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) are bilingual programs where ESL-trained teachers teach the prescribed academic curriculum using English (Ovando, 2006). Several program models exist, including ESL pullout, ESL content, or sheltered instruction.

Lau v. Nichols: A class-action suit against the San Francisco Unified School District presented by parents of Chinese students. The Supreme Court ruled that districts must create meaningful opportunity to participate as required by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (*Lau v. Nichols* [1974]).

Long-term English learner (LTEL): LTEL refers to students who have been in US schools for seven or more years and have been unable to exit the EL classification (Freeman & Freeman, 2002). A LTEL remains with an ELL classification due to inability to fully acquire English proficiency or academic language. Academic English takes from five to seven years to acquire (Thomas & Collier, 1995).

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND LITERATURE

REVIEW ON LATINO/A EDUCATION

Theoretical Frameworks

This study was guided by three frameworks: the bio-ecological systems model, the social capital framework, and the funds of knowledge framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Coleman 1988). The bio-ecological systems model was the primary framework setting up the habitus for additive and subtractive exchanges of social capital at schools and funds of knowledge at home.

Bio-ecological Systems Model: Bronfenbrenner

Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bio-ecological systems theory proposed that the development of a child depends heavily on the relationships he or she has within different environments. Specifically, he claims that "individuals develop through the interconnectedness of their verbal, nonverbal behaviors within activities, through shared relationships, shaped by their roles and influenced by the environments in which these interconnections take place" (p. 11). Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2005) proposes five systems: micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chronosystems, which interact through bi-directional influences.

Bronfenbrenner's five systems (1979, 2005) build layers through which the child is allowed and able to interact with his or her world. The first level, referred to as the *microsystem*, was defined by the "pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). Bronfenbrenner

later adjusted the definition for microsystem to also include “persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief” (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 148). Settings in this system may include the home, school, library, playground, and supermarket among other nearby locations for the child and the individuals within this system. Among these microsystems, the home or family is the most influential of all the environments in the development of the child.

The *mesosystem* serves as the bridge of social interactions that directly connects the developing child between settings within their microsystem. Bronfenbrenner’s examples for the developing child are interactions within the home, with school, and with neighborhood peer groups, while for adults, mesosystems might include interactions with family, with work, and with social spheres (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25).

The developing child indirectly participates with, but is influenced by the third environment, also known as the *exosystem*. The exosystem enables the child to benefit through association with family members or relationships in any of their settings, even if they themselves do not personally know the person or if they do not partake in the same setting; the child therefore benefits from access to network and settings through associations with others.

The *macrosystem* includes consistencies that may exist within the “lower order” micro-, meso-, and exosystems such as culture as a whole, the belief systems of various groups within settings, and the pertaining ideologies of the overarching setting. Similar to the microsystem, the definition for macrosystem was revised:

[T]he macrosystem consists of the overarching pattern or micro-, meso-, and

exosystem characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other broader social context, with particular reference to the developmentally instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems. The macrosystem may be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture, subculture, or other broader social context. (italics in text; Bronfenbrenner, 2005, pp. 149-150)

A country such as the United States would be considered a macrosystem, encapsulating the various local environments within that make up the micro-, meso- and exo-layers. The “American dream” ideal to which many immigrants subscribe is an ideal preserved at the national or macro level yet upheld by the micro-, meso- and exosystem layers within. Cultural/ethnic/religious groups among other large cultures can also make up macrosystems which share attitudes and beliefs and which can also evolve over time.

As the child grows and develops, his or her bio-ecological systems also grow and expand. The roles or set of behaviors and expectations associated with their position in society and their relations to others also evolve depending on their age, sex, occupation, social status, race, and ethnicity, among several other factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 85). Bronfenbrenner (2005) introduces a notion of time, the *chronosystem*. The introduction of this new system to the bio-ecological model, he claims, “completes the discussion of formal paradigms and research designs for the study of development in context” (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 120). The chronosystem contributes to the model by noting that environments are not fixed and change over

time; developmental changes are “triggered by life events or experiences...in the external environment (e.g., the birth of a sibling, entering school, divorce, winning the sweepstakes) or within the organism (e.g., puberty, severe illness)” (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 119). The child’s age of immigration and/or reunification with family members in the United States, as well as legislations affecting students’ educational experiences, are examples of the critical importance of time in the experiences of all children, but particularly of children of immigrants.

In addition to the bioecological model, Bronfenbrenner introduces several key concepts influencing the development of a child. The importance of continuous “interaction” among systems is particularly reinforced throughout his work. The reason why interaction is key, according to Bronfenbrenner, is because failure to interact with other people, or to connect or engage through activities results in a feeling of disconnectedness for the child, this results in “alienation” (Bronfenbrenner & Mahoney, 1975, p. 485). Alienation can play a critical role in the development of children of immigrants. Repak (1995) found, for instance, that “alienation within the family increases with time as children become more acculturated more quickly than their parents and lose respect for parental authority” (p. 167). This alienation, also referred to as “dissonant acculturation,” potentially occurs when students assimilate at a faster rate than their parents (Xie & Greenman, 2005, p. 5).

Bronfenbrenner argues that disconnects between microsystems such as the home and school have resulted in children’s alienation in schools. Bronfenbrenner even claims that schools are “one of the most potent breeding grounds of alienation in American society” (Bronfenbrenner, 1974b, p. 60; as cited in Bronfenbrenner, 1979,

p. 231) because although “alienation ultimately affects the individual, it has its roots in the institutions of the society, and among these institutions the family plays a particularly critical role” (Bronfenbrenner & Mahoney, 1975, p. 485). The interaction between families and institutions is therefore of critical importance.

Other theorists have also found the intricacies within systems to be of importance, in particular how these interactions delineate not only the grounds for alienation, but also the grounds for reproducing such alienation through institutions across various systems.

Social Capital: Bourdieu

Social capital was useful when observing connections or relationships within and across the student’s bio-ecological systems. Pierre Bourdieu (1973, 1977) first conceptualized what is today widely recognized as social capital. Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (pp. 248-249). The “social obligations” or “connections” between acquaintances do not occur naturally, and in fact must be created. These connections may result in material and/or symbolic exchanges sometimes also producing economic capital. Capital according to Bourdieu (1977) includes “*all* the goods material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as *rare* and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation” (italics in text; p. 178). According to Bourdieu (1977), examples of capital range from a smile or handshake to information and honors of recognition.

More specifically, Bourdieu (1986) explains that capital can present itself in

three forms: economic, cultural and social capital. *Economic capital* is that which can be easily and immediately converted into money and may be institutionalized such as property rights; *cultural capital* is present in the embodied (dispositions of the mind, knowledge, understandings, skills that are learned through the socialization process), objectified (cultural goods which are passed on reinforcing the embodied form such as books, computers, paintings, particular work tools, etc.), and institutionalized (form of objectification, which are the degrees and diplomas also validating the embodied cultural capital items) (Bourdieu, 1986; Holt, 1998; Lamont & Lareau, 1988).

Social capital, as noted previously, is convertible, made up of social obligations established and maintained over time. The obligations are composed of exchanges of various forms of capital, transferring capital to individuals, e.g., through information, yet still having access to that capital by belonging to the collective group. For students, acquiring access to information about colleges (cultural capital) through established connections with institutional agents will inform their *habitus* or predisposition or understandings about college, but will also contribute to the student's social capital. This transference of information can potentially generate more relationships with teachers and/or with their peers, thereby further increasing their social capital. The information about college would also transfer information about institutional capital, and introduce them to symbolic capital, that legitimized by dominant groups.

Although according to Bourdieu (1986) economic capital is the “root of all the other types of capital” (p.252), symbolic capital is perhaps the most valuable form of

accumulation because it can be more easily converted to other forms of capital through its legitimacy and recognition (Bourdieu, 1977). Similar to other forms of capital, symbolic capital may be inherited or used by others through association with a particular name or group. A son or daughter of a prominent business owner, for example, may have access to accumulate more capital because of his or her parent's established social, cultural, and economic capital. The access to more capital will therefore be beneficial for the son or daughter, enabling him or her to accumulate more capital and dominance.

It is the accumulation of inherited capital, supplemented by connections for further capital gains, which allow social capital to serve as a tool for reproduction of the dominant class. The limited access to social capital opportunities for children of immigrants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds is particularly problematic across all systems. The implications that limited interactions and resources acquire and/or maintain social capital provides a unique framework to explore the inequalities present in the educational system, particularly for children of immigrants.

Social Capital: Coleman

James Coleman (1988, 1990) has also made several contributions to the conceptualization of social capital, particularly in the field of education. Coleman defines social capital by its function: "It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure" (Coleman, 1990, p. 302). Coleman describes social capital as productive, allowing achievements that might not be otherwise attained.

Coleman (1990) introduces the element of trust in the creation of social capital, which he proposes take three forms: obligations and expectations, information potential, and norms and effective sanctions. Coleman (1991) specifically relates these forms of social capital to families, communities, and schools, advocating for parent involvement to support schools, school involvement to include parents, and the reinstatement of authority in the household as well as transferring such authority to schools. The emphasis of collaborations between home and schools is a particular focus in Coleman's work, resting on notions that the two microsystems can and should support one another through rigid expectations, norms, and sanctions.

In addition to ways social capital can be created, Coleman (1990) indicates ways that social capital can be destroyed or lost. For example, according to Coleman, there is a loss in social capital through limited parent interaction with schools and even through the immigration process. Coleman places much of the blame for capital loss on parents. For example, parent involvement in school interrupted by employment reflects a loss for parents who will no longer be able to volunteer, for their child who will not be able to benefit from interactions with other adults or support networks, and for other parents and schools who would benefit from the assistance (Coleman, 1991). Schools' not providing parents with the resources they need in order to help their children is also a critical loss of social capital. Immigrants or individuals moving from one place to another may experience both social capital gains and losses. Although they may experience gains from the new prospects their new location may provide, such as new employment opportunities, neighborhoods, or relationships, they may also experience a loss resulting from the loss of established

family and friend connections (Coleman, 1990).

Social Capital: Bourdieu and Coleman

Bourdieu and Coleman both suggest the importance of social networks in the acquisition of social capital; however, their definitions, purpose, and outcomes for social capital differ significantly. According to Bourdieu, social capital serves as a function for the dominant group to preserve their position of power. Bourdieu suggests that social capital is held by those with access to cultural, economic, and symbolic capital. Those belonging to lower classes are subject to the dominant group's definition of what constitutes cultural and symbolic capital and are more often than not destined to remain in their inherited state due to their limited access to networks and institutions. Coleman's work, however, ignores class differences for the transmission of social capital and places higher responsibility on families for the inculcation of norms that will enable the child to succeed. Both of these theorists perceive individuals from lower socioeconomic classes from a deficit point of view, suggesting that these individuals do not themselves hold social capital, or that they themselves are destroying social capital for their children by moving or seeking employment.

Funds of Knowledge: Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez

Funds of knowledge refers to "the historically accumulated bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household functioning and well-being" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133). The concept is based on the premise that "people are competent, they have knowledge and their life experiences have given them that knowledge" (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005, p. ix). Funds of knowledge

have been instrumental for gaining insight from the lived experiences of underrepresented students and their families, thereby shifting away from deficit views, which often characterize students and families from marginalized populations. Funds of knowledge research reveals opportunities by which practitioners can activate students' understandings. Through such practices, students and/or their families would be more included, and teachers would also practice more effective teaching practices.

Theoretical Framework Summary

The challenges affecting English language learners are many, as noted in the previous chapter. At the macro level, there are several policies which are shaping not only the schools that students attend, but also their home environments. Through the use of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory, I was able to holistically understand the various factors shaping students' language learning and schooling experiences. First, I understood the home environment more closely by speaking to parents about the perceptions and understandings they have about their children's language learning and schooling. I observed and/or interviewed parents about ways they supported their children's schooling and language learning at home (funds of knowledge). Second, the bio-ecological theory allowed me to look closely at the school setting, observe the supports in place to meet the federal mandate and therefore the supports that shape students' language learning and schooling experiences. Within schools, I looked at the social capital that is added to or subtracted from ELL students. Third, I was able to interview the students to learn about their own understanding of the supports they receive (social capital/funds of

knowledge), the challenges they perceive in acquiring language, their schooling, and their perceptions, if any, about the relationship between their home and school environments which may potentially influence their language learning and/or schooling. Lastly, through the interviews, I was able to have a more complete understanding of the factors enhancing or hindering relationships and/or the transmission of capital/funds of knowledge across the home and school, which can further potentially influence students' language learning and schooling.

Latinos in the United States: Diversity of Histories and Experiences

Latinos make up the largest minority population across the United States. The diversity within the Latino community is also growing apparent across many parts of the nation. The term "Hispanic" includes Mexicans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans and has expanded to also include the growing Central and South American immigrant population. Although the Central and South American presence has existed in the United States for several decades, their unique characteristics have often been ignored, and to some were in fact considered to be the "other" Latinos (Chardy, 2010; Falconi & Mazzotti, 2007; Repak, 1995). The purpose of this section is to provide background knowledge on this immigrant group and their children. This section is divided in two parts. The first part will address: Who are the New Latino immigrants? What are the key characteristics of the "New Latinos" in the United States (Wortham, Murillo Jr, & Hamann, 2002)? Why did these Latinos migrate to the United States, and, particularly, why did they choose to migrate to the Mid-Atlantic area? Lastly, this section will take a closer look at Central Americans specifically in the Mid-Atlantic State. The second part will focus on challenges and issues experienced by

Central American immigrant or Latino families and their children, particularly in regards to education.

Who Are the “New Latino/a” Immigrants?

Mexicans, Cubans, and Dominicans have traditionally been the largest percentage of Latino immigrants to the United States (Portes & Bach, 1985; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001; Rutter & Tienda, 2005). The terms “immigrant” and “foreign born” are used interchangeably to address peoples arriving to the United States after birth, regardless of immigrant status. In 2010, Mexicans alone made up 33 million, 64.5% of all immigrants (Pew, 2012). Puerto Ricans make up the second-largest Hispanic subgroup with 9% of the Hispanic population. One key distinction between Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics, however, is that they are U.S.-born citizens, and although many migrate from the island to the states, they are not considered “immigrants.” Although there are multiple commonalities among the different groups classified as Hispanic, such as speaking Spanish, importance of family, cultural values and traditions, many differences also exist. Racial and socioeconomic identities, migration histories, religion, and languages spoken are just a few of the differences within the overarching Latino label. Although much is known about certain Latinos, namely Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Dominicans, very little is known about the “New Latinos” composed predominantly of Central and South Americans who arrived mostly in the 1980s and 1990s. Central Americans, however, have increased in numbers and presence within the Mid-Atlantic area.

Central American immigrants, who tend to be from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, continue to be viewed derogatorily as “culturally inferior,” even by

other Latinos, and “prone to crime” (Mahler, 1995). Although immigrants are often accused of driving up crime rates, research indicates that immigrants are less violent compared with those who are U.S.-born, and particularly less violent those U.S.-born who reside in immigrant communities (Sampson as cited in (Arya, Villarruel, Villanueva, & Augarten, 2009). In fact, a California study comparing cities with high and low increase of new-arrival immigrant populations found that those with higher increases of new arrivals had a drop in crime rate (Arya et al., 2009). These views have affected the lives of Central American immigrants, and the livelihood of current and future children of immigrants. Central American countries have joined the ranks of the top ten countries of origin for immigrant groups in the United States. Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Hondurans respectively make up the fourth-, sixth-, and eighth-largest origin groups (Pew, 2012).

According to the Pew Research Center (2010), there are an estimated 1,827,000 Salvadorans in the United States, of whom 64.7% are foreign born. The median age for Salvadorans in the United States is 29. Educationally speaking, 23.4% of Salvadorans in the United States hold only a high school diploma, and 8.4% hold at least a bachelor’s degree. A little more than half, 54.2% are U.S. citizens, and 44.2% self-describe as English proficient. The median household income is \$43,791, and 46% of Salvadorans are homeowners. An estimated 15.4% of Salvadorans live in poverty, and an estimated 38.9% are without health coverage.

In summary, the majority of Central Americans in the United States are foreign born and in their late twenties. Approximately half are US citizens and the remaining half are either permanent residents, are protected by Temporary Protection

Status (TPS), or have an undocumented legal status. Most Central Americans have very limited formal education and have not completed high school.

Why Did They Migrate to the United States?

The reasons why Central Americans migrated to the United States are many and resemble the tragic persecutions of some previous immigrant groups. There are numerous factors “pushing” these immigrants out of their country and pulling them to the United States. One key difference, however, is that U.S. foreign policies also helped shape the exodus from these Central American countries into the United States. For example, the United States financially supported conservative governments by fighting off guerrilla forces across several countries in Central America (Menjivar, 2000). By the 1980s, for example, El Salvador was the third-largest recipient of U.S. aid, receiving close to 10 billion dollars in war-related money and materials (Repak, 1995).

Many Salvadorans and Guatemalans fled their respective countries because of political as well as economic instability. U.S. foreign policies and political intervention resulted in many companies’ closing their businesses due to civil strife (Repak, 1995); this resulted in unemployment and consequently increased poverty. Additionally, growing political tensions and fighting resulted in increased recruitment efforts both by the military and guerrilla forces for soldiers. This posed significant fear, particularly to men and boys of all ages who could be recruited at any time. With limited economic resources, growing political pressures, a deteriorating sense of security, and decline of freedoms, many Central Americans were forced to migrate into surrounding countries, the majority with hopes of eventually residing in the

United States.

The support each of these Central American immigrant groups encountered in the receiving countries varied. For example, Salvadorans affiliated to the government were reportedly granted asylum in the United States and continued to sponsor the war from afar (Repak, 1995). Other Salvadorans not affiliated to the government fled to nearby Honduras, Mexico, or the United States but were not necessarily granted asylum. Guatemalans also sought refuge in Mexico or the United States. In Mexico, Guatemalans were granted refugee status for a specific period of time, and although Salvadorans were not granted refugee status, they were allowed to remain in certain areas of the country without fear of deportation. Mexico's stance to allow immigrants to remain in Mexico was taken specifically so that the United States would do the same for Mexicans residing in the United States (Aguayo & Fagen, 1988). Because countries such as Mexico did not have policies in place specifically addressing Central American immigrants, the United States would use this among several other reasons to deny refuge, claiming that these immigrants could potentially find refuge in surrounding countries (namely Mexico) (Aguayo & Fagen, 1988).

Generally, the United States responded to Central American immigrants' arrival in the 1980s by creating barriers (Rodriguez in Falconi & Mazzotti, 2007, p. 85) such as establishing policies limiting their access to resources. Court cases such as *Orantes-Hernandez et al. v. Richard Thornburgh* (1990) and *American Baptist Churches et al. v. Richard Thornburgh* (1991) challenged the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for deliberately discouraging Salvadorans from applying for political asylum (Rodriguez in Falconi & Mazzotti, 2007, p. 90). Although few

Central Americans applied for political asylum and refuge during the civil war, only 3% of those who applied were accepted (Barker and Pianin, 1988, A-21; as cited in Repak, 1995). Additionally, Salvadorans and Mexicans accounted for the largest percentage of deportees from the United States for “unauthorized entry,” even though many deportees had lived in the United States at least three years (M. Suarez-Orozco & Páez, 2009). Many were apprehended during normal day-to-day activities such as walking to stores, picking up their children from school, or waiting for the bus (Hagan and Rodriguez in M. Suarez-Orozco & Páez, 2008, p. 193).

Rather than providing Central Americans with political asylum, the US Congress passed a new classification in 1990, the temporary protected status (TPS) to address the new undocumented immigrant population. Many Salvadorans in particular received TPS to reside and work legally in the United States. TPS provided some Central Americans with temporary protection to live and work in the United States, and thus it has not provided immigrants a pathway to permanent residency or citizenship. TPS is usually granted for 18 months (U. S. C. I. Services, 2010), and announcements for extensions made before expiration. Salvadorans in particular have benefitted from TPS extensions repeatedly particularly due to Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and two earthquakes affecting El Salvador in 2001. If TPS extensions are granted for the particular country, applicants who meet the specified criteria must complete two applications (Temporary Protected Status and Employment Authorization, even if they will not necessarily be employed) and pay fees which currently amount to \$470 per applicant (U. S. C. I. Services, 2010).

TPS continues to provide protection for many otherwise undocumented

Central Americans. Changes within INS however made significant changes toward the “criminalization of immigrants.” For example, INS made significant increases of removals of “criminal aliens” who had committed “aggravated felonies” through raids or surveys. Definitions of what constitutes an “aggravated felony” were also adjusted to affect more immigrants. Legal permanent residents who “previously presented no threat to their legal status suddenly became subject to deportation under the new law” (Johnson, 2006, p. 61). However, since 1993, Non-criminal deportations continue to be the largest percentage of removals from the United States.

The immigrant flow of Central Americans fleeing their countries in pursuit of safety and better opportunities for themselves and their families steadily continued even after peace agreements were signed ending civil wars in the 1990s. Numerous natural disasters, a growing dependency on remittances (Orozco, 2002) and a growing dependency of cheap labor by United States employers and consumers have all contributed to the steady flow of immigration into the United States and timely renewals of temporary protection status (Robinson, 2007). According to some opponents, the use of TPS extensions “has become a covert way to enable undocumented workers to stay without immigration reform” (Chardy, 2010). Most recently, the Department of Homeland Security has granted TPS extensions to immigrants from three Central American countries: El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Why Did Latinos/as Particularly Choose to Migrate to the Mid-Atlantic Area?

Immigration to the Mid-Atlantic region is a fairly new phenomenon. In fact, the area only seemed to receive a growing presence of foreign-born population until

the 1960s. In 1900, only 7% of Washington's population was foreign-born, and according to the U.S. Census, this population then dropped to 4.2% in 1960 (Repak, 1995). Today, the foreign born population totals in the Mid-Atlantic area is estimated at 12.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey). Soon after this period however, the trend began to change. An increasing number of Central and South Americans began to shape and evolve the Mid-Atlantic area to the diverse community that it is today. The Hispanic population in the Mid-Atlantic area continues to grow exponentially.

There were numerous differences among the "new" immigrant groups in the region. One of the key peculiarities among the Central American immigrants during the wave in the 1960s and '70s is that most of them were women. Unlike the Central Americans in the previous section who arrived in the 1980s and beyond, many of these immigrant women, did not arrive to the Mid-Atlantic area on their own but, rather, were brought to the United States by U.S. government employees or those working for International Agencies such as the World Bank (Repak, 1995, p. 2). Central American women were brought as housekeepers or caregivers and were often sponsored to remain in the United States. Ironically, "the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the federal agency charged with enforcement of illegal-migration laws, has historically served the interests of domestic employers and winked at the employment of undocumented immigrant women in private homes" (Hondagneu-Sotelo as cited in M. Suarez-Orozco & Páez, 2009, p. 265). These less stringent policies allowing diplomats and others to sponsor women as domestic workers to the United States promoted the continued flow of women to the Mid-

Atlantic area. These women, many of whom were pursuing higher education degrees in their countries were recruited and willingly ventured to the United States to work as domestic workers. The women left their respective countries in order to leave the poverty and limited employment opportunities existing across Central America (Repak, 1995).

The immigration of Central Americans to the Mid-Atlantic area supports previous research on “chain migration” (MacDonald & MacDonald, 1964). After Central Americans (mostly Salvadorans) settled in the Mid-Atlantic area, many informed family members and friends about jobs and higher wage opportunities (Capps, Henderson, Passel, & Fix, 2006; Repak, 1995). Entire communities or towns were reported to migrate to the United States after original immigrants settled (Repak, 1995). In addition to social networks, and employment opportunities, safety and access to housing served as benefits to migrating to the area in comparison with other cities with significant immigrant communities. The Mid-Atlantic area, for instance, was considered safer than areas closer to the Mexican/U.S. border, where larger concentration of INS officials would be expected, thereby resulting in an increased risk for deportation. Employment and housing opportunities also appeared more accessible, and with less competition than in other cities already with predominant immigrant groups. Repak (1995) found that immigrants also perceived people in the Mid-Atlantic area to have greater tolerance for foreigners and familiarity with a diversity of cultures, hence making the area more welcoming to Central American immigrants. By 1988, the various conditions resulted in a 12% increase of foreign-born population to the Washington, DC area (Repak, 1995, p. 2).

The Central American population and the Latino population in general have been significantly growing in the Mid-Atlantic area. In 2004, the Mid-Atlantic area was home to over one million immigrants (Capps et al., 2006). A study of the area's immigrants found that many immigrants arrived to the Mid-Atlantic area particularly for various job opportunities at the high and low end of the job market. Findings also indicate that immigrants contribute strongly to the region's economy, purchasing power, and tax base (Capps et al., 2006). The significant increase of immigrants has particularly affected the Mid-Atlantic state as discussed in the following section.

Recent Immigration to The Mid-Atlantic State

According to the Pew Center (2008), approximately 375,000 Hispanics live in the Mid-Atlantic state, most foreign-born. In 2008, Central Americans made up the largest Hispanic segment. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by 2030, the Mid-Atlantic state's Hispanic population will increase to 27% if the immigration trend continues. In one of The Mid-Atlantic State's counties, there was an increase in Hispanic population of 192% since 2000 (PEW, 2010).

The Mid-Atlantic state's data reported that its population had increased 41% between 2000 and 2006, particularly as a result of its growing immigrant community. However, state data also reports that foreign-born immigrants only make up 12.4% of the state's total population. Although most immigrants entering the state are documented, over ten percent of immigrants within the Mid-Atlantic state are undocumented (PEW, 2006). Differing from previous immigrant groups who settled throughout the state, a state issued report noted that recent immigrants are primarily choosing to live in concentrated areas within The Mid-Atlantic state because of

employment and more inclusive policies.

There are several other unique characteristics about new immigrants to The Mid-Atlantic state. Latin Americans, at 37%, make up the largest share of immigrants to the state, followed by Asians, 32.6%, Africans, 15.3%, Europeans, 13.5%, and others, 1.6% (MPI, 2010). The Migration Policy Institute's (MPI) Fact Sheet for this state reports that over half of the new immigrant population, 51.5%, were female and 48.5% were male in 2007. The majority of the immigrant population in the Mid-Atlantic state, or 69.9%, is between 18 and 54 years of age; minors make up 8.3% and those older than 55 make up 21.8% (MPI, 2010). In addition to being of younger and working age, many immigrants are also establishing families here in the United States. In 2006, 22.9% of children in the Mid-Atlantic state under the age of six had immigrant parents.

Although there are several similarities within the new immigrant population, there are also differences. Two key differences among recent immigrant groups are educational level and socioeconomic backgrounds. According to state reports, many Asian and European immigrants arriving to the state have graduate degrees and earn salaries over \$75,000 annually, yet over half of Latin American and African foreign-born immigrants have less than a high school education and earn less than \$24,999 annually per family (DLS, 2008). These differences demonstrate the diversity among new immigrants and potential challenges in their integration within the state.

Social Policies Affecting Immigrant Families in Mid-Atlantic State

The Mid-Atlantic state has undoubtedly been shaped by its history of immigrant communities; however growing anti-immigrant sentiments flourishing

across the nation also began to impact the state. In 2008, for example, several immigration raids took place across the state, including one in Rensselaer County where 45 immigrants—35 men and 10 women from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Nigeria—were detained while working (Wan, 2008). That same year, police officers across the state were accused of racial profiling and turning immigrants over to immigration authorities (Constable, 2008). ICE agents were also accused of racial profiling during an immigration raid in which 24 Latinos, mostly day laborers, and a 7-11 Latino customer were captured to reportedly meet ICE quotas (Aizenman, 2009). English-only legislations were also proposed this past decade in the state.

In 2009, a law went into effect revoking the privilege for undocumented immigrants in the state to acquire a valid driver's license or even an identification card without proof of lawful presence (Wagner, Rein, & Helderman, 2009). In the realm of education, undocumented students, even those who have completed the majority of their education in the United States or who have at least graduated from the state's high schools, do not qualify for in-state tuition and must apply as international students. These undocumented students also do not qualify for federal financial aid to pursue higher education, nor are they eligible to work legally in the United States without a legal immigration status. Since the time of my study, legislation has been changed in favor for undocumented students to attend school and pay in state tuition across at least one state in the Mid-Atlantic region.

The integration of immigrants in the Mid-Atlantic state and across the country is not a new phenomenon, given the nation's immigration history. However, the

diversity within the recent immigrant groups indicate a myriad of challenges and issues that they, along with their families, may experience. It is clear that many immigrants arrived to the Mid-Atlantic area seeking refuge and better opportunities. Although several efforts have prompted the integration of immigrants, such initiatives have faced opposition and numerous obstacles. The following section will focus on the prevalent challenges and experiences lived by Central American immigrants in the Mid-Atlantic area.

Contemporary Challenges. Historically, immigrants have been used as scapegoats during periods of recession in the United States. The most recent economic recession in combination with failed efforts for the passage of a comprehensive immigration reform has placed Latinos in a very vulnerable position. Anti-immigration legislation has been proposed in Arizona, and similar proposals have been made in other parts of the country; immigration raids and deportations have been on the rise; and hate crimes against Latinos have also been increasing (AP, 2010; Madigan & Hermann, 2010; Slevin, 2010).

Latinos have a lot of other significant challenges some of which have been referred to in previous sections. According to several studies, the majority of recent Latino/a immigrants, and Central Americans in particular, had limited access to formal education, did not attend or complete high school, have an unauthorized immigration status, have limited professional experiences, and have limited English proficiency (Fortuny, Capps, Simms, & Chaudry, 2009). All of these barriers represent a very challenging outlook for opportunities available for Central American immigrants and their families. The following section discusses these challenges

further in hopes of bringing awareness to policies and practices targeting children of immigrants— children who will not only soon make up a quarter of the population in public schools across the nation, but who will also play an essential role in the future labor force in this country (Fortuny et al., 2009).

Challenges at home/within the family. Among the greatest challenges facing Latinos or Central Americans in particular is parent s' limited formal education. Fortuny et al. (2009) reported that 26% of children of immigrants were in families where neither parent had completed high school or the equivalent education, and the largest of these immigrant groups comes from Mexico (47%) and Central America and Spanish Caribbean countries (31%). Only 9% of South American students had parents with less than a high school education and 40% had parents with four-year college degrees or more education (Fortuny et al., 2009, p. 8). Overall, findings suggest that children of immigrants were less likely to come from families where at least one parent had completed a four-year degree or more. These data demonstrate key differences within the Latino groups but specifically indicate the greater needs that some Latinos, namely Central Americans, may have in understanding, participating and supporting with their child's education.

According to Fortuny et al. (2009), children of immigrants are more likely to live with both parents and live in larger families. These findings support previous studies about Latinos and indicate that residing with larger families have both positive and negative effects on children of immigrants (Fortuny et al., 2009). For example, immigrant families are able to rely on extended families for childcare and support. Crowded housing situations, and greater competition for resources and parental

attention, however, are some of the negative effects experienced by children of immigrants. Salvadoran immigrant households were found to be the largest with 4.4 persons on average (three adults and 1.4 children), followed by Mexicans with 4.2 persons on average (Capps et al., 2006). Additional family expectations within larger families can also pose a negative effect on the life of children of immigrants. Language allows children to help their parents navigate their day-to-day experiences, serving as cultural intermediaries (Orellana, 2009). Older children are expected to provide childcare, and often, at later ages, are expected to contribute financially when necessary or possible. These expectations are burdens often placed on children of immigrants which may be unexpected experiences by nonimmigrant children (NWLC & MALDEF, 2009).

In addition to coming from large families, Latinos are also more likely to be poor (i.e., their family income is below the federal poverty level) and to have low income levels, twice the federal poverty level according to federal guidelines (Pedraza & Rivera, 2005). According to recent reports, more than half of children of immigrants are low-income (51%) and almost a quarter are more likely to be poor (22%) (Fortuny et al., 2009). The most recent recession (from 2008 onwards) has especially affected Hispanics; according to a census report, one in four Latinos (25.3%) lived below the poverty level in 2009, and those especially affected include the youngest population—33.1% of children of immigrants live below the poverty line (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2010). Capps et al. (2006) also found that in 2000, although immigrant households were larger, income for Salvadoran immigrant households in particular was \$51,000, and income for immigrants from other Central

American countries was \$55,000, in contrast to native-born household incomes of \$88,000 (p.16). Not only do Central American immigrants have lower income levels, but low percentages of immigrant families also receive public benefits (Fortuny et al., 2009). The poverty levels for children of immigrants is especially significant because “family income has substantial impacts on child and adolescent academic achievement” (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; as cited in Rutter & Tienda, 2005, p. 29).

The high poverty rate for Hispanic immigrants impacts parents as well as the children of immigrants by limiting their exposure to socio-cultural networks within immigrant communities. Immigrants in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, for instance, are found to be highly segregated in certain neighborhoods because they are more affordable (Capps et al., 2006) or have fewer housing restrictions; for instance, in 2000, nearly 70% of immigrants to the DC area lived in three suburban counties: Fairfax, Virginia (29%), Montgomery County, Maryland (27%), and Prince George’s County, Maryland (14%) (Capps et al., 2006, p. 13). In consequence, immigrants and their children who reside in areas with other immigrant populations often live segregated from other nonimmigrant groups and often have limited external social networks. As children of immigrants are exposed to the English language and “American” values in schools, parents face many problems, particularly because they are “unable to mediate as [their] children attempt to find their niche in a new society” (Repak, 1995, p. 166).

Repak (1995) found that parent-child relationships among immigrants often become estranged. These estranged relationships occur at two levels: parents who

immigrate, leaving their children in their home country with extended family or spouses and later being reunited in the United States; and also between immigrant parents with children born in the United States whose children soon lose their heritage language and adopt “American” values. In Suarez-Orozco et al. (2008), Central American immigrant children were found to be separated the longest from their parents, usually more than five years, and were slightly more likely to be separated from their father (91%) than from their mother (80%), but a high percentage were also separated from both (80%) (pp. 60–61). Many of these immigrant children arrived to the United States not only having to adapt to a new country, but also often having to adapt to a completely new family with additional siblings and/or stepparents (Carola Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). As if rebuilding relationships between the child and the parents who have missed several years in the lives of their immigrant child were not enough, establishing relationships with new siblings proves to be a significant challenge in certain immigrant families (Carola Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). Parent-child relationship strains between immigrant parents and their U.S.-born children usually begin when the child starts to assimilate into the American culture. When this occurs too quickly, “dissonant acculturation...deprives children of family or community resources, and leads them farther and farther away from parental expectations” (Zhou, 1997). Many immigrant parents are therefore torn because they want their child to be “American” and learn English, but are unprepared to handle changes to traditional family roles (Carola Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). Additionally, communication becomes challenging when children begin to adopt the English language and are

unable to communicate with parents and family in their own language (Fillmore, 1991).

As a result of migration, many immigrant parents and children experience a lot of emotional uncertainty and traumatic experiences (Capps et al., 2006; NWLC & MALDEF, 2009). Mahler (1995), for instance, documents the disillusionment that many Central and South American immigrants experienced soon after their arrival to Long Island, New York. Many participants expressed a loss of freedom and fear acquired through an undocumented status, dim outlooks of success with limited job opportunities, expensive housing cost, and unscrupulous businesses targeting immigrants, even by other immigrants (Mahler, 1995). Menjivar (2000) also found similar disappointments and victimization of Salvadorans in the San Francisco, California area. These experiences, however, are often eclipsed by traumatic experiences lived prior to migrating to the United States. Salvadorans spoke about political conflicts, fear for their wellbeing and that of loved ones, and economic troubles, among other obstacles (Mahler, 1995; Menjivar, 2000). The financial, emotional, physical, and psychological experiences immigrants suffered in their homelands and on their journey to the United States thus make it no surprise that immigrant parents often suffer depression symptoms (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008).

Immigrant children also suffer many issues of abandonment and emotional disturbances. In fact, studies indicate that children who migrated with their parents were less likely to demonstrate depressive symptoms (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). The mental, physical, emotional, and financial costs that many immigrant families endure in order to escape the various political, economic, and social conditions in

their homelands is significant. Since many of them are also of lower socioeconomic levels (Central Americans in particular), many have no choice but to migrate without legal authorization. Those with financial support may apply and qualify for a visa, which facilitates their migration to the United States. The following section will discuss further the implications of immigration status, a contentious topic of debate across the nation.

Immigration Status and Impact

Immigration has been at the forefront of various conversations in recent years. High unemployment rates, a troubled economy, and growing anti-immigrant sentiments have prompted numerous concerns for the estimated 11 million unauthorized immigrants residing across the United States and their advocates. Across the nation anti-immigrant legislations have been proposed profiling Latinos in particular, and stripping many from access to employment, language services, schooling, driver's licenses, even threatened citizenship for U.S.-born children of undocumented parents.

In the past few years, the number of undocumented immigrant removals has increased significantly. According to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Total Removals list, 2,206,175 undocumented immigrants have been deported since fiscal year 2007 thru August 2012 (ICE, 2013). Among those deported, more than half (57%) were non-criminals, and the remaining 43% were convicted criminals (ICE, 2013). Immigration raids and detentions pose a significant risk to Central Americans living in the United States and particularly in the Mid-Atlantic state, with its high number of undocumented immigrants. Immigration raids have prompted a

state of terrorism and fear among the Latino communities in particular, for adults as well as for their children.

The implications of federal immigration policies and state immigrant policies clearly affect immigrant families and their children. Fortuny, et al. (2009) found that “almost a third (31% or 4.9 million children) lived in mixed status families where the children were citizens but their parents were not” (p. 2). Although the children themselves are U.S. citizens, they have no way of protecting their parents from persecution by ICE officials or protecting themselves from losing their parents to deportation. Capps, Castañeda, Chaudry, and Santos (2007) found that, as a result of 900 undocumented immigrants being captured in immigration workplace raids in three states, 500 children were affected, most of them U.S.-born citizens and under the age of 10 (p. 2). These children and their communities who took on caregiving roles experienced significant hardships as they waited days and even months to learn the parents’ fates (Capps et al., 2007). Children who suffered separation from their parents reported feelings of abandonment in addition to symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and separation anxiety (Capps et al., 2007).

As previously noted, Central American immigrants particularly face this barrier, both nationally and locally within the Mid-Atlantic state. Capps, et. al (2006) found that in 2000, 26% of the immigrants in the Mid-Atlantic area were unauthorized or held temporary authorization such as TPS. In the District of Columbia, 42% of children of immigrants are said to live in mixed-status families (Fortuny et al., 2009, p. 6). Deportations of family members not only separates families, but it can be a traumatizing experience for children who may not be aware

of or understand their parents' undocumented status. Michelle Obama's televised visit to an elementary school on May 19, 2010, demonstrates the worries experienced by many young children in mixed-status families. The second-grader shared with the first lady that the president was sending away people who did not have papers, and also shared that her mother did not have papers (James, 2010). The young child's fear of having her mother "taken away" demonstrates the anxiety that many children of immigrants regularly experience. It also demonstrates disadvantages that U.S.-born citizens, children of undocumented immigrant parents may experience at schools as a result of immigration policies.

As a result of deportations, many mixed-status families have been forced to be separated. For many parents at risk of deportation, there are three choices: 1) leave children with the parent in the United States who is not detained as the other parent is deported to the home country, 2) leave children with a guardian in the United States while the parents either return to the home country and prepare to receive their children, or 3) the entire family returns to the home country (of the immigrant parent) immediately with their children (including those born in US). The challenges facing the remaining single-income households (when only one parent is deported) and/or the communities who care for these children who remain in the United States is of high importance yet has also not been given very much attention in the research. Children with unauthorized immigrant parents are especially vulnerable because their parents cannot work legally (Capps et al, 2004; Capps et al., 2007). Additionally, unauthorized and TPS households have the lowest incomes and earn the lowest wages (Capps, 2003; Capps et al., 2006). Despite lower incomes, parents (even those with

legal status) might fear interacting with government agencies and self-select against using public services for which their U.S.-born children are eligible to receive (Holcomb et al 2003; Fortuny et al., 2009)

Parent deportations also affect older children of immigrants. In Ortiz-Licon (2009), Latino (mostly Mexican) high school dropouts who had re-enrolled in school were studied to learn why they dropped out of school and why they decided to reenroll and complete their education. Many of the participants indicated that their parents' deportation or immigration status played an important part, often negatively affecting their education or lives. Students shared that as a result of a parent's deportation, their families experienced a lot of additional stress. The students reported more family obligations, particularly financial obligations, once a parent was deported. Others mentioned, however, that they used those negative experiences to motivate themselves to pursue careers, such as becoming an immigration attorney, in order to help their families (Ortiz-Licon, 2009).

Students who are undocumented themselves have also been in the shadows until recently with growing attention to the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien and Minors (DREAM) Act. The DREAM Act, which has been proposed unsuccessfully since 2001, would provide undocumented youth who arrived to the United States before the age of 16 and who completed their education in U.S. high schools a pathway to legalization by completing at least two years of college or military service. Many of these undocumented students' experiences have been ignored, despite the implications that an undocumented status may have on a student's future. Immigration status can negatively influence students' college-going

and professional aspirations, particularly because there is little motivation for students to graduate since they (1) will not qualify for federally funded financial aid, (2) will be considered an out-of-state student even in their state public school (unless there is state legislation allowing instate tuition), and (3) will not be able to legally find a job without a documented status. The National Women's Law Center (NWLC) and Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) conducted a study in (2009) exploring the causes of the significant high school dropout rate among Latinas. School personnel shared that Latina students with an undocumented immigration status were both very aware and discouraged by their immigrant status. According to a high-school teacher, one of her students complained, "I work in the field now and I'm going to end up working in the field," because [undocumented students] they cannot get other, better jobs... These kids are aware, they know exactly what's going on—the problem is that the mainstream community does not understand" (NWLC & MALDEF, 2009, p. 11).

The frustrations resulting from unresolved immigration status, both on families and on children of immigrants, are often specifically related to education. The following section will take a closer look at the education of immigrant students.

Education and Schooling for Latino Students

There are a number of issues affecting Latino students in schools. These include high dropout rates, lower socioeconomic status, lower parent educational attainment, low participation in school preparation programs such as Head Start, negative social influences such as gang membership, incarceration, and teenage pregnancy. In schools, Latino students face placement in lower tracks, are more likely

to attend schools with teachers with less preparation and less likely to be certified. Many Latino students report feeling like they are not represented in the curriculum and distrust teachers and perceive them as uncaring. Additionally, many Latinos live in homes where English is not the home language and this often determines their placement in schools and limits parent involvement.

The following sections will look closer at some of these prevailing issues experienced by Latino students in schools across the country.

High-School Dropout Rate

The greatest challenge affecting Latinos in education is that, as a group, they continue to have the largest high-school dropout rate (Ortiz-Licon, 2009; Rutter & Tienda, 2005). Ortiz-Licon (2009) indicates that “50% of urban Latino students drop out of school before completing their high school studies” (p. 8). Among Latinas, 41% do not graduate high school on time with a standard diploma (NWLC & MALDEF, 2009, p. 7). Approximately 27.8% of Latino students in the 16- to 24-year-old age range permanently dropped out of public school compared with 13.1% and 6.9% of their black and white counterparts, respectively (National Center for Education Statistics as cited in Ortiz-Licon, 2009). Latinos also have the lowest high-school graduation rate and the highest retention rate, and they continue to lag behind other racial/ethnic groups in academic performance.

Family and Home

There are many factors that result in the low educational attainment by Latino students. As noted in the previous section, many Latinos come from low socioeconomic households where overcrowding, family responsibilities, immigration

status, and limited access to adequate nutrition and healthcare, among other factors, negatively influence student performance. Ortiz-Licon (2009) found that approximately one third of the students interviewed indicated that they would be the first to graduate high school in their families. Despite lower parent educational attainment levels, parents express high aspirations for their children's success in school (Aldous, 2006). In fact, Hispanic mothers and fathers were found on average to speak to their children about school more than did parents in other immigrant groups (Aldous, 2006). Unfortunately, with lower levels of formal education and limited English proficiency, many Latino parents are limited in the extent to which they can assist their children in achieving their academic goals. For example, "parents with limited English communication skills are less able to engage with the school system and to broker on behalf of their children, or to provide help with homework and to participate in various school activities" (Rutter & Tienda, 2005, p. 40). This places Latino parents and students at a disadvantage since parent involvement has been found to result in positive outcomes such as "improved academic performance, higher test scores, more positive attitudes toward school, higher homework completion rates, fewer placements in special education, academic perseverance, lower dropout rates, and fewer suspensions" (Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005, p. 466).

A growing number of programs have been established to support students "at risk," a label often assigned to Latinos and African-American students. As noted previously however, there are various reasons why certain Latinos do not necessarily benefit from such programs (namely, immigration status, language, and/or

unfamiliarity with the educational system). Takanishi (2004) indicates that only 26%, or approximately one in four children attend Head Start programs, which could help students, and ELL students in particular, prepare to enter schools with more academic tools. The study's findings suggest, however, that Latinos do not attend because the programs are not necessarily offered in neighborhoods where there is a concentration of Latinos. Different child-rearing practices and access to early-childhood education programs may explain low attendance (Capps et al. 2005, Hernandez 2004, Lian, Fuller, & Singer 2000, Takanishi, 2004). According to the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study of Children (ECLS-K), "Latino children, both immigrant and native-born, enter kindergarten with lower skills than other groups, and that the inequalities in their cognitive ability at this young age can be significant" (Takanishi, 2004, p. 65). This is particularly true because "(1) skills at entry to kindergarten predict a child's educational achievement in third grade; and (2) achievement at the end of third grade predicts a child's future" (Takanishi, 2004, p. 63).

Neighborhoods and Environment

Neighborhoods and environmental factors have significant implications for health, education, and employment opportunities of Latino/a children and their families (Cubbin, Pedregon, Egerter, Braveman, & Bregman, 2008). Hispanics and blacks, according to the data, live in poorer neighborhoods with less access to quality housing (Cubbin et al, 2008). As a result of lower socioeconomic status, children of immigrants are also more likely to attend schools surrounded by negative influences. Arya et. al (2009) found that close to 18,000 Latino youth are incarcerated daily across the United States directly after school hours for minor offenses; language

barriers between parents and officers sometimes resulted in children remaining overnight in detention centers. Latinas further have the highest teen pregnancy and birthrate of any subgroup (NWLC & MALDEF, 2009). Latinos are also likely to live in communities with fewer role models and fewer resources such as playgrounds, parks, and after-school programs (NWLC & MALDEF, 2009).

Schools

Latinos are at a greater disadvantage, because in addition to limited resources in their surrounding neighborhoods and communities, they also attend schools with limited resources and greater academic challenges. Across the United States, “minority and immigrant populations are disproportionately concentrated in the poorest neighborhoods of the large central cities” (Rutter & Tienda, 2005). These students are also more likely than majority White students to attend highly segregated and low performing schools where educational opportunities are limited” (Orfield, Eaton, & the Harvard Project on School Desegregation, 1996 as cited in Rutter & Tienda, 2005, p. 28). Research shows that “school districts with the largest concentration of economically disadvantaged students spend about \$1,000 less per student, on average, than districts with few poor students” (Education Trust Data Bulletin, 2001 as cited in Pedraza, 2005, p. 170). Although there are mixed findings in regards to the relationship between resources and student performance, the majority of research suggests that districts with increased expenditures had improved performance such as higher test scores (Murray, 1995; Murray, Evans and Schwab, 1998; Bohte, 1999).

Schools with limited resources are prone to have numerous challenges. These

challenges include, but are not limited to, high teacher turnovers, overcrowded classrooms, uncertified teachers, limited office staff, overwhelmed counselors and limited parent outreach and support. Since many immigrant families reside in low-income neighborhoods, these are therefore some of the issues affecting schools attended by children of immigrants. Additionally, Latino students complained that they do not find themselves represented in the curriculum or in afterschool activities, and some reported that they were punished when they used Spanish in schools (Ortiz-Licon, 2009; National Women's Law Center & MALDEF, 2009, p. 20). Language barriers are definitely a subject of concern for the education for children who have immigrated to the United States from other countries as well as for children of immigrants born in the United States.

Education of Central Americans and Mexican

Central Americans in general and Salvadorans in particular have had very little representation in the literature. Although they have been represented as participants within studies, they have often been categorized as "Latino" despite their unique educational, immigration, economic, cultural and even linguistic histories. In the realm of education, there is contrasting information about educational attainment. On the one hand, Central American asylum seekers were attending four-year colleges at high rates, and on the other hand Central Americans are underperforming academically, dropping out of school, and entering gangs (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

In Suarez-Orozco's (1989) ethnographic study of Central American refugees and U.S. high schools, findings suggest that Central American parents are highly

interested in participating in their children's education and were willing to help in whatever way they could. Additionally, findings suggest that "perceptions of parental sacrifice are intertwined with achievement motivation" (Suarez-Orozco, 1989, p. 85). Many Salvadoran children were aware of the struggles their parents faced (and that they too lived) in order to arrive in to the United States. This awareness translated into a sense of debt, "a wish to achieve, to do well in school, in order to repay parents and relatives, to make their endurance worthwhile by "llegando a ser alguien (becoming somebody)" (Suarez-Orozco, 1987, p. 292). In the mid-1980s, Central Americans became "desirable students" because they displayed an eagerness to learn, they were polite, and because they were appreciative toward teachers. However, because of the quick pace at which these immigrants were learning English and due to limited space in regular classrooms, counselors were reported to systematically place Central American immigrants into ESL classes and lower-level bilingual classes (Suarez-Orozco, 1987).

English Language Learners

According to a study by the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) and supported by the Pew center (2009), Latino children now constitute a majority or near majority of first-graders in nine of the nation's largest cities. Harry Pachon, president of TRPI, responded to the study's findings by reinforcing that "we [in the United States] are now in the unique situation of having to teach English to native born Americans....We now know that English Language Learning (ELL) is not just for immigrants" (Jenkins, 2009). A growing number of students classified as ELL across the United States are indeed born in the United States. Not only are a growing number

of U.S.-born students found to need language services, but ELL is also a placement for children of immigrants at every level of the educational pipeline, beginning from elementary and including college levels. Despite the changing demographics of Latinos in these programs, very little has been done to address the programs or specific language needs for native English-language learners. Research suggests that, often, students classified as ELL are tracked into programs where the primary focus is on learning English with limited academic content at their respective grade level, yet a requirement for exiting ESL programs. ESL therefore becomes a vicious cycle which students enter because they need support in English but remain in because they do not have the academic content to transition into mainstream classes (Callahan, 2005; Lacelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994).

The educational models for teaching second-language learners have been debated around the world for many years. Bilingual education has been a program implemented successfully to various degrees across various countries. The use of bilingual education versus ESOL (English for speakers of other languages)/ESL (English as a second language) programs has especially been debated for many years here in the United States. Proponents of bilingual education argue that models such as transitional or dual immersion build on students' language abilities by adding or transferring their native language abilities in their first language to a new language. Longitudinal studies have found that after several years, bilingual students outperform monolingual students. ESOL/ESL use models which seek to fully immerse the student in the English language as soon as possible and do not include language instruction in native language.

Today, the most prominent language learning models used across the United States include several ESOL models and two bilingual education programs. The bilingual education models include: 1) transitional bilingual programs and 2) dual immersion programs. Transitional bilingual education is a means to “phase out one language as the mainstream or majority language develops” (Baker, 1988). Although native language is used in teaching language learners, the goal of the program for ELLs is to acquire the English language in order to mainstream students into English Language classes. Dual Immersion programs on the other hand are programs that allow monolingual English speaking students to learn a new language or English learners to maintain their native language while eventually spending the other half of the day learning the new language (Christian, 1999). The goal is for students to be able to read, speak, solve math and apply a new language to the curriculum (be it French, Chinese, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, etc. for native English speakers, or English for ELL students. ESOL or ESL, on the other hand, seeks to integrate English language instruction as soon as possible and does not include language instruction in native language.

In order to meet federal and state guidelines mandating full access to “meaningful schooling,” in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) for students identified as ELL, schools often select to provide English language through ESL services (Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller, & Frisco 2009). This program’s implementation in some parts of the country have been heavily criticized, and referred to as ESOL “ghettos” (Valdés, 1998) because immigrant students who are expected to be learning the English language are limited to interacting, learning, and acculturating with other immigrant

students rather than with native English speakers. Segregation in ESL “ghettos” therefore deprives students from associating with native language learners to practice speaking English. Additionally, although programs often aim to help ELL students speak English, many of these programs do so at the expense of academic content providing remedial coursework and activities with little preparation for college-bound courses and material (Callahan, et al 2009; Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; Valdés, 2001). In Arizona, ELLs were mandated four hours daily of remedial English classes which drastically reduced opportunity for other subjects (Bodfield, 2008). Segregating these students from native English speakers and not providing students with academic content not only further affects their English, but jeopardizes their entire academic foundation and outcomes. As Takanishi (2004) indicates, “children who do not acquire basic reading and mathematical skills by the third grade are at a serious disadvantage when they enter the last years of elementary school, and will have to struggle to complete middle and high school” (p. 63).

As Valdés (1998, 2001) demonstrates through her study, “English proficiency” often serves as an “academic gatekeeper” for many students (Callahan, 2005; Harklau, 1994a; Minicucci & Olsen, 1993; as cited Callahan et al., 2009, p. 35). ESL students are often placed in programs where, despite the expectation that ELLs will learn English, the curriculum, segregated classrooms, and limited resources, expectations, and support will result in students who neither acquire English nor the academic content that they need to finally transition into mainstream classes. Additionally, schools often ignore Latino students’ language abilities in their first language, particularly as it pertains to “gifted” programs (Valdés, 2003). Students

therefore remain in dead-end tracks which limit their social mobility to graduate high school and pursue higher education that would result in higher earnings, greater employment opportunities, and greater access to social networks, among other opportunities. English language proficiency or placement in ESL programs was in fact attributed to be one of the many reasons why some students prefer to drop out of school ("*Listening to Latinas: Barriers to High School Graduation*," 2009; Ortiz-Licon, 2009).

In college, many students previously classified and exited from ELL tracks find themselves tracked once again into ESL classes. Studies have demonstrated college students' frustrations due to prior ESL placement (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999; Valdés, 2001). These students report feeling discriminated, marginalized, and uncomfortable. For example, students were asked "to compare aspects of life in 'their' countries to those in the United States. And they may suffer the indignities of being introduced to instructional details, such as which side of their notebook paper to write on, or to cultural aspects of U.S. life...as if they were newcomers to the country" (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999, p. 125). Harklau et al. (1999) argue that the placement of these students in ESL programs is "because the writing of students in ESL programs is often held to a standard of grammatical perfection not applied to the writing of non-ESL enrolled students" (p. 124).

School placement in addition to English language assessments have often been arbitrary for immigrants or children of immigrants (Lacelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000). School readiness for this population has also been determined through "checklists" (Fillmore & Snow, 2000), including:

Do they know their first and last name? Can they follow simple instructions? Can they ask questions? Can they answer them? Do they know the names of the colors in their crayon boxes? Can they produce short narratives? Do they know their mother's name? Can they count to ten? The assumption is that all children at age five or six should have the abilities that are assessed, and anyone who does not is not ready for school. (p. 9)

English Language Learners are often placed or assessed using tests that have not proven valid for assessing students learning English as a second language (Lacelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994). Arbitrary questionnaires, higher standards for writing and speaking, and unreliable measures often subject many children of immigrants to substandard levels of education.

Although linguistic capabilities are central to the discussion of English Language Learners' academic performance, other researchers indicate that school underperformance by ELL and Latino students is not solely related to the English language. Tienda (2005) argues that "if linguistic diversity were the main reason for scholastic underperformance of Black and Hispanic youth, Asians would score lower than both Whites and Blacks on standardized tests." Yet according to data provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Asians have math and reading proficiency rates of 38 and 39 respectively in comparison with 32 and 30 for whites, 10 and 15 for blacks, and 14 and 15 for Hispanics (Rutter & Tienda, 2005). Rather than language abilities, the significant differences in scores may result to the differences in social class, parental education levels, and even the extent to which parents advocated for their child's progress in schools.

Gounari and Macedo (2009) suggest that educational inequalities within groups exist, particularly within linguistic minorities, due to racist attitudes. “Language racism” they explain, suggests why many black Americans, despite having spoken English “for over two hundred years, find themselves still relegated to ghettos” (Gounari & Macedo, 2009, p. 35). Language discourse has framed the use of English as the “common good,” and policies have been adopted to exclude those who do not speak the right English in order to defend the common good by protecting any threat to the hegemony of English (Gounari & Macedo, 2009, p. 36). Instead of focusing on “standard” English levels, Harris, Leung, and Rampton (2002) argue that policies and practices need to accept “vernacular Englishes” to avoid “continued resistance and failure” in schools (pp. 44 – 45)” (Roberge, Siegal, & Harklau, 2009). Portes & Rumbaut (1996, 2001) have found that English-language assimilation for immigrant youth has been an inevitable and a fairly rapid process; by the third generation, many in fact do not speak their heritage language or prefer to speak English (Rumbaut as cited in Rutter and Tienda, 2005, p. 302). The consequence, for not widely accepting “other” languages and accents are an extreme loss to children of immigrants; it is not only loss of cultural, social, and linguistic capital, but it is a loss of identity that sometimes contributes to their own alienation.

Summary

Although there is very limited data specifically on the educational attainment of recent Central Americans or their children, data suggests that Central Americans have lower socioeconomic status, lower parental educational attainment, mixed

immigration status families, and limited English proficiency status, which poses significant threats to their education. The importance of equitable access and equity within education proves to also be of significant concern for Latinos in general, and Central Americans in particular due to their population growth within the Mid-Atlantic state. Further research is necessary to look at policies affecting ELL students, their placement in programs provided for ELL, and possible repercussions that these educational policies may have on their academic and professional pathway.

As the numbers of language learners enrolling in schools continues to grow, it is important to begin looking more closely at students' schooling experiences. In this chapter, I presented the three frameworks guiding my research. These include Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems model, social capital and funds of knowledge. In the previous section, I reviewed literature of various factors impacting the educational opportunities of Latinos in general and Mexicans and Salvadorans in particular. Then I looked at literature referring to how some of these factors have influenced schooling opportunities for English language learners in particular. The following chapter will take a closer look at the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this qualitative study I used a case study methodology, and employed the use of ethnographic techniques/intensive interview. Case study research in particular allows the researcher the opportunity to learn and understand the process through monitoring and finding causal explanations (Merriam, 1998, p. 33). Because I was interested in the process by which students are placed, maintained in, or exited from their ELL classification, this design was best-suited for this research.

As the researcher, my role was to serve as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. I entered the field, employed an inductive strategy whereby I used concepts, found themes, and aimed to build on existing theories (Merriam, 2009, p. 64). Through the qualitative approach, using multiple sources of data, detailed descriptions of participant experiences, and my investigator's own perceptions, I learned that many parts worked together to shape students' learning experiences and schooling. In this report my goal is to "reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole" (Merriam, 1998, p. 6).

This case study's methodology design has evolved significantly since its initial conception. The proposed cases were initially two schools and the criteria for the cases limited participants to children of Salvadoran immigrants who are under-represented in the literature and highly visible in the Mid-Atlantic state and surrounding area. Once in the schools, it became evident that various factors were shaping the schools, the English instruction method, and thereby the students' language-learning experiences in very different ways. Although data were collected

across both sites resulting in 56 interviews and 10 follow-up interviews, the data presented here will focus on student cases at one site, Maravilla Elementary school. The student cases within the school include students formerly or currently classified ELL from Salvadoran or Mexican origin. Data collected at the second school, Tulipan Elementary, will be used for future work.

In the following section I describe the selection criteria for the site and sample of the study.

Research Site

I arrived at Maravilla through my participation as a research assistant in a longitudinal study across three schools in a Mid-Atlantic state. As in most case studies, sample selection is first done at the school or case level, and subsequently within the case (Merriam, 2009). Criteria will be noted for both: the school case and the selection of the embedded cases, the students within the case.

Selection of cases and background. Maravilla was purposefully selected as the site for my study from three schools because of its demographics and ELL composition. Maravilla is found in Renderos County. This county has had a growing ELL population, and specifically a growing Spanish speaking Latino population. According to Mid-Atlantic state data, nearly 200 Hispanic students attend Maravilla. Purposeful samples are selected in order to gauge the population of interest (Patton, 2002). Students were selected to serve as the primary cases. The students themselves therefore served as the unit of analysis. In brief, this was a multi-case research study (Merriam, 1998). Students served as embedded cases within the site and cross-case analysis was conducted as is typical for multi-case studies (Stake, 1995; Creswell,

1997).

School overview. Maravilla Elementary school is comprised of a growingly diverse population which has seen a significant growth particularly of Latinos/as since the early 1990s. As noted previously, the significant ELL population entitles the school to Title III funds. Maravilla is among the 400 schools across the Mid-Atlantic state which participates in the school wide Title I classification because at least 40% of their students qualify for free and/or reduced meals (FARMS). *Title I: Improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged* of NCLB ensures that children attending schools in high poverty areas “have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and academic assessments” (NCLB, 2002). Maravilla’s population exceeds the Title I guideline with its overall student population meeting a 60% poverty rate. This Title I classification entitled the school to receive additional funding to “support extra instruction in reading and mathematics, additional teachers, materials of instruction, as well as after-school and summer programs to extend and reinforce the regular school curriculum” (NCLB, 2002). Because the majority of students are of low socioeconomic status, Title I funds may be used for the education of *all* students rather than specifically students meeting income, or having special or LEP needs. Additionally, Title I funding may be used for parent involvement purposes, including informing parents at least annually about Title I’s implementation, parents’ rights, and ways the school will provide parent involvement opportunities. Parent involvement is a central piece in Title I services and schools are charged with providing training and materials to parents so

that they are able to support children at home. In efforts to establish stronger family school partnerships, Title I funding can be used to pay for child care, transportation, and translations for documents and/or an interpreter to encourage parents to attend school activities.

Sample selection of participants. Approximately 135 students participated in the overarching longitudinal research study at Maravilla during the 2010-2011 academic year. Per conversations with teachers, parent liaisons, and students at both schools, Salvadorans and Mexicans were found to make up the Latino/a student body at Maravilla. Schools do not disaggregate the Latino/a ethnicity by country of origin or heritage country. Because students from both Mexican and Salvadoran origin were in large numbers represented with an ELL classification both in the state and at the school, I expanded my original design to include participants who are children of Salvadoran as well as Mexican immigrants. The following criteria were then used to recruit participants:

- 1) Children of Salvadoran or Mexican immigrant parents: This criterion was selected because children who come from immigrant households or households where English is not spoken are less likely to be proficient in English, thereby obtaining an ELL classification when first entering schools. Since parents are first generation immigrants in the United States, their family may include children born in their country of origin, in the United States, or both country of origin and the US. This will provide a maximum variation of students classified ELL, the second criterion.

Additionally, Salvadoran immigrants make up a significant percentage of the

Latino/a population in the state, in the county, and in the school. Salvadorans have a unique migration history, varying immigration status, and educational characteristics which lend themselves to information-rich cases. As a Salvadoran American I was also interested in contributing further to the literature of this population. However, given that Mexican Americans are the largest immigrant group at a national level, and most studies related to students of Mexican origin are from Texas or California, I decided to also include children of Mexican origin or heritage in my study.

- 2) ELL Classification: I selected this criterion because the study seeks to understand the experiences of children currently or formerly classified as ELL. This criterion allowed me to understand further the services that are available for students with an ELL classification at Maravilla.
- 3) Fourth Grade Students: This grade level was selected because according to research, student performance sometimes begins to deteriorate; this period is often referred to by educators as “the fourth grade slump.” According to researchers also, language takes between 4-9 years to develop and therefore students in this age group should 1) have the ability to respond to questions in either English or Spanish and 2) provide insights about their ELL classification.

Convenience, maximum variation, and snowball sampling were the main types of purposeful sampling conducted to recruit participants meeting the above criteria. (Creswell, 2007; Miles & Hubberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Initial recruitment was made via collaboration with the ESOL teacher, homeroom teacher, and parent

liaisons identifying students meeting the selected criteria. A recruitment letter in Spanish and English was sent home for parents of students identified as current or former ELLs. Additionally, the parent liaison served as a key informant at the school; she invited me regularly to afterschool activities which provided me further access to recruit students and parents in a more social setting. The parent liaison also provided me with parents' phone numbers as a follow up to the recruitment letter. This was particularly useful for reaching parents with limited formal education and who may have difficulties reading the letter.

I contacted all parents of the 14 fourth grade students meeting the criteria via letter, telephone, and/or in-person at school events. I was able to contact 10 parents (eight mothers and two fathers) and asked them if they would 1) allow their child to participate in my study and 2) also participate themselves in my study. All of the mothers who agreed that I interview their children also agreed to be interviewed. Both of the fathers who were initially contacted via telephone indicated that they were not able to participate because of work schedules. One father indicated that his daughter could participate but recommended his wife to be interviewed because of his schedule. The other father was also unable to be interviewed because of his fluctuating schedule and his child was also not interviewed because of availability near the end of the academic year.

Lastly, a purposeful sample of school staff were also contacted for an interview at Maravilla which included fourth grade teachers, ESOL teachers, the parent liaison, and the school principal. All three of the participant's fourth grade classroom teachers, two of the three ESOL teachers (current fourth grade ESOL

teacher and ESOL teacher working with grades 2-3), the parent liaison and the school principal participated in the study. These teachers, staff, and administrator were selected because they are currently working directly with the student participant, their parent, or provide leadership to those directly working with the student.

Researcher's entry, reciprocity, ethics. My role as a researcher assistant within a larger research project allowed me access to the schools, their respective principals, teachers, and students. Establishing good rapport was therefore a central component even prior to my study. In addition to establishing good rapport, another important component is ensuring confidentiality to all participants. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and staff selected a pseudonym, or were assigned one for data storage and reporting. All participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and that they were not required to share information that they were not comfortable sharing. Additionally, waivers of consent were requested and approved for parents as protection for a possible undocumented immigration status. The Mid-Atlantic State, county, and school were also assigned a pseudonym.

Participation in my study was voluntary, but reciprocity on my behalf was of great importance. I understand that participation in my research study was not necessarily useful for the student, their families, teachers, parent liaisons, or school principal, and they were reminded of this prior to interviews and observations. However, reciprocity is of particular concern to qualitative researchers (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). During the study, I made myself available to assist at the school translating between parents and staff, teachers, or the principal. Additionally, if parents asked questions about the ESOL program or about schooling in general for

which I could provide answers, I also made that known. In one instance I attempted to assist a parent who did not want to leave his son in their apartment alone during the summer and I also interceded to see if there was availability in the summer school program. At the end of the study/academic year, I provided student participants with a small token of appreciation. I wrote a bilingual note thanking the students for their participation and encouraging them to do well in school. Additionally, I provided students with a textbook/coloring book and a small notepad/Sudoku pad. The texts included *Questions & answers: Ancient history explore the past* and *Questions & answers: Science: Explore how things work* and the coloring books were Animal Planet-themed. The items were selected given a limited budget, availability, and, when possible, student interests.

As is traditional with case study research, the researcher served as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009). As a researcher with an interest in the issue of schooling and the language-learning experiences of ELLs, I attempted to curtail as much bias as possible by reporting my personal positions or biases and experiences in this report, through self-reflection, and memo-writing. Additionally, I took several steps to establish credibility with all participants. Among the various strategies which I used to promote validity and reliability, I included: 1) various sources of triangulated data, 2) reflection on various issues during and after data collection, 3) the conduction of member checks and follow-up interviews when available, and 4) peer review/examination of findings with fellow research assistants in the project and/or educators. In the analysis and write-up for this report I attempted to ensure that the data allow “all voices to be heard” (Merriam, 2009, p.230).

Data Collection

This qualitative case study used *ethnographic techniques* to collect data. Ethnographic techniques include “interviewing, conducting documentary analysis, examining life histories, creating investigator diaries, and observing participants” (Merriam, 1998, p. 14). I primarily conducted in-depth interviews with various participants from one school site. Additionally, I drew from data collected within the school as part of a larger longitudinal multi-state, multi-site study which focused on how children develop in the areas of vocabulary and comprehension.

Sources of data. Semi-structured interviews, observations, and documents served as sources of data. Twenty-five initial interviews were held with students, parents, teachers, the parent liaison, and the school principal (see Appendix 1, Table 4). All interviews were audio recorded with the exception of one that was partially recorded due to failing to recognize that the recorder’s battery needed replacement. Notes were taken during interviews when possible. In the instance of the partially recorded interview, I wrote as much as I could recollect from the interview immediately after the interview was concluded. I transcribed all but five of the 25 audio recorded interviews. The other five interviews were transcribed by three bilingual family members or a professional transcriptionist. I reviewed all transcriptions and audio recordings at least twice for accuracy and edited transcripts as necessary. Twelve interviews were conducted in Spanish per participant request including: all parents, one ESOL teacher, part of one student’s interview, and the parent liaison interviews. These interviews were first transcribed and then translated.

Each interview was held either at the school or the student's home. Interviews with students' mothers were held at school or at their house; they ranged from 12 minutes to almost two hours in length. All but one teacher interview were held at the school, and interviews ranged from 11 minutes to approximately an hour and 9 minutes. Interviews with the parent liaison and the principal were 53 minutes and an hour and 11 minutes, respectively.

All nine students were initially interviewed at school after their lunch period, during their recess break. I would meet students in the hallway near the main office, ask them if they were available during their recess period and if they agreed, asked their teacher for permission. Upon teacher approval, the student and I would usually walk to a tree overlooking a field where their peers were playing. The location was selected primarily because it was in an open space, on school grounds yet providing the student more privacy. Two students preferred having the interview inside the school because of the warm temperatures near the end of the school year, and in those instances interviews were held on a bench near the media center. Initial student interviews lasted between 11 and 43 minutes in length depending on comfort, experiences, and willingness to share. Follow-up interviews were held with four of the nine student participants halfway through their fifth grade year based on availability and unchanged contact information. The follow-up interviews with students were held at each student's home and ranged from 25 to 52 minutes in length.

For the parent interview, I provided them with the option to come to the school, or to meet at a mutually agreed location including their home or a nearby

public library. Three mothers preferred that I visit them at home where I interviewed them in their living room. Six mothers came to school for the interview. Teacher interviews were also held based on the teacher's preference; most teachers opted to have the interview at a small table just outside of the main office. One teacher interview was held in two parts, the first half in the school's computer lab and the second half in the teacher's classroom. One teacher however requested to go to a nearby coffee shop. The parent liaison's interview was held in her office. The principal was interviewed in a small conference room within the main office.

Patton (2002) suggests asking six types of questions that helped structure my interviews. These questions included: experience and behavior questions, opinion and values, feeling questions, knowledge questions, sensory questions, and background/demographic questions. All semi-structured interviews in this study began by asking demographic questions to make sure that participants not only fit the criteria, but also to establish rapport and to get to know the participants further (see Appendix 4). Responses to these questions provide access to "the interviewee's perceptions, opinions, values, emotions and so on" (Patton, 2002, p.103). Follow-up interviews were attempted with all nine of the student participants once interviews were transcribed. Follow up interviews were possible with four student participants, three whom continued at Maravilla. Of the remaining ESOL students at Maravilla, two remained with an ELL classification but only one who continued receiving ESOL services.

The interview protocols served as a guide for each of the respective participants. There were instances however where additional questions were asked

pertaining to the participant's response or as a result of an observation. Prior to conducting student interviews, the interview questions were tested with family members or friends of family who had an ELL classification, were previously placed in ESOL, and were not older than middle school. In addition to the semi-structured interviews, several informal conversations took place after assessing students through the larger study, after school during their dance rehearsals, or in the hallway where we would often exchange greetings. The parent liaison and one of the ESOL teachers were particularly helpful in my understanding the school culture. Additionally they provided me with significant opportunities to interact with students and their families.

Observations. In addition to formal interviews and informal conversations, I also conducted informal observations of activities that took place in schools or in the county which were relevant to my participants. For example, I attended a county-wide event for Hispanic parents, a "Reading is Fun" after-school gathering with parents, I watched a movie at the school with the mothers after school, and assisted during student performances in a school assembly. I would take field notes of the relevant observations during or after the event.

Observation if used properly "is a research tool when it is systematic, when it addresses a specific research question, and when it is subject to the checks and balances in producing trustworthy results" (Merriam, 2009, p. 118). I conducted formal ESOL classroom and some fourth grade classroom observations as part of the larger study. ESOL observations were scheduled for third through fifth grades once before the winter break and once after returning from the holidays. The fourth grade ESOL instruction was scheduled for 20 minutes and the mixed-grade ESOL class was

scheduled for 60 minutes daily according to the ESOL teacher schedule. The observed fourth grade ESOL sessions were each between 24 and 30 minutes. The observations of the mixed-grade ESOL sessions lasted about 45 minutes in length. In addition to observing the ESOL class instruction, I also observed two fourth grade classrooms during workshop or language arts instruction for approximately an hour in length. Those classroom observations influenced my case selection and ongoing analysis.

Documents. In addition to interviews and observations, documents were also collected. Documents collected included but were not limited to a class assignment/script, student records including ELL classification, event flyers, a copy of the county's adopted Home Language Survey, the Mid-Atlantic state's adopted ESOL parent notification letter templates, parent survey responses, and language assessment results collected from the larger research study. Documents were provided by the ESOL teacher, parent liaison, through the larger research project, or as available at the school. The documents provided various types of information about the school and/or services available for students and parents. The flyer for the Countywide Hispanic Forum, for example, provided insights of activities that were held at the event and provided for parents as well as indications of services and resources the county and educators perceived would be applicable or useful for Hispanic parents.

Field notes and memos. In qualitative tradition, I wrote field notes regularly when out in the field and memos periodically. My field notes included notes of daily activities at the school site, informal observations, and recollections of informal

conversations with students, teachers, principal, staff, or parents. Memos provided the opportunity to consider particular issues in the field, connections with theory, and other possible considerations. In essence, memos supported ongoing analysis. I particularly used memos to reflect on various issues that were either consistent or sometimes differed in my interviews. One example of a memo write-up included reflections on my role as a researcher with Mary, one of my participants. During my interview with Mary, for example, she asked me about my own immigrant experiences, something that had not occurred with other participants. She also seemed to be more knowledgeable and/or perhaps more willing to talk about the undocumented immigrant experience in comparison to other students. This prompted me to reflect on the student's understanding of the immigration process and make connections with the frameworks. In general, I wrote memos to reflect on important themes, categories, and concerns as they would arise.

Data management strategies. Data management strategies are very important to consider given that this is a multi-case study using various sources of data. The data included various audio files, observation notes, field notes, memos, and other documents. In order to ensure accountability for all sources of data, a master list/matrix of documents gathered and their location were created and updated throughout the study period. All documents were saved electronically. Additional notes and/or edits to observation and field notes were completed by the end of the day to ensure accuracy. Files were saved using descriptive codes that were important for managing large numbers of data sources, particularly with the use of Atlas.ti, a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software CAQDAS (Friese, 2012). One

example would be the following transcript:

A2_Selena_US_ES_Stu_Inter_Trans_1

The A2 represented the second student (2 out of the nine) at School A (Maravilla). Selena was the pseudonym selected by the participant, she was US born (US), her heritage country is El Salvador (ES), she was a student (Stu) (rather than parent or teacher) and this was the name of the transcript file (trans) for the first interview (1). Each file name therefore provided me with a glimpse of useful characteristics for each student, parent, and school staff.

I then downloaded public files from the internet such as public school records, which I converted into Adobe Acrobat pdf documents. This was done to avoid possible updates or changes to data, and to document possible policy changes that may have developed during the course of the study. Flyers and materials available at school were scanned and saved as a file per school. All documents as noted earlier were coded and catalogued by the participating student, and within the specific school where data was collected. State documents were filed separately. Due to storage space, Drop box, an online service, was used to store data securely online.

Data analysis strategies. I conducted interviews, collected formal and informal observations, documents, took field notes, wrote memos, and began organizing the data (Gay, Mills, Airasian, 2006). I personally transcribed each of the interviews (with the exception of five) and repeatedly listened to all interviews to verify that the interviews were transcribed thoroughly. Coding was prefaced and accompanied with careful reading and re-reading of interview transcripts to develop insightful connections (DeWalt & Dewalt, 2002). I then began coding the data using

attribute coding, magnitude coding, as well as descriptive coding. I first classified students based on attributes such as current ELL and former ELL students, whether students were U.S.-born, and their heritage country, which were all established as part of the sampling criteria. Gender and income (eligibility for free and reduced meals) were also attributes that were of importance. Magnitude coding helped determine the values or emotions particularly in regard to student perceptions about their ELL classification and ESOL placement (Saldaña, 2009). This was the case, for example, if students had a positive/confident or negative view about their ELL placement. Descriptive coding is just one approach to analyzing the data's research questions broadly asking, "What is going on here? What is this study about?" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 70). For example, I had a separate code for "ESOL classroom instruction or activities" to note the different types of activities noted by students, teachers, and observations of ESOL classroom practices. Additionally, I also coded different supports that students perceived available as well as the challenges perceived across each of the environments. The data were categorized by the different ecological systems including the home, school, or neighborhood environments for each student.

Descriptive and evaluation coding were used to code interviews with secondary participants that included the fourth grade mainstream teachers, ESOL teachers, parent liaison, and the school administrator. These interviews provided a backdrop to the language-learning services and schooling experiences of the student participants. Participants classified as ELL at this school received ESOL services in compliance with Title III. Evaluation coding therefore allowed a "systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of

programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming” (Patton, 1997, p. 23). Through the triangulation of sources and evaluation coding, for example, it was possible to notice some disconnects between the prescribed expectations for ELLs and the actual practices which resulted in some of the recurring themes. Interview transcripts were initially coded manually, creating a table in Word for each participant and also through the use of the Atlas.ti software. A table in Excel was ultimately compiled to include all participants and to facilitate comparisons.

In preparation for the report, as is consistent with a case study design, each case was first treated as a comprehensive case. I first created student profiles for all students, including their educational trajectories and focusing specifically on their language-learning journey. These profiles included the language-learning supports available across their environments and their educational (ELL) trajectory. Once I had created a profile for each student, I was then able to do a comparative case study analysis. Comparative case study analysis considers “the processes within each case, understand[ing] the local dynamics, before the [researcher] can begin to see patterning of variables that transcend particular cases” (Merriam, 1998, p. 195). Assertions were made based on emergent themes that were found through the immersion with the collected data (Creswell, 1998).

Trustworthiness

I used several strategies to establish trustworthiness in my study. As the researcher I attempted to achieve eight strategies which include: 1) Triangulation of sources, 2) Member checks, 3) Adequate engagement in data collection, 4)

Researcher's position or reflexivity, 5) Peer review/examination, 6) Audit trail, 7) Rich, thick descriptions, and 8) Maximum variation (Merriam, 2009, p. 228).

First I used triangulation. Denzin (1978) proposed four methods of triangulation of data sources: using multiple methods, multiple sources of data, multiple investigators, or multiple theories to confirm emerging findings. For my study I triangulated my data by using multiple sources of data, which included 25 interviews with 26 participants from one school, including nine students, seven school staff members, nine mothers, and one father. I conducted formal and informal observations, prepared field notes, memos, and collected documents to confirm my findings and obtain a "holistic understanding of the situation" approach (Merriam, 1998, 2009). Information provided was cross-checked. For example, although I relied on the assumption that student and teacher participants provided accurate and thorough responses about their experiences and practices, the use of multiple sources of data including interviews with observations sometimes suggested inconsistencies in student, parent, or school staffs' beliefs, understandings, behaviors, and/or practices. Documents served a similar purpose, triangulating data provided during the interviews and information available at school or at county functions. Additionally, data from the larger research project was used, which therefore included data collected and/or analyzed by other investigators such as student performance on assessments.

Member checks were also an important strategy I used to ensure credibility. Member checks were conducted primarily with the students whom I met for follow-up interviews at their homes when available. Additionally, the parent liaison in

particular and the Spanish speaking ESOL teacher served as key informants who provided important feedback, given their direct experiences with the students, the families, and their familiarity with the school context.

As a field researcher assessing students across schools, I was able to spend a lot of time at the school with the students and staff. Once my research was approved by the Institutional Review Board, I spent even more time in the school. For example, I contacted the ESOL teachers and the parent liaison if they needed additional help at the school. I volunteered two days during my spring break, helping the parent liaison put books away and create student reports in addition to helping in a first grade math class. I attended several school activities and events. In one of my field notes I noted that one of the ESOL teachers joked that I should be added to the payroll since I spent so much time at the school. Given that I had spent so much time at Maravilla, this earned a lot of trust from the students and teachers. I therefore invested a lot of time understanding the school, its teachers and administrators, parents, and students in particular.

In order to ensure dependability, an audit trail is important so that an investigator interested in conducting another study will be able to trace my steps to my findings. My research report provides the reader with as much detail as possible in order for the findings to be able to “make sense” (Merriam, 2009). Readers can then assess if findings from this study are transferable and applicable to experiences of ELLs and their families.

My study attempted to achieve maximum variation of current and former ELL student experiences. Maximum variation sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was

originally developed in grounded theory research, suggesting that efforts should be made to identify and seek participants “who represent the widest possible range of the characteristic of interest for the study” (Merriam, 2009, p. 79). I sought to identify and recruit current and former ELLs from different socio-economic households, with varying language abilities in English and Spanish, of different genders, abilities, and immigration backgrounds (see Appendix 1, Table 5). I selected fourth grade students in particular because research suggests that it is a period in students’ education when there is a deceleration in academic performance recognized as the “fourth grade slump” (Chall & Jacobs, 2003). Additionally, there were no studies available in reference to the schooling and ELL experiences for this age group. The student participants determined the fourth grade teachers who participated in the study. An ESOL teacher not directly instructing fourth grade students was also interviewed because she was noted by at least one participant as previously providing her with ESOL instruction. Additionally, the ESOL teacher’s Latina and immigrant background provided different perspectives for language-learning and instruction when compared to the other teachers participating in this study. The majority of the teachers participating in this study were primarily white, monolingual, and from the Mid-Atlantic region.

Transferability

External validity or transferability questions whether findings are generalizable (Merriam, 2009). This qualitative research was conducted to understand how students who were classified as ELL understand their language-learning and schooling experiences. It particularly looks at the factors which shaped their pathway

to remain or exit the ELL classification or ESOL placement. The cases were selected to “understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many” (Merriam, 2009, p. 224). Nonetheless it is possible that participants’ stories, feelings, and understandings of their language-learning experiences across various environments may resonate or may be similar to those experienced by other students, within the school, within the district, within the state, and even within the country. Similarly, teachers and administrators may share similarities to those at other schools. The purpose of this study was to bring out the different voices, particularly those of the student participants, but the findings present a need to further study the complexities affecting the education of ELLs at the local, state, and national level and across various environments.

Ethics

Many of my study’s participants were not familiar with research and I made every effort to ensure they were aware of their participant rights. Patton (2002) recommends various ways of doing this. 1) I explained the purpose of my research and my methods. 2) I reminded participants that their involvement in the research was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. If there were questions that were uncomfortable for them, I reminded them that they did not have to answer if they did not want to or felt uncomfortable, and I proceeded to another question. However, I emphasized my study’s importance and that it has the potential to help understand experiences of children of immigrants, their schooling, their institutional support, funds of knowledge, and challenges they experience in their various environments which might influence schooling. 3) Risk assessment: I

monitored possible risks through the study, which I also outline in the next section as possible limitations, particularly with participants who may feel sad recollecting their own educational memories and immigration histories connected to their current immigrant status, among other reasons. Given my interviews with students, I ensured that students were interviewed in open yet confidential spaces around the school and that the school staff was visible.

4) Confidentiality: I have made several attempts to ensure the confidentiality of my participants. The most important was to ensure the confidentiality of all of my participants, and the school where they attend or work. I have referred to the state as a Mid-Atlantic state, and I created a pseudonym for the school, and a pseudonym for students who did not choose one for themselves. Although the education of children of immigrant, ELL classification, ESOL placement, institutional supports, or funds of knowledge are not inherently sensitive topics, I made every effort to ensure that participants were safeguarded while preserving the integrity of my study.

5) I requested a waiver for consent for parents from the university's Institutional Review Board because I suspected some of my participants would be undocumented immigrants and signing or including any personal information could potentially deter their participation. The waiver was approved. I did however provide and read to students a Child Assent. 6) Reciprocity is an important aspect of qualitative research. In efforts to provide reciprocity to my participants, I responded to questions they had either about services at school or in general. One mother for instance asked me about the outdoor education program the following year; she was concerned that it would be overnight. I provided her with my understanding of such

experience, and the precautions I believed the school would take. I also suggested I could ask additional questions at school about the trip for her if she preferred (which she declined). The only father who participated in this study asked me about the ESOL program and I shared with him information about the program, and encouraged him to talk to his daughter about it, find out if it was helpful, and noted that he could always go to the school and speak to school staff if he had some concerns. I also offered my assistance to help or be there at the school if he needed additional support.

Limitations

As I mentioned previously, many parents were not necessarily familiar with academic research and hesitated to participate in this study. Many of the mothers also had hectic work schedules and had very limited time to speak with me. I made myself very available to meet them wherever they preferred and as early in the day or late in the evening as they were available. During the interviews, I expected parents in particular to be hesitant about sharing their immigration status, particularly if they were undocumented; many of the mothers were in fact very open to share.

Another concern that I had was that teachers and/or the administrator would perceive my study as judging their teaching or their school. Most teachers however were also very open with sharing the services they were or were not provided by administration and/or the county. The principal was also very candid about her perceptions about immigrant families and their children.

Most students in this study were approximately ten years of age at the time of the interview. They were all concluding their fourth grade year, and spoke English at various proficiency levels. Most interviews were conducted in English per the

student's request, however, given perhaps some of my questions, their English abilities, age, and other factors, I sometimes had to repeat my questions or rephrase as necessary. In one interview I had to consistently rephrase (in either Spanish and English or both) what I understood the student participant to have said, and the student would confirm or restate what I misunderstood. Although I did not previously think that language would be a limitation since I could speak in both languages, there were instances where students had difficulties expressing themselves in either language.

The initial student interviews were all held at the school. These interviews lasted between 15 to 45 minutes depending on the student's availability, interest, and recess period. Although there were some teachers that were willing to let me continue interview the student for longer periods since it was the end of the school year, several factors shaped the length and depth of each interview. Follow-up interviews were conducted as available and were held at students' homes. Some mothers had changed their number and moved, or had conflicting schedules which prevented me from conducting follow-up interviews with all students.

Positionality

As a researcher, educator, advocate, and immigrant, this study was at times a personal journey which required constant reflection about my own education, immigration, and cultural histories and biases. I am originally from El Salvador. My father migrated to the United States first, and within a year my mother, brother, and I embarked on the journey to reunite our family. Prior to leaving El Salvador I attended school, completed first grade and left two months before completing the second

grade. When I arrived to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, I did not speak any English. I was placed in first grade and provided ESOL services. I was also assigned a Puerto Rican classmate, Freddy, who helped me in class. He translated for me and in exchange I would help him with math. By the second grade, I exited ESOL and was placed in the “gifted” track. My brother and I were, at the time, among a handful of Hispanics at a predominantly African American school.

I am truly grateful for the many experiences I received at my school. I was very fortunate and received a lot of support from my classroom teachers and ESOL teacher as well as school volunteers. I remember having a lot of conversations with teachers who took the time to learn about my Salvadoran culture and who encouraged me academically by regularly checking on my progress. My teachers were also supportive outside school. For example, my brother and I attended church a few Sundays with one of our teachers and her daughter. During the summer, a school volunteer took my brother and me to museums, provided us with additional workbooks for reading and math practice, and took us to the pool and recreation centers.

The immigrant population in the area continued to grow and with no bilingual staff, I was often called to the school’s main office to translate for Spanish-speaking parents. I became a mini-staff member in the office, where I extended my social network to include the principal, vice principal, and other staff members. This opportunity validated my skills, enabled me to use my cultural capital, and provided me with additional social and cultural capital. I gained further support from staff, learned about the student council, and eventually gained awards and recognition. The

supports I received at school and in activities in which I participated provided a very good foundation for my academic, as well as social integration in my community. However, there were also several factors that affected my schooling, such as immigration and my parent's limited formal education. For instance, my mother was captured during an immigration raid. I was also often responsible to read, translate, and often speak for my parents. These experiences allowed me to empathize with my student participants and their families.

In addition to my own experiences, this research was influenced by my youngest brother's ELL classification and placement. When he was in the third grade, I attended the "Back to School" night, met the teachers, and learned about the curriculum for the year. As my brother and I were walking out of the school that night, he waved to a teacher whom I had not met. I learned that he had been placed in ESOL and inquired about the placement. The response was simply taking him out of the class without further explanation as to why he had remained with the classification, or placement in the program, or what services he needed to ensure he was academically successful once he was removed from such placement.

My experiences have shaped my beliefs that schools and homes are integral to the academic success of its students. However, I also recognize the difficulties and complexities present across both settings. The expectations and demands on schools are continuously increasing as are the threats to their financial resources. Additionally, parent involvement, engagement, and advocacy are particularly difficult to obtain when macro factors such as immigration and language also hinder such efforts. Nonetheless, it is through the collaboration between schools and homes that

students will most benefit academically, socially, and eventually professionally.

Conducting research to which I have such a personal connection was not an easy endeavor. Although it allowed me the opportunity to connect with and better understand my participants, it also prompted a need for reflective practices such as writing memos, member checks, and conversations with fellow researchers in the field. My reflective practices combined with my personal experiences and knowledge allowed me to relate to these children, families, and educators in ways that undoubtedly strengthened my work.

CHAPTER 4: MARAVILLA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND THE PARTICIPANTS

This chapter provides an introduction to the context for the students' language learning experiences of the ELL learner in this study and is divided into two sections. In the first section I provide more information about Maravilla, the school attended by the primary participants and the location in which the English learning primarily takes place in this study. In the second section I introduce the fourth grade students who are currently or formerly classified as English Language Learners and who serve as the study's primary participants. Next I introduce their mothers (and one father) who serve as secondary participants and informants primarily about the home environment, and their home school relationship. Lastly, I introduce the ESOL teachers, fourth grade teachers, ESOL Parent Liaison, and the school principal who also serve as secondary participants and informants in the school environment.

School: Maravilla Elementary School

To better understand students' English learning experience, this section provides an overview of Maravilla Elementary. This school is located in a developing semi-urban area of the state. Malls, restaurants, and new condominiums surround the school. The school, first occupied in the early 1950s, has been renovated three times, and sits on a hill hidden by the growing urban development. The school grounds appear well maintained. A quiet street divides the school from the small neighborhood also tucked away from the rising expansion. There are two main entrances at Maravilla. In 2010-2011, when this study was conducted all school

visitors would ring a doorbell at each of the two entrances to be allowed into the building. Administrative assistants monitored the cameras at the entrances, and allowed visitors to enter the school building. Visitors would then proceed to the main office. The area in front of the main office is surrounded by resources for parents in English, and, when available Spanish. Some of the resources available included flyers about parent nights within the district as well as information on helping children develop academically and emotionally. “Welcome, Bienvenidos!” was displayed on the wall, boldly visible as soon as visitors walked into the school near the main office.

The school’s demographic, socioeconomic, and special service population provides an important understanding of the school, and students’ needs. In 2010-2011 approximately 500 students comprise the pre-K thru 5th grade classes. The school serves predominantly African American and Latino students. The African American population has remained fairly stable since the 1990s, with 57% of the population in 2010-2011. The Latino student population, however, has been increasing exponentially, from 3% of the student population in 1994 to 39% of the student population in 2010-2011. Inversely, the White, not of Hispanic origin, student population has steadily been decreasing at Maravilla, from 19% in 1993 to 3% in 2010-2011.

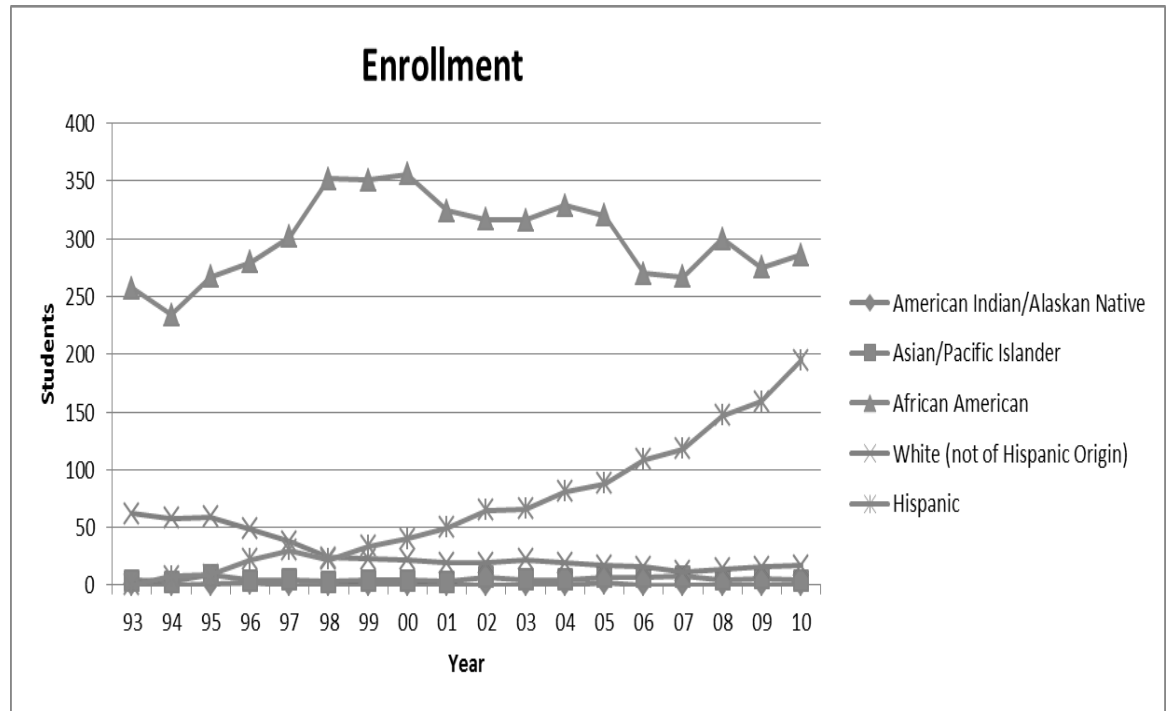


Figure 1: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity at Maravilla, 1993-2010

A significant percentage of the students qualify for programs based on income or special needs. For example, over 83% of students at Maravilla qualified for the Federal Free and Reduced Meals program (lunch program based on income levels between 130% and 185% of the poverty level), and 95% or more of the students qualified for Title I services. Approximately 6.9% of its students were in Special Education, and 5% or less of its students had a 504 plan, that is, require additional special accommodations but are not eligible for special education services. State data indicated that 26.4% of the student population at Maravilla in 2010-2011 was classified LEP, 72 % of which school staff indicated were Latinos. At the national level, one in five students is a current ELL, and one in ten is a former ELL (Callahan, 2013). Maravilla’s ELL population is therefore atypically higher than national levels since at least one of every four students is a current ELL student. At Maravilla, all

student groups (African American, White, Hispanic, Free/Reduced Meals, Special Education) met adequate yearly progress (AYP) in both reading and math for the 2009-2010 academic year. Student standardized test reports were changed as of 2011 due to changes in race code classifications by the US Department of Education. State data for 2010-2011 was therefore not available according to previously noted racial categories. Data used from 2009-2010 indicate school performance across groups at the end of student participants' third grade academic year. However, state data noted that "too few" students in the Hispanic, White, special education, and LEP categories met the participation rate on the state mandated assessments for AYP rules.

According to the school website, the school staff consisted of two administrators, 24 pre-kindergarten to 5th grade teachers, and over 62 additional support staff, including four whom were part-time. Approximately 61.5% of the teachers at Maravilla have standard certification and 38.5% have advanced certification. The ESOL staff consists of three ESOL teachers and one parent liaison. The Special Education team is comprised of six staff members. There is one full-time and one part-time educator supporting each of the following subjects: Media, Music, Art, and Physical Education. There is also a full time Band, Strings, and computer lab technician. The school has additional support personnel, including an area director, a school psychologist, a pupil personnel worker, and a guidance counselor.

In addition to the ESOL services that I outline in the following chapter, Maravilla also offers the Gifted and Talented (G/T) program and Special Education services. During the 2010-2011 academic year, G/T was provided by a Development instructor as a pull-out enrichment class for reading and push-in class for math.

Though there are no set identification guidelines for G/T placement according to the State's Department of Education website, ability and achievement test scores, as well as teacher and parent observations are recommended to help identify G/T placement of students. Special Education services adhere to guidelines prescribed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and State regulations.

Maravilla administration and staff have also established opportunities for students through partnerships with area businesses, religious organizations, and the school's alumni association. The school website also advertised DARE, Girl & Boy Scouts, health clubs, and various STEM initiatives. Student participants were also involved in the After School program and the Ritmo Latin@ dance group.

OVERVIEW OF PRIMARY PARTICIPANTS- ELL AND FORMER ELL STUDENTS

In an effort to understand each student's language learning and educational trajectory, this section will provide a brief overview of each of the focal students ELL classification and ESOL placement pathway through the fourth grade at Maravilla Elementary School.

The Students as Participants

I interviewed nine fourth grade students at Maravilla Elementary (see Table 1). Seven of the nine students were born in the United States (U.S.), and of the other two, one was born in El Salvador, and one was born in Mexico. Six participants are female and three are male. Two of the male students both U.S. born, spent at least one full year in their heritage country before starting school in the U.S. For six students

Maravilla was the first school that they attended in the U.S. The remainder of the students began their education at other schools within the county. Both of the foreign born students attended at least one year of school in their respective country and both indicated that they could read and write in Spanish prior to arriving to the U.S. All students came from households where Spanish was spoken, though not necessarily to the student. For example, Estela one of the ELL students indicated that she only spoke English by the time she began school. Seven of the nine fourth grade students had an ELL classification, and were all recommended for pull out ESOL instruction. However, two of the seven classified ELL students were no longer regularly attending ESOL class. One student participant received ESOL services but was not on the ESOL schedule that the fourth grade teacher provided in the larger study. This student also indicated that he had been placed in the program intermittently since kindergarten. Two former ELL students exited ESOL placement by the second grade and no longer had an ELL/RELL classification.

Ms. Simms was the ESOL teacher for all fourth grade students receiving ESOL services. Ms. Laressa was the 4th grade homeroom teacher for five of the participants (4 ELLs, 1 former ELL). Ms. Macken was the 4th grade homeroom teacher for three ELLs, and Ms. Olivia was the 4th grade homeroom teacher for one of the participants (former ELL). The two former ELL students were both placed in Gifted and Talented Programs during their third grade year. However, one of the two was no longer pulled out for the Gifted and Talented class because Ms. Laressa, her fourth grade teacher decided she would no longer be joining the group. Six students were eligible for the Free and Reduced Meals/National School lunch. One student

was not eligible for the free lunch program and data was not available for two others.

Seven of the students came from two income households. At least three of the mothers have remarried and the student therefore lives with their mother and a stepfather. Two of students came from a single income household.

The following table sums up some characteristics of the students.

Table 1: Student Participant Characteristics

Student	Gender (F/M)	Age	Birthplace / (Heritage)	Grade began in US school or (MX/ES)	ESOL Classification	Nat'l School Lunch
Pepé	M	10 yrs 6 month	US (Mex)*	Kinder	Current ESOL	Eligible
Roger	M	11 yrs 4 months	Mexico	Kinder; 4 th in MX	Current ESOL	Eligible
Mary	F	9 yrs 11 months	US (Mex)	Kinder	Current ESOL	Eligible
Estela	F	10 yrs 5 months	US (Mex & Salv)**	Pre-Kinder	Current ESOL	Eligible
Selena	F	10 yrs 4 months	US (Mex)	Pre-Kinder	Former ESOL; Former Gifted	Eligible
Nathalie	F	10 yrs 4 months	El Salvador (Salv)	Kinder; Kinder in ES	Former ESOL; Current Gifted	Eligible
Yasmin	F	10 yrs	US (Salv)	Kinder; *withdrawn from pre-k (moved)	Current ESOL	Not Eligible
Juan	M	10 yrs 10 months	US (Salv)*	Began near end of 2 nd ; SIFE	Current ESOL	No data
Guadalupe	F	10 yrs 1 month	US (Salv)	Pre-Kinder	Current ESOL	No data

*Spent at least one year outside of the US; ** Spoke mostly English when starting school in the U.S.

Student Participants

Pepé

Pepé was born in the U.S and is of Mexican heritage. He was approximately 10 years and six months by the time of the interview. When he was two his mother took him to Mexico and they remained there for approximately one year. During his time in Mexico Pepé learned to speak Spanish. He returned to the U.S. in time to start pre-kindergarten at Maravilla. When Pepé began school he only knew a few words in English. In Kindergarten Pepé was provided ESOL instruction by an ESOL teacher who would come into his classroom. The ELL classification and ESOL support continued through the first grade. In second grade, although it is unclear why, Pepé no longer received ESOL services. Pepe's ESOL services resumed when he was in the third grade and continued in fourth grade. Although Pepé was not listed on Ms. Simms's ESOL class schedule, he indicated that he attended ESOL class periodically.

Roger

Roger was born in Oaxaca, Mexico but lived in Mexico City with family while his mother came to the U.S. to work. He was the oldest participant, approximately 11 years and a half by the time of the interview. Roger went to school in Mexico, attending up to the fourth grade. By the time Roger arrived to the U.S. he was able to add, subtract, and do some multiplication. However, presumably due to his English and his age, he was placed in pre-kindergarten briefly and then quickly advanced to kindergarten. When Roger first arrived in the U.S., he lived with extended family and first learned English from his cousins. By the end of fourth grade Roger continued to have an ELL classification, though he reported that he only

attended ESOL class for tests.

Mary

Mary was born in the U.S. and is of Mexican heritage. She was approximately 10 years by the time of the initial interview. She began her schooling in Kindergarten at Maravilla. She knew very little English before starting school. She was placed in ESOL during her kindergarten year, and in the first grade she was apparently recommended for special education services which her father declined. In the fourth grade Mary continued to have an ELL classification, received ESOL instruction and was recommended for the Afterschool Daycare program.

Estela

Estela was born in the U.S. and is of Mexican and Salvadoran heritage. She was approximately 10 years and a half by the time of the interview. Unlike all other student participants, when Estela began school she spoke only English because no one speaks Spanish to her at home. Estela attended pre-kindergarten through the second grade at Zorrillo elementary school, where she received instruction in English and Spanish since pre-kindergarten. Estela arrived to Maravilla in the third grade where she reported learning English through ESOL. By the fourth grade Estela continued to have an ELL classification and received ESOL instruction.

Yasmin

Yasmin was born in the U.S. and is of Salvadoran heritage. She was approximately 10 years by the time of the interview. Yasmin attended pre-kindergarten briefly at Maravilla. She attended kindergarten through the second grade at Chalate elementary school where she received ESOL instruction. Yasmin

transferred to Maravilla during the second half of her second grade year and had a very difficult transition. Yasmin was recommended for special services by her teacher at Maravilla, but upon evaluation she was not found eligible for any special education services. Yasmin did, however, continue to receive ESOL instruction. In the fourth grade Yasmin continued to have an ELL classification and received ESOL services.

Juan

Juan was born in the U.S. and is of Salvadoran heritage. He was approximately 11 years by the time of the interview. When Juan was three years old he was sent to live with his grandmother in El Salvador. Although it is unclear why he was sent to El Salvador, childcare may have been a contributing factor, as Juan is the sixth child in a family of nine, and the first child born in the U.S. Juan remembers very little about his life in El Salvador. His grandmother enrolled him in school and he attended through the second grade, however, Juan reported that he did not learn much while he was in El Salvador.

When Juan was eight he returned to the U.S. and arrived to Maravilla Elementary school 25 days before the end of the second grade. Juan did not receive any ESOL services until he began the third grade. By the fourth grade Juan continued to have an ELL classification and received ESOL instruction. He is the only participant significantly below grade level, writing at a first grade level in and reading at a second grade level.

Guadalupe

Guadalupe was born in the U.S. and is of Salvadoran heritage. She was approximately 10 years by the time of the initial interview. When she started school

she did not know how to speak English and thought it was very difficult to learn. Guadalupe went to pre-kindergarten at Tulipan Elementary school, another school in the county approximately 2 miles away from Maravilla with a high ELL population. She began kindergarten at Maravilla and has remained in ESOL throughout her time there. Guadalupe was one of two students who shared that she had taught herself how to read Spanish, specifically by using el Silabario. By fourth grade Guadalupe continued to have an ELL classification, received ESOL instruction and was recommended for the Afterschool Homework program.

Nathalie

Nathalie was born in El Salvador and arrived to the U.S. with her mother and sister at the age of 6. She was approximately 10 years and a half by the time of the interview. She completed kindergarten in El Salvador, where she learned to speak and write in Spanish. She remembered attending school mostly in the morning. When enrolled at Maravilla, Nathalie was placed in Kindergarten. Nathalie did not speak any English when she started school. By the second grade Nathalie had exited ESOL. Her third grade teacher recommended her for the Gifted and talented Program and was completing her second year in the program in the fourth grade.

Selena

Selena was born in the U.S. and was approximately 10 years and a half by the time of the interview. She remembers knowing a little bit of English by the time she started school. Selena attended Pre-kindergarten at Maravilla. She indicated that she does not remember being placed in ESOL when she began school. Selena's mother however, indicated that Selena had been placed in ESOL through the second grade. In

third grade Selena was recommended for the Gifted and talented program. By the fourth grade Selena had finished one year and a half in the Gifted and Talented Program.

Secondary Participants- Home

The home environment is critical for the children's growth and development prior to school enrollment. Parent's immigration, education, length in the United States, English language ability, household income, employment, immigration status, are all important factors shaping the student's language, development and access to social and cultural capital. For the purpose of this research, I primarily contacted mothers to learn further about their fourth grade children's schooling and language learning experiences. An overview of mother's characteristics is followed by more detailed description of each of the parent's experiences.

In total there are nine mothers of student participants interviewed for this study (see Table 2). One father was present during portions of the interview I had with his wife and he contributed some responses. All of the mothers and the father were originally from El Salvador or Mexico; four mothers and one father were born in México, and five mothers were born in El Salvador. Four mothers and one father had an undocumented immigration status, four had a legal immigration status and one mother did not share her immigration status which I speculate may be unauthorized based on her response which she noted requires "papers." Five out of the nine mothers attended some elementary school; one graduated high school; and one attended some college. One mother did not indicate attending any formal education. One mother migrated to the U.S. as a child and attended elementary school through

the 10th grade in the U.S. She had an ESOL placement through elementary school. In regards to their children, four of the seven mothers of currently classified ELL students did not seem to be aware of their children's ESOL placement. Three mothers and the father indicated that they were aware of the ESOL placement to varying degree, but did not fully understand the program's placement, purpose, and/or exit process. Both mothers of former ESOL students were aware that their daughters had exited, but only one of the two was aware of the exiting process.

Table 2: Parent’s Characteristics and Knowledge about ESOL Program

	Country of origin	Length in U.S (years)	Mom Ed (*US)	Documented Immigration status	Awareness: ESOL placement?	Understand ESOL program?
Pepe’s Mother	Mexico	11	5 th grade	No	No	No
Roger’s Mother	Mexico	5	6 th grade	No	No	No
Mary’s Mother	Mexico	10	5 th grade	No	No	No
Mary’s Father	Mexico	>15	n/a	No	No	No
Estela’s Mother	Mexico	>15	10 th grade*	Yes	Yes	No
Yasmin’s Mother	El Salvador	11	6 th grade	Yes	No	No
Juan’s Mother	El Salvador	11	3 rd grade	No	Yes	No
Guadalupe’s Mother	El Salvador	>10	n/a	No	Yes	No
Selena’s Mother	El Salvador	15	High School Graduate	Yes	EXITED ESOL	No
Nathalie’s Mother	El Salvador	5	Some college	Yes	EXITED ESOL	Yes

Pepé’s Mother, Señora Lorena

I interviewed Señora Lorena at Maravilla. She is originally from Oaxaca, México. She attended school up to the 5th grade when her mother passed away. Señora Lorena helped raise her six siblings. At the time of the interview she had lived in the U.S. approximately eleven years, although she had returned to México with Pepé for approximately one year in 2001. Although she specifically did not indicate her immigration status, during the interview she shared that she was denied services requiring “papers.” She plans to return back to México when her children are older. Pepé’s mother thought that her son had exited ESOL in the first grade. She did not

know he continued with an ELL classification in the 4th grade. At home, she shared that Pepé speaks only English with his younger siblings and sometimes also with her husband, but he speaks some Spanish to her. She encourages him to learn both languages.

Roger's Mother, Señora Nohemi

I interviewed Señora Nohemí at her apartment where she lives with her three sons and two others who rent another room. She is originally from Oaxaca, México but was raised in the capital. She attended school up to the 6th grade. Although her mother encouraged her to continue to attend school, Señora Nohemí indicated that she left her studies to work and financially help her single mother. It is unclear how long she has been in the U.S. although she had lived a few years with family before bringing her three sons from Mexico. She and her sons were undocumented at the time of the interview and she planned to return to México within three years. She warned her children to behave in school because if they did not behave, they would all be deported. Roger's mother thought he had exited ESOL because he had "passed the class" recently. Roger's mother indicated that she would like for Roger to continue speaking Spanish as well as continue learning English.

Mary's Mother and Father, Señora Lucero and Señor Jorge

I interviewed Señora Lucero in a townhouse her family rents where she lives with her husband, Señor Jorge and two children. She is originally from Oaxaca, México and studied up to the 5th grade. She had lived in the U.S approximately 12 years by the time of our first meeting. Mary's father, Señor Jorge also participated in portions of the interview and seemed to be most informed about Mary's schooling; he

is also originally from México and had lived at least 15 years in the U.S. Both parents were undocumented. Señora Lucero did not know that neither her daughter nor her younger son were in ESOL. Señor Jorge indicated that he knew she had class with Ms. Simms but did not know about the ESOL program or the ELL classification process. Señora Lucero indicated that Mary knows how to speak Spanish and English. She indicated that Mary was learning how to read more in Spanish recently through her Catechism classes. They encouraged their children to learn both languages.

Estela's Mother, Señora Gladys

I interviewed Señora Gladys at a table near the back entrance of the school also near the media center at Maravilla. She is originally from the city of Monterrey Nuevo Leon, México. She attended some elementary school in México, and continued elementary school here in the U.S. Señora Gladys has a documented legal status. She was the only parent in the study who attended school in the U.S. and who she herself was in the ESOL program. She shared that when she arrived from México learning English was very difficult for her; her friends would speak to her and she helplessly stared back unable to respond. She was placed in ESOL throughout her entire elementary schooling. In hindsight she shared that “her ESOL teachers put forth a lot of support.” She remembers “liking [ESOL] because it was easy for [her], they were easy things that they put [for her to do]... they help a lot because they teach you to read, to pronounce words.” She reported exiting ESOL in elementary school. However, she continued to be pulled out regularly in middle school. Señora Gladys remembers,

They would always separate [her] into a little group, those who needed more

help. They always took [her] out even in middle school from classes because they didn't want to put [her] in classes that were too high because [she] still didn't know [English] too well.

She attended high school until the 10th grade and then dropped out when she found out that she was pregnant.

Señora Gladys was aware that Estela was in ESOL. Señora Gladys indicated Estela receives ESOL instruction about twice a week. Señora Gladys had mixed feelings about her daughter's ESOL placement. She indicated understanding why her daughter would not complain about the placement and joked that it was "because it's easy." However, she shared that her daughter broke down in tears in front of her a few weeks ago when she learned she had not exited ESOL and would remain on the same level. She indicated that she would contact someone at Maravilla to see how much more time Estela would be expected to be placed in the ESOL program. Señora Gladys however did not seem to know specifically who to contact at the school, or what the exit procedures are for her daughter to exit from the ESOL program despite her own history in the ESOL program. At home, Señora Gladys indicates that her children mainly speak English, and when they do try to speak Spanish, it's difficult and they revert to English.

Yasmin's Mother, Doña Elsa

I interviewed Doña Elsa in their family's town house where she lives with her husband, two children. The day of the interview a family member from Florida was visiting, and so were two of Doña Elsa's grandchildren. She is originally from Chalatenango, El Salvador. She was able to attend school through the 6th grade but as

a result of the civil war taking place in El Salvador, and the distance she had to travel, she was not able to continue with her schooling. She arrived to the U.S with a legal status. She has lived in the U.S. for approximately 11 years. Her husband arrived to the U.S. first and filed for his wife Doña Elsa and their children who remained in El Salvador to come to the U.S. with a legal status. After Doña Elsa arrived to the U.S., they continued to wait while the legal status for their three children in El Salvador was resolved. Yasmin was their first born in the U.S. Since her birth their other three children have arrived from El Salvador. Doña Elsa was not aware of Yasmin's placement in the ESOL program; she thought only her youngest daughter was in ESOL. At home, Doña Elsa encourages her children to use Spanish at all times, including when speaking, watching television and reading the bible. However, her husband is said to speak English often with the children.

Juan's Mother, Doña Alejandra

I interviewed Doña Alejandra in the media center at Maravilla. She is originally from Chalatenango, El Salvador. She enrolled herself in school against her mother's will when she was 11 years old and went up to the third grade. Doña Alejandra had lived 10 years in the U.S. She is mother to nine children; Juan is the sixth child, and the eldest of the 4 who were born in the U.S. Both Doña Alejandra and Juan's father were undocumented, they had recently separated as of the time of the interview. Dona Alejandra indicated that her son was in ESOL. She indicated that Juan has "always been in ESOL." At home, Doña Alejandra indicated that she advocates that her children speak as well as write and read in Spanish and encourages them to learn English.

Guadalupe's Mother, Señora Milagros

I interviewed Señora Milagros on a bench near the main office at Maravilla. She arrived with her youngest child in a stroller a few minutes before the parent teacher conference with her son's kindergarten teacher. Señora Milagros did not seem very comfortable with being interviewed and provided few yet important responses for this study. She is originally from El Salvador and did not provide any information about her immigration status or education. However, Señora Milagros indicated that she relied on Guadalupe to read, write and translate for her. Señora Milagros also relies on Guadalupe to tell her how she's doing in school. She seemed really proud of her daughter though seemed to understand very little about formal education in the U.S and of the ELL classification process, ESOL program in particular.

Nathalie's Mother, Señora Cristina

I interviewed Señora Cristina at a table near the back entrance of the school also near the media center at Maravilla. Señora Cristina is from San Miguel, El Salvador. Señora Cristina is the only mother who had attended private school throughout her schooling including some college in El Salvador. She was pursuing a degree in law but then got pregnant and left school due to financial constraints. At the time of the interview Señora Cristina and her daughters had lived approximately 5 years in the U.S. Señora Cristina was aware that her daughter had been placed in ESOL, but also that she had exited the program quickly. She indicated that the program was very helpful for Nathalie as a recent arrival, and also for her youngest daughter who was U.S. born. Rather than attending the after school program for help, Señora Cristina shared that her daughter stays to help other students. Nathalie was the

only student participant currently with a Gifted and Talented classification although her mother was not aware about her daughter's placement in the program. At home Señora Cristina encourages her daughters to speak Spanish and English because she wants them to be bilingual, which to her means being able to speak, to write, to read both languages and correctly.

Selena's Mother, Señora Rosa

I interviewed Señora Rosa in Maravilla's media center. She is originally from San Miguel, El Salvador. She graduated from high school with a concentration in accounting. She then migrated to Los Angeles where she took some basic English courses. She came to the Mid-Atlantic region thanks to a friend who helped her find work in the area. Señora Rosa also indicated that her daughter was in the Gifted and Talented program but that recently had been removed from it by Ms. Laressa, her fourth grade teacher. Señora Rosa believed that Selena had been in ESOL until the second grade. She believed that the ESOL program had helped Selena with her Spanish, although she also attributed that to a Spanish book club that Selena belonged to at Maravilla. Señora Rosa proudly shared throughout the interview that her daughter is very responsible and until this current year had achieved straight A's. At home, Señora Rosa has a rule that Selena and her two younger brothers only speak Spanish. However, she encourages her children to learn English at school.

Secondary Participants- School

While students are the main focus of this study, school staff and administrators served an important role as secondary participants and informants to this research. This section will introduce two ESOL teachers, one Bilingual Parent

Liaison, three fourth grade teachers and the School Principal whose involvement with the primary participants significantly informs this research.

Fourth Grade Teachers

Students spend the largest part of their school day with their homeroom teacher. As such, it is important to learn about the fourth grade teacher's background and perceptions about teaching ELLs and the supports they receive at Maravilla.

Ms. Laressa

Ms. Laressa is originally from the Mid-Atlantic state and also from Renderos County... She completed all of her education including obtaining her teaching degree within the state. Ms. Laressa took two years of Spanish classes which she admitted were to get the credits required for college admission. She has lost most of the Spanish she learned. She began her teaching career at Maravilla, and was concluding her sixth year of teaching in 2010-2011. Ms. Laressa had the largest ELL population in her class including two newcomer ELLs who had arrived to the country near the beginning of the school year. Ms. Laressa taught five of the nine students participating in this study, four current ELLs and one former ELL.

Ms. Macken

Ms. Macken is also originally from the Mid-Atlantic state. She completed all of her own schooling, including earning her Special Education degree within the state. She also took two years of Spanish classes in high school and expressed she can not speak it although she can pick out some words. Ms. Macken began her teaching career at Maravilla, and was concluding her fourth year of teaching in 2010-2011. She had

recently finished her Master's and indicated she wanted to take Spanish courses in the future. Ms. Macken has the high performing ELL population in her class. Ms. Macken taught three of the nine students participating in this study, one of the ESOL students she encouraged to remain in her class rather than attend ESOL because of his significant progress.

Ms. Olivia

Ms. Olivia is also originally from the state. She does not have any language learning experience though she indicated "it's challenging ... not knowing Spanish. So I've tried to, you know, pick up on some things, it's my goal to learn Spanish eventually." She has been at Maravilla three years, though she has one year teaching experience at a surrounding county. Ms. Olivia did not have any current ESOL students in her class that academic year. However, she taught a "high level bilingual" student; one of the two formerly classified ELL participants and the only participant currently in the G/T program.

The ESOL Teachers

Although participating students spend most of the day with their homeroom teacher, students with an ELL classification are required to receive ESOL instruction from an ESOL teacher. ESOL teachers are responsible for providing the language instruction mandated by Title III of NCLB to ELLs. They are also trained to assess students using the state mandated assessment to evaluate students' English language proficiency.

Ms. Murriquillo

Ms. Murriquillo is originally from Spain. She teaches ESOL to first and

second graders at Maravilla. She previously taught English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) to high school and adult students prior to arriving to the United States. Upon arriving to the US she taught ESOL three years at the elementary level in North Carolina (NC) to approximately 80 students annually. Ms. Murriquillo believed that the teaching experiences in NC are not very different to those in the Mid-Atlantic State because everyone follows No Child Left Behind. However, the way each county applies NCLB, differs. Additionally, she noted that the credential requirements differed, for example, in the Mid-Atlantic state she was required to take the Praxis I (mathematics, reading and writing) which was not required in NC. At the time of the interview she had worked four years at Maravilla. She was currently teaching 50 ELLs, monitoring 5 and had taught ESOL to some of the student participants. She additionally finished her Masters of Arts in TESOL and took the Praxis in ESL, Spanish as well as in Early Education.

Ms. Simms

Ms. Simms teaches ESOL to second through fifth graders. She began her career in California, where she completed a five year program to be a classroom teacher with an ESOL credential. She earned bachelor's degree in Child development and a minor in Spanish. Her first and only year of teaching in California public schools she indicated having a class of 34 sixth grade students including students with disabilities, English Learners in addition to mainstream students. That year she also taught every subject including physical education. By 2010-2011, Ms. Simms had worked at Maravilla seven years and had acquired tenure as an ESOL teacher. She was currently scheduled to meet with 38 ESOL students. Ms. Simms had an assigned

classroom, where she also housed the two other ESOL teacher's desks and portable instruction materials.

The ESOL Parent Liaison

Ms. Estrella is one of the four ESOL staff at Maravilla and has served as the ESOL Parent Liaison for seven years. She is originally from South America and arrived to the U.S. in 2000. Prior to migrating to the U.S., Ms. Estrella completed a college degree in Speech pathology, and had practiced for eight years. She also previously worked at a bilingual program for another state. Ms. Estrella not only translates and interprets for teachers, parents, and sometimes students; she also coordinates various programs and activities at Maravilla.

The Principal

Principal Long is African American and a native of the state and County, where Maravilla resides. She was inspired to go into the field of education by her first grade teacher. Principal Long studied French four years in high school, she earned a bachelor's degree in Elementary education and years later earned her Master's degree in Elementary Administration. She began a Ph.D. program but did not complete the dissertation requirement. Principal Long has over thirty years of combined teaching and K-12 administrative experience. During 2010-2011 she celebrated her 14th year at Maravilla Elementary school. She was aware of the significant demographic changes within the county and the school during her tenure at Maravilla. She also remembers when ESOL teachers would travel from school to school to provide instruction to students, whereas now ESOL teachers are more often permanently housed within

schools, as is the case at Maravilla. She noted that the largest growth in ELLs has been in the last five years at Maravilla.

Summary

This chapter introduced the school context and student, parent and school participants included in this study. The following chapter will introduce the macro policies shaping student's language learning trajectories.

CHAPTER 5: TRAVELING THE ELL JOURNEY: A POLICY POINT OF VIEW

In this chapter I focus on the macro factors shaping the student's English learning experiences. Macro factors as noted in chapter 2 include overarching policies that may shape more localized (Micro) systems such as the school environment. Some of the macro policies previously mentioned include parents' immigration histories and statuses as, well as more specifically, Title III of the No Child Left behind. Micro systems are particular settings in which a student develops through their interaction with a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations. For example, at school the patterns of activities could include the ESOL lessons and additional supports provided for ELLs, the perceived roles students and their teachers have in the school setting, and the interpersonal relations that students have with their teachers, administrators and the relationships that school staff have with the parents.

In the first section, I outline how Title III, a federal policy, is adopted within the Mid-Atlantic state. In the second section, I also focus on how this macro policy is enacted within a microsystem, Maravilla Elementary, where students shared their language learning experience. In this chapter, I also introduce the key factors shaping students' ELL classification, ESOL placement, and educational trajectory. Additionally, I introduce topics that will be further developed in later chapters including teachers' perspectives on teaching ELLs, Parents' understanding of the ELL process and their interaction with the school, and the students' understanding of their current or former ELL classification.

Mid-Atlantic State: Title III & ELL Inclusion

Students potentially classified as English Language Learners (ELL) enroll in U.S. schools at various points in their education but do not necessarily receive ESOL support. This section will present the Mid-Atlantic State's adopted ELL classification path for students who enter school with limited to no English proficiency or who come from households where English is not spoken. Although it is not mandatory in this state, many children begin school in pre-kindergarten where ESOL services are not provided. This is problematic because it is at this grade level that children often begin to learn academic English, particularly those arriving to school from households where they speak a language other than English. The ESOL path officially begins at Kindergarten or at a later point when students enroll in school and their parents complete a Home Language Survey (HLS). Students who are from households that speak a language other than English are assessed using a state adopted ESOL placement test. Parents are then notified about the student's placement via a parent notification letter. Subsequently, students are provided ESOL instruction if the parent agrees with the ESOL placement recommendation.

Regardless of the parent's decision to accept services or not, students are re-assessed in the spring for English proficiency and placement the following year. This process repeats until students test at a proficient English level, and also perform in age and/or at grade level. Once these two criteria are met, the ELL exits the program and is labeled a Reclassified English Learner (RELL). State policy requires ELLs who test proficient to be classified RELLs and monitored for two years after reclassification. (See figure 2)

ESOL CLASSIFICATION, PLACEMENT, & EXIT

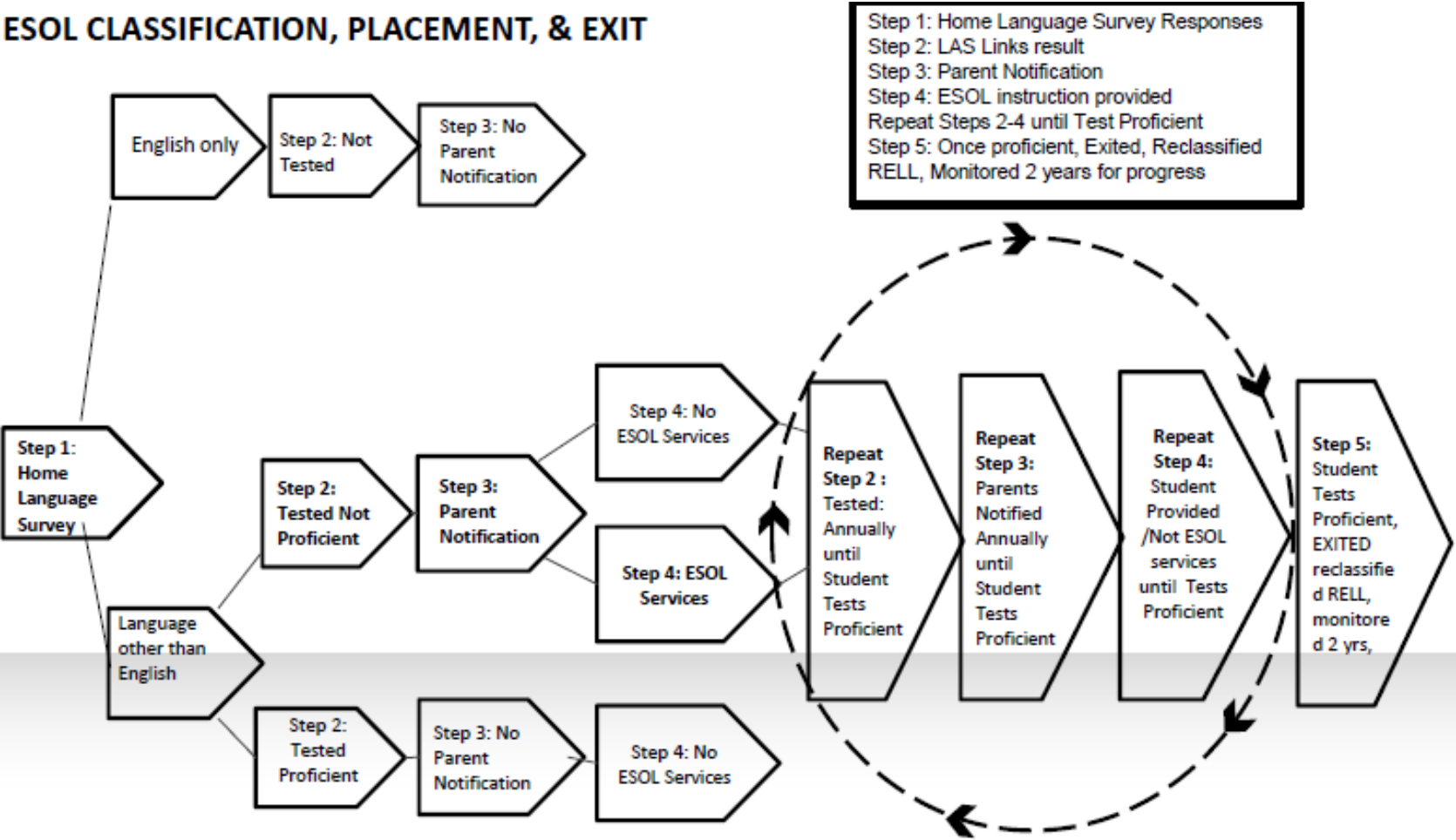


Figure 2: ELL Classification, Placement and Exit

ELL Pathway within the State

Pre-Kindergarten

According to the State's Department of Education website, pre-kindergarten is funded by the state but is not mandated. It is offered to four year olds in certain schools for half or full day however, admission is limited due to funding and space constraints. Schools offering pre-kindergarten have classes with approximately 20 students, facilitated by a teacher and an instructional assistant. The state curriculum serving pre-K students "blends the [student's] developmental needs" within its program to match state standards but does not indicate the English Learner's linguistic development as one of the needs addressed.

Kindergarten and Beyond

Most students in the State begin their formal schooling in the U.S. during their Kindergarten year. At the beginning of the school year, all students receive several forms which are required to be filled out at home. These forms provide schools with personal, contact, and emergency information about the students and their families. One form in particular is the Home Language Survey (HLS) which begins the ELL classification process (figure 4.1).

In this state, a student is classified as a potential ELL if the student: 1) was born outside of the U.S., 2) is not a native English speaker, 3) comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant, or 4) is an American Indian or Alaskan Native and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the student's level of English language

proficiency. According to state policies, ELL classification is based on two things: 1) the home language survey, and 2) the state's adopted ESOL placement assessment.

Home Language Survey (HLS)

The HLS developed within the county is sent home to parents or guardians and is available in English and other languages; however the form in Spanish indicates to the parent/guardian completing the form that responses to the survey should be in English. The HLS first requests basic demographic information such as the student's name, birth date, sex, parent/guardian's name, home/work telephone, school, and grade. The form then notes that federal and state laws require collection of the student's primary and home language. The HLS specifically asks:

- What language did your child learn when he/she first began to talk?
- What language does your child most frequently speak at home?
- What language is spoken by you and your family most of the time at home?

The survey indicates that if there is any response other than English noted, students will be assessed and parents will be notified about the results. The last section of the HLS asks parents what language, if available, they would prefer to receive school information and asks for their signature. Based on parents' response to the HLS, eligible students are then assessed using the State adopted ESOL Placement Assessment.

LAS: The ESOL Placement Factor

The LAS (Language Assessment Score) Links Placement Test, a

CTB/McGraw-Hill product, was the State's adopted ESOL Placement Assessment until 2010-2011 when this study was conducted. This assessment determines the student's ESOL proficiency: beginner, intermediate or advanced and then classifies them as high or low within those categories. Student performance on the LAS assessment determines when English proficiency has been achieved, and therefore when students can exit the ESOL program.

LAS evaluates student English proficiency across four domain areas: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Scores within each section indicate a student's proficiency in that domain. The student must successfully achieve proficiency across all domains to be considered proficient in English and avoid ELL classification and ESOL placement or once classified ELL, to exit the ESOL program. The speaking domain is the only one that is required to be administered individually; the other three domains can be administered in a group setting or individually.

According to CTB/McGraw Hill, the LAS developer's website, the assessment can take approximately 30-40 minutes, and its results provide data that can be used for accurate ESOL placement. The delivery method of the assessment is paper and pencil, and it can be hand scored. Additionally, the assessment is cost effective, costing only about \$2 per student. LAS is one of the commonly used LEP tests prior to the NCLB (Abedi, 2008).

As of 2011-2012, the state adopted another ESOL placement assessment, the World-Class Instructional Design & Assessment (WIDA). According to the WIDA website, the Mid-Atlantic state is one of 32 states to join the WIDA consortium, a

non-profit cooperative affiliated with various “leaders in the fields of education, curriculum development, and assessment” (WIDA, 2013). The assessment provides grade-level English Language development standards, corresponding to the grade-level Common Core state curriculum and uses a five proficiency level scale (entering, emerging, developing, expanding, and bridging) to measure student’s development (WIDA, 2013).

Parent Notification of ELL Status

Once students are identified as potential ELLs by the HLS, students must be assessed and parents notified within 30 days of the beginning of the school year. If students enroll in school at a later period in the school year, parents are notified within two weeks. Parents with children who are eligible for ELL services are notified in writing via a parent notification letter. A template of this letter is provided by the Mid-Atlantic State’s Department of Education in various languages and is modified as necessary by the county. The two-page single spaced letter is sent home and the parent is expected to read, sign and return. The notification letter is used for both initial and continuing ESOL placement.

The parent notification letter is comprised of various sections outlining the ESOL instruction recommendation, services and goals. First, the letter addresses parents or legal guardians and enthusiastically encourages parents to enroll their children in the program. Specifically it reads, “we are pleased to inform you that your child ... to receive instruction in our ESOL program.” The letter outlines the basis by which the student was found eligible for ESOL instruction, such as: (1) the HLS, (2) teacher recommendation, and (3) LAS performance. Second, parents are informed of

the child's Overall English Proficiency Level via a checked box for one of five options: Low Beginner (1), High Beginner (2), Low Intermediate (3), or High Intermediate (4), Advanced (5). Third, parents are notified which of the ESOL program's method of instructions will be used. The available offerings include: Content based, Pullout, Structured English Immersion, Sheltered English or Other (program offerings detailed in the following section). Parents can also request a different method if it is available at the school.

The letter then introduces methods and strategies that will be implemented within the ESOL instruction. The letter indicates that the services will be differentiated per the student's level of English proficiency, and will focus on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The goal of the program is that "students fully transition into mainstream classes, meet appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion, graduate from high school at the same rate as mainstream students."

The letter then offers additional information for ELLs requiring special services, including information about additional supports and requests parental permission for student ESOL placement. The letter informs parents whose children are ESOL Students with Special Needs that they will receive ESOL instruction as support for their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The letter also addresses the Exit criteria, noting that ESOL services will cease when the student demonstrates proficiency on the assessment and is able to succeed in age/grade appropriate learning environments. The parent notification for ESOL placement letter then informs parents that they have the right at any time, whether through the letter or at a later point, to

refuse ESOL services. In order to refuse services in the future, parents would have to contact the ESOL teacher and/or the school in order to affect the change. In the letter, parents are provided with two options 1) “Yes,” allowing the student to participate or 2) “No,” not allowing student participation in the ESOL program for that academic year. Regardless of the selection, both options indicate that the student will be assessed in the spring to determine progress in English language proficiency. The letter then has a space where school staff signs before sending the letters to parents, and provides contact information in case a parent has a question, such as selecting an appropriate program. Finally, parents are asked to sign their name “to show that [they] have received [the] notice and approve of [their] child’s placement,” regardless of their previous selection, and notes to whom the notice should be returned to at the school.

ELL Instruction

If a parent approves the ESOL placement and method(s) of instruction, students are eligible for services. ELLs can be recommended for at least one of five different methods: Content Based, Pullout, Structured English Immersion, Sheltered, or other. In a Content Based program, students spend the majority of their day with other ELLs and the instruction is provided at the student’s level. The second and most prevalent method is the pullout program where students are taken out of their homeroom class to receive ESOL instruction a few times per week. According to the literature this is the most expensive (Chambers, Parish, 1992; Crawford, 1997), most implemented, and least effective of all ESL instructional programs (Thomas & Collier, 1997). The third method of instruction is the Structured English Immersion

program where children remain within the classroom where they receive specialized English support. The Sheltered English method of instruction is another common recommendation in which the ESOL teacher goes into a content based class such as Social studies, mathematics or science. Lastly, the “other” category is available which provides the teacher the option of tailoring services for the ELL’s specific need. There are no specifications on the frequency, the length, and/or content or curriculum that are to be covered as part of the ESOL instruction.

Additional Supports for ESOL Students

In addition to ESOL instruction the parent notification letter also advises parents that ESOL participation will potentially make students and their parents eligible for other services. These services include “school tutoring, summer intensive English programs, parent outreach programs and the services of an interpreter for teacher conferences.” There is no indication of whether these services will be provided to students and/or parents if ESOL instruction is declined.

ELL Pathway at Maravilla

This section will present how the ESOL policy is enacted at Maravilla by walking through the policy as it shapes the English Learning path at Maravilla for students starting with limited to no English proficiency.

ESOL Pathways at Maravilla

Invisible ELLs in Pre-Kindergarten

Selena and Pepé are the only two students I interviewed who attended pre-kindergarten for an entire year at Maravilla (see Table 1). Yasmin and Roger also

attended pre-kindergarten but only briefly. Estela and Guadalupe attended pre-kindergarten for an entire year but at other schools within the county. According to Principal Long, over 50% of Maravilla's pre-k students are Hispanic. However, she indicated that there are no ESOL services available for these students because not only is pre-kindergarten optional, but due to funding, it is not available in all schools. Additionally, she noted that students attend pre-k where they will not necessarily attend kindergarten the following school year. Thus there is less incentive to provide teachers and students at this grade level with additional school resources and supports.

Kindergarten: The ELL Starting Line

Roger, Mary, Nathalie, and Yasmin began school fully during their kindergarten year; Juan was the only student who enrolled in a school in the U.S. near the end of his second grade year. ESOL services at Maravilla begin in kindergarten. Six participants attended Maravilla by their kindergarten year. All participating students, regardless of the school they first attended in the U.S. were classified ELL and provided some form of ESOL instruction. Seven of the nine fourth grade students have an ELL classification. Six students have had an ELL classification since kindergarten.

Each participant's path to ESOL at Maravilla is outlined in the remainder of this chapter. As mandated by the state, the path begins when the schools send the Home Language Survey (HLS) home for parents to complete.

Home Language Survey (HLS) Mismatch

The state website indicates that ELL placement is according to the LAS links,

the state adopted assessment. At Maravilla, however, at least one teacher noted that the placement was based solely on the HLS and not the LAS. Ms. Simms revealed that “[students are] placed in ESOL based on the home language survey, if they say that they’re speaking another language in the home, no matter what the language is Chinese, Urdu, whatever, they are placed in ESOL.”

One problem with the use of the HLS to determine student’s ESOL classification is the inconsistency between the home language spoken by the parents and the home language spoken by the student. For example, all mothers, including the mother who attended school in the U.S. preferred that I conduct the interview in Spanish. However, most (eight of the nine) students I interviewed indicated a preference to conduct the interview in English. Juan, the one student who selected to use Spanish, reverted to English during the interview. Seven of the nine student participants also reported or were observed speaking English at home to siblings or parents (usually their father), and/or watching television in English. Even though parents all encouraged their children to speak Spanish at home, those students who did speak Spanish did not speak it well. For instance, Pepé’s mother indicated, “the Spanish that [Pepé] speaks, he doesn’t really speak it well.”

According to both ESOL teachers, their students have very limited ability in Spanish, their first language (L1). Ms. Simms shared that she “and several of the ESOL teachers are seeing that it seems...these kids come with less and less language all the time. I mean and sometimes it’s hard to understand why.” She insisted that many of her students “have simply just lost their first language.” Ms. Murriquillo on the other hand noted that when she first arrived at Maravilla from teaching in North

Carolina, she was particularly surprised to see the students' language imbalance at Maravilla. She explained:

What struck me most...is to see that these children do not seem to belong in neither English nor Spanish, which for me is serious because I don't know, it's too difficult for them to develop Spanish, to function in Spanish and to function in English. It's like a mixture, a little bit here, they can speak about some things from home in Spanish but they do not know how to say it in English, they can speak about parts of the reading in English and then they don't know it in Spanish...

Students in the Mid-Atlantic State are not assessed in their home language as part of their ELL classification or placement. This omission is important for two reasons; first, it is important because schools potentially fail to build on student's prior knowledge if the student is fluent in their home language. The only two students who exited their ELL classification reported a command in their home language. Secondly, this omission is important because students who come from households where a language other than English is spoken may still be more fluent in English than their heritage language. This suggests that these students may have a limited foundation in their L1 and may require additional supports. Estela was the only student who reportedly came from a household that speaks English. She stated that "in pre-k, I used to only speak English; I knew how to speak English... I knew how to speak it good since usually, I don't...really talk Spanish at home." Nonetheless Estela is one of the participants who remained with an ELL classification in fourth grade.

ESOL Assessments: English Proficiency Inconsistencies

The ESOL teachers and the principal shared several frustrations with the LAS placement test. First, during the 2010-2011 year Principal Long said that the assessment takes too long to administer, “it took two months to give it, a whole month almost to get the LAS links test and it wasn’t even practical.” Second, Ms. Murriquillo explained that the exam “doesn’t take into account any variant, about [student’s] personal characteristics,” such as if they’re shy and do not speak or simply respond with two words when asked a question. Students can therefore test at a “level 2” in the speaking section, yet in reading they may be a “level 4.” Third, students must receive a score of at least 80 or above across all four domains in order to be tested out of ESOL. Ms. Simms explained, “[an ELL] can still be a level 5 and not be dismissed if the combinations of all four things, if they’re not at least a level four in all four things [speaking, listening, writing, reading] so that the combination gives them a good score across the board; they won’t be dismissed.” Fourth, the LAS assessment does not focus on academic language. Ms. Simms shared that “LAS Links really does not address CALP [Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency] at all.” She said that “it’s very rote, it’s not classroom aligned at all... the writing part [of the LAS test] is probably the most aligned with a classroom activity.”

All ESOL teachers and Principal Long agreed that the expectations of ELLs on these assessments are higher than expected for students from English Speaking households. For example, Ms. Simms expressed that “[kindergartners] are asked to actually write sentences at a kindergarten level, which that’s insane!” This additional requirement almost automatically guarantees kindergartners who come from

households where a language other than English is spoken, an ELL classification. Further, as demonstrated in subsequent chapters of this dissertation, this classification will not necessarily be matched with services that will help the student acquire English.

Despite the staff's negative perceptions of the assessment, students are tested annually until they pass all of the four domains. Ms. Simms provided a copy of a report she created based on the 2010-2011 LAS assessment performance for her fourth grade students (See Table 3). She administered the test to the students and scored the assessment herself. The domains assessed on the LAS Links include: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Although the LAS included four domains, Ms. Simms broke down her results into six categories: student's ability to speak, listen, analyze words, read, reading comprehension, and writing conventions. She reported using the test results to recognize the student's areas of need that she should focus on the following school year. Although the report does not indicate specifically how Ms. Simms calculated the percentages in the report, or if the percentages noted represent the student's actual score on the particular domain. However, the report demonstrates the wide range of needs and levels across the fourth grade ESOL students. For the ELL student participants who began school during their kindergarten year, this would be the 6th time they took a LAS placement test without being able to exit.

Table 3: Ms. Simms' 4th grade Language Assessment Report

Students	Speaking	Listening	Analyze Words (rhyming, syllables, prefixes)	Read Words (Synonyms, Antonyms, words in context)	Reading Comp	Writing Convent (Verb tense, punctuation, capitalization)	Writing Sentences
Pepé	93%	70%	70%	50%	80%	85%	Sp/verbs
Roger	93%	75%	70%	70%	60%	75%	Sp/vocab
Juan	56%	80%	70%	20%	40%	35%	Sp/mech
Mary	80%	65%	80%	90%	87%	75%	mech
Estela	73%	85%	90%	70%	60%	90%	vocab
Yasmin	100%	85%	60%	100%	73%	45%	Sp/mech
Guadalupe	88%	70%	90%	60%	67%	95%	sp
Nathalie	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Selena	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Documenting ELL Classification: the “NCLB” Letter

All parents are notified upon determining student’s eligibility for ESOL services via “the NCLB letter” as it is referred at Maravilla. This letter is what allows ESOL teachers to teach or not to teach students ESOL. Once the letter is sent home, a parent is expected to read, sign, and return the letter back to school promptly. If parents do not respond, ESOL teachers send a second notice. If the parent still does not respond, “no response” is noted on the file, and ESOL teachers continue with the default option, which is to provide ESOL instruction.

As I presented in the previous chapter, most of the ELL students’ parents interviewed were unfamiliar with their children’s ELL classification, ESOL

placement and/or program procedures. Four parents told me they thought their children were no longer in ESOL. The other three parents reported knowing about ESOL, but were unfamiliar with the ESOL placement or exit procedures.

Parents not only had limited understanding of the programs, but particularly, they had no understanding of their right to even opt out of having their child receive ESOL services. Estela's mother, a former ELL herself, was the only parent to indicate awareness of her child's placement in the ESOL program and acknowledged receiving the parent notification letter. Estela's mother remembers receiving the letter for both Estela and her fifth grade son, who also attends Maravilla. She recalled that "last year, yes they sent a letter also for my son that I had to put them both [in ESOL]." Although she stated she would contact the school "to ask how much more time [Estela] will need to be in ESOL," she did not seem to know "the lady that is in charge of [ESOL]." Most importantly, Estela's mother did not realize she had a choice as to whether or not to "put" either child in ESOL. Her son was placed in ESOL through the fifth grade, and Estela also seemed destined to continue in the program the following year.

Estela's mother's example demonstrates that even when the parent notification was sent home to families in Spanish, the letter may not have been accessible to many of the mothers that I interviewed. Only one of the mothers attended elementary through the 10th grade in the United States and therefore has first-hand experience with US schools and the ESOL program. However, even she did not seem to understand the placement or exit procedures. The remaining mothers, if they attended school, did so in their respective countries and did not seem to be very

familiar with the U.S. educational system. Many of the mothers in fact relied on their fourth grade children to provide them with information about their classes, after school activities and progress. The letter may also be difficult to understand for most mothers since six of the seven ELL mothers have less than a 6th grade education level. In fact, many of the students themselves shared that signing field trip permission slips was a way their parents supported them because reading the forms was so difficult and required much of their time, but parents did it because they wanted their children to take advantage of the activities.

Additionally, many of the parents reported automatically signing school forms or accepting any services the school recommended. Mary's father indicated that often they receive documents but that they are unaware as to what the letters are really about and usually sign and return them because they think whatever the school is offering will help their children. For example, Mary's parents had the following exchange:

Mary's mother: [as a parent] one says yes [to school offerings], but doesn't even know for [what]...

Mary's father [somewhat defensively]: Well, I say yes because, because, I think that she will learn more, that she will improve, you understand.

There are many explanations for such parent responses. Although Mary's father is able to read, their interchange suggests that Mary's parents expect schools to only offer something that will be beneficial to the student. In fact, most parents would assume that an official letter from school indicating that they are "pleased to inform" their child qualifies for something would understand it as something favorable and are

therefore more likely to sign and accept the services. Yasmin provided a similar example which occurred in kindergarten. She explained

When I was in kindergarten our teacher sent us everybody a paper, saying that if they wanted their students to be better, their children to be better, to buy a big box like this big of full materials to help you. There was like glitter, there was books, there was scissors, there was materials, rulers, oh everything and that packet was very fun. I didn't know my parents ordered that, I remember that it was a total surprise for me, and my dad bought it for me, and it cost \$200.

Although Yasmin may have benefited from the \$200 box of glitter, scissors and books, this example demonstrates how willing parents are to help their children succeed, and simultaneously, how susceptible these parents are to school offerings.

The implications of this "NCLB" letter on the education of students that many parents did not seem to remember are great. The letter does serve well for documentation purposes, notification of recommendation for ELL classification, English proficiency, ESOL services, what those services entail, and a choice for placement.

ESOL Instruction

ESOL instruction at Maravilla during the 2010-2011 academic year appeared to be a time of transition, particularly with ESOL students in levels three and four, the ELL classification levels at which the majority of the participants were placed.

Although in recent years the common method of ESOL instruction was providing pull out services, the school's administration was encouraging a new co-teaching

initiative. ESOL teachers and classroom teachers who had ELLs in levels 3 and 4 at their respective grade levels were expected to co-teach. These changes resulted in a number of programmatic challenges for ESOL teachers and also in a lapse of services for many students. These experiences shaping ESOL instruction at Maravilla will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Additional Supports for ELLs at Maravilla

As reflected in the “NCLB” letter provided to parents, additional supports such as the afterschool program and summer school are available to Maravilla students with an ELL classification and teacher recommendation.

After School Program Perceived as “Day Care”

The after school program at Maravilla is provided through funding from a 21st century grant. Principal Long shared that the Afterschool program is particularly useful because the program is designed as a “reinforcement [for student’s] homework, and education.” The program has 100 allotted spaces for participation across all grade levels. Students are recommended for the program based on their ability. The program is facilitated by teachers, Teacher’s Aides, and sometimes by trained volunteers. None of the ESOL or 4th grade teachers appeared to be thoroughly involved in the after school program.

According to student and parent interviews, the after school program was not very effective. Although, some students were recommended to stay after school in order to obtain additional homework support, students complained they were not given time to complete their homework, nor did staff verify that it was done correctly. Mary’s mother seemed particularly upset,

Supposedly [school staff] said that [Mary] was behind, and that she needed more help. And of course one wants what's best for them. We say, if it's to help her, it's the best for her, of course, how are we going to say no. And during all of that time she stayed, but then when we noticed in two occasions that the homework was incorrect... imagine that, if her dad didn't check her homework the next day she goes to school, and the homework is incorrect, what is that good for? The child stays [after school] without eating, and without spending time with us [her parents], for nothing, if the homework is wrong... we don't let her stay the entire week, only two days [now].

Mary's mother and others complained that they expected the additional time spent after school to be spent on homework. Mary's parents and Yasmin's mother shared their frustration with the program and confessed that they did not allow their children to remain after school as much. Parents felt that neither the children nor the parents were being helped. Yasmin's mother also shared with me the following about her daughter's experience in the after school program:

Supposedly [my daughter stayed] because there she did her homework, they helped her more, and they helped them more with the English language, ... when I would come home from work... [I would ask] did you do your homework?...[and her daughters would say]... we did other things... So, what benefit, tell me, we are forcing them to stay later, they stay until 5 there, when they come home, they want to play but they have to do their homework, they haven't done any of their homework. I trusted that she did them there [at the after school program], so I said no, it's better to take them out [of the after

school program] because they're not progressing.

Both Mary's and Yasmin's mothers expressed that their concern was ensuring that their children received at school the homework help they needed because the homework was in English and they cannot provide help for their children. Ms. Murriquillo agreed with the parents, "many parents leave their children in the after school program hoping that they do their homework and all because [parents] cannot help, and [the after school program is] really not doing a favor. Having resources here [at Maravilla], I do not understand why there is not a quality program after school."

Two of the ESOL students also reported having limited time for doing their homework assignments during the after school program. For example, the day I interviewed Guadalupe, I observed her having a conversation with her homeroom teacher, Ms. Macken, who questioned her about an assignment she had not completed for homework. Minutes later during the interview Guadalupe shared that she had stayed after school the previous day but had not done the assignment. When I asked her what happened, she shared, "because we were outside." Yasmin also suggested that the program was not very helpful and compared it to a "day care" program that was available at her previous school.

Despite their ELL classification, two ESOL students shared that they "were not given the form" for participation. Pepé and Roger both indicated that this program was for students who were below grade level and they were not offered the service despite the parent notification offering additional support for students with ELL classification.

Summer School

A summer school opportunity is also available for ELLs at Maravilla, though space is also limited. Only a student eligible for services, such as ELL classification and/or academic need, is provided with a parent permission slip. Ms. Simms would be the only ESOL teacher facilitating the ESOL summer school component. Estela wanted to participate in the summer school program because she considered that “it was helpful” but not necessarily to acquire English. Guadalupe participated during the summer school program following the 2010-2011 school year. She shared that the class consisted of field trips such as “going downtown,” and also to a museum. However, she said the class sometimes proved to be challenging. For example, her summer school ESOL class, “went to field trips, and they gave [ESOL students] questions about what we learned during the field trip... sometimes it was difficult to answer [the questions] because I didn't remember... what was the answer.” Although the classes provided exposure to new environments, and opportunities to acquire social capital, it was unclear how often or how much opportunity was allotted for explicit English instruction.

Translation Services

As referred to in the parent notification letter, parents are provided with translation services at Maravilla by an in-house ESOL Parent Liaison, Ms. Estrella. As part of the ESOL staff Ms. Estrella understood her role was to work with the Hispanic community at Maravilla. In addition to working at Maravilla, she is responsible for several other schools in the county. However, given its significant Hispanic population her base has been at Maravilla. This “additional service” offered

by the state for the parents of ESOL students will be discussed further particularly when discussing the home school relationship in a later chapter.

Summary

In this chapter I outlined the macro policy, Title III, as it has been adopted at the state level. Then I introduced how this policy has been enacted at Maravilla Elementary school. My findings suggest many inconsistencies between the state's adopted policy and its local application in the micro setting, at Maravilla. First, children who enter schools from homes where a language other than English is spoken do not receive ELL services in pre-kindergarten at perhaps the most critical entry point into the school system. The ELL classification begins in Kindergarten although students may begin school earlier. Second, the HLS does not accurately determine the student's language proficiency and continues to be used as a strong indicator for student's ESOL placement. Third, ESOL placement assessments are inconsistent across states which suggest that there may be a number of variations on what it means to be English proficient, how to determine English proficiency, and the needs of ELs for becoming English proficient. In schools school staff reported that the assessment used 1) takes long to administer 2) does not take student's personal characteristics into account 3) students must receive a score of at least 80 or above across *all* four domains in order to exit 4) LAS does not focus on academic language, and 5) Expectations for ELLs on assessments are higher than expected for students from English Speaking households. Fourth, parent notification letters serve as proof of documentation that parents have been informed about their child's ELL classification and course of instruction in school. However, several parents did not

seem to understand the purpose of the letter, did not recall receiving the letter, or did not fully understand the contents of the parent notification letter. Fifth, ESOL services available at the school were in flux. Students did not necessarily receive the instruction noted on the parent notification letter, and the additional supports are reportedly substandard providing limited to no support for parents and students. In the following chapters I will look more in depth at the factors shaping teachers' experiences teaching ELLs, parent's experiences understanding their child's ELL placement and their tenuous relationship with the school, and also at the students' perception of their English learning experiences at Maravilla.

CHAPTER 6: EXPERIENCING TEACHING ELLS: A TEACHER'S POINT OF VIEW

In the previous chapter I focused on Title III, the macro policy, targeting the linguistic services provided for students with an ELL classification. Specifically, I outlined the policy as it is adopted at the state level and focused on the factors that shape student placement at Maravilla. In this chapter I will focus on factors shaping the teaching experiences once these students are classified ELL at Maravilla. In the following sections I will draw from interviews I had with two ESOL teachers, the fourth grade teachers and the school principal, all previously introduced in Chapter 4. Additionally, I will draw from formal and informal observations, field notes and memos I wrote in the course of the study and beyond. I have divided this chapter into three sections. The first section introduces the co-teaching initiative proposed by administration at the beginning of the academic year, which highlights the programmatic challenges hindering ESOL services. The second section presents a snapshot of what constitutes ESOL instruction for fourth grade students with an ELL classification. The third section introduces how high stakes testing can potentially create a mechanism for retaining ESOL students with an ELL classification at Maravilla.

“When you are in ESOL you are *already* out of the Interior”

ESOL instruction at Maravilla during the 2010-2011 academic year appeared

to be a time of transition. School administration encouraged ESOL and classroom teachers to co-teach in classes where they had the most advanced ESOL students. Although teachers expressed that they did not fully understand what it meant, they proceeded with the co-teaching initiative. However, fourth grade and ESOL teachers had limited joint planning time to prepare for co-teaching. Therefore, what resulted was that the fourth grade teacher would simultaneously teach the non-ESOL students, while Ms. Simms would teach the advanced ESOL students.

Ms. Macken relayed that although the intentions were to co-teach, when Ms. Simms joined her classroom, “instead of co-teaching, she was teaching her lesson, I was teaching my lesson, although we tried to communicate through email and things we just didn't have the time.” The noise level and limited space proved to be problematic. Ms. Simms noted that “when you have a group that large, there is no such thing as bringing them to a back table that will accommodate 14 kids. So, I ended up having to pull them out and teach them [in her classroom].”

Prior to returning to the pull out method of ESOL instruction, both Ms. Murriquillo and Ms. Simms attempted to collaborate with their respective homeroom teachers. However, Ms. Simms reported that instead of co-teaching with the fourth grade teacher, “I was walking around mostly like a [Teaching Assistant].” Similarly, Ms. Murriquillo rather than co-teaching, and serving her ELL students, wandered the classroom “to help, and not exactly [help] ESOL students, but rather, I was helping anyone.” After both ESOL teacher’s attempts to “co-teach” resulted in limited “teaching” opportunities, both reverted to pulling out their students to other spaces for ESOL instruction.

ESOL Teachers as Support Staff and Conflicting Assignments

Although both ESOL teachers began to pull out their students much later in the academic year than usual, they faced several challenges teaching an ESOL curriculum. ESOL teachers at Maravilla were often expected to help other teachers, but they were not often valued for their own work as ESOL teachers. Ms. Simms complained that “[ESOL teachers] ... are not given enough credit for what [they] do.” For example, Ms. Murriquillo mentioned that ESOL teachers at Maravilla,

are like the third leg of the reading program. The reading program, yes, works sounds, phonemic awareness [with the ELL children]... but when these [Reading specialists] are not successful or when it is not enough, when they believe that a Latino student needs more support, [ESOL teachers] are asked to be the support.

She explained further,

spelling for example, is one of the obligations that [ESOL teachers] have in first grade, spelling which is nothing more than repetition, [they] spend 10, 15 minutes of each session in first grade working on spelling when not all children need help with spelling. Some students are [ESOL] level three and four, they need help with spelling because they can't memorize or for x reason, and we are doing that during [ESOL] time. Our time is valuable, but this isn't our choice, it's the administration.

Ms. Murriquillo reported that often, administration would evaluate their ESOL students' progress and alert them to additional student needs which did not necessarily classify as ESOL services. She shared that administration would make

comments such as,

What [ESOL] level are they in? They are reading at level “A” and they are in first grade.’ Of course as a teacher for that child you feel horrible because you feel responsible. So you say, ‘well, let’s begin with the letters.’ ... Then they say, ‘it’s that now, they don’t know the first 15 frequency words.’ And you say, well, and you do it.

Ms. Murriquillo reported being torn between providing the ESOL services that she felt the students needed and providing the services required by administration or by fellow teachers. She continued further:

It’s when all else fails, [ESOL teachers are asked to] please teach the sounds to first graders; and you do it, because you feel bad. And obviously you know that this child will not read [with only instruction of sounds]... but when you know that in the classroom they are asking to do x, and the child doesn’t know it, well then you try to help out.

She affirmed that whatever additional help they provide the student is useful, but it is not necessarily the ESOL services that they should be providing their students. Ms. Murriquillo shared that when “the child is improving in English, [they are] generally improving in reading knowledge or [their] ability to retain spelling words but I am not having an ESOL session.” She shared that she “could easily give an ESOL class without using books... I can use a lot of other things because I am looking for the child to talk.” Administration’s requests for additional support often result in, “a conflict of assignments,” as suggested by Ms. Murriquillo.

In summary, as indicated by Ms. Murriquillo ESOL teachers are often seen as

“helpers” or temporary fixers rather than for their own merit in providing ESOL instruction:

What we [ESOL teachers] do is to cover up, to fix holes... we are not looking for a comprehensive solution, to help [ESOL students] in whatever they truly need. We are doing a little bit. [I'll] teach them how to use adjectives, done, objective met, and then you have neglected the three hundred thousand things...

Ms. Murriquillo goes on to explain that at Maravilla, “the ESOL program is weak, very weak.” In order to improve, she shared, “the ESOL program has [to get] the same ranking as other subjects for example, mathematics...ESOL will improve at that moment [when they are ranked].”

ESOL is the Lowest Rank

However, the ESOL program does not have a rank in the school and all the teachers seem to be aware of this fact. Although “there’s other things that are just as important [such as language],” Ms. Macken added that at Maravilla, “[the school’s] focus is so much on reading and math.” During her co-teaching experience Ms. Murriquillo was not allowed to interfere with the mathematics lesson even though she was instructed to co-teach as the ESOL teacher. Math at Maravilla seemed to have a “sacred” status. The math hours must only be used for math. Even when Ms. Murriquillo noticed something “linguistically relevant during math” she was not allowed to teach. In addition, Ms. Murriquillo shared that math interfered with ESOL instruction in that “sometimes for x reason the mathematics teacher [needed] fifteen additional minutes... this [resulted in] that I shorten [my ESOL] time for that period.”

Instances such as those Ms. Murriquillo concluded, determined “how long [was] spent with each [ESOL] student.” Math however is not the only subject that detracts away from ESOL’s importance. Ms. Murriquillo stated that although “currently, the ESOL program is like a mandate that comes from No Child Left Behind, many times it is seen as not so important.”

In the following section I outline the specific ways that ESOL teachers are marginalized and excluded, further supporting Ms. Murriquillo’s perception that the ESOL program is not very important at Maravilla.

ESOL Class on the Periphery: Scheduling and Space issues

ESOL teachers face two critical programmatic issues as reminders of their “out of the interior” status. These issues include scheduling of ESOL instruction and the limited space available to provide such instruction. Both ESOL teachers complained that they are the last to arrange their class schedule. These teachers noted that they have to wait for the interventionists for math, reading, speech, and special education before they can arrange their class schedule. Ms. Murriquillo complained that “when everyone has...made their schedule, then [ESOL teachers] are allowed [to set their schedule].” Ms. Simms emphasized that “really, [ESOL teachers are] never given priority.”

Furthermore, ESOL teachers are not allowed to conflict with other classes, including gym, and band. In the 2010-2011 school year, Ms. Laressa indicated that the fourth grade teachers also requested that students remain in the homeroom class during the reading portion of the homeroom schedule. Ms. Laressa shared:

Normally [ESOL students] were pulled out of their reading time and we as

teachers fought to not have that happen because we felt that if [ESOL students] received the reading time from us, and got extra reading time, that, that was beneficial. But they were always pulled during reading time and so we fought very hard this year not to lose them during reading.

Ms. Laressa advocated for adjusting the student's ESOL schedule around the reading schedule because she felt that would be beneficial for the ESOL students. Indeed, it is problematic that ESOL students would not have otherwise had exposure to grade level reading. However, in the teacher hierarchy at Maravilla, it appeared that ESOL teachers were constantly fighting to teach ESOL. In the end, the fourth grade teachers won. Neither ESOL teacher indicated preference for pulling ESOL students during reading. Ms. Murriquillo complained rather that "[ESOL teachers] could not pull the kids from physical education, nor from music, nor from art, nor from band, nor from any of these things" which clearly limited their scheduling options. This also demonstrated how little priority or value was given to the ESOL program at Maravilla.

Students also shared frustrations about scheduling conflict for receiving ESOL services, highlighting just how little attention or adherence was made towards the ESOL schedule and instruction. Mary shared with me that "we usually don't go [to ESOL]. Because we usually go outside [for recess]...we don't know what time we have to come [back into the school] because we're outside." Mary explains that if students return to the classroom in time from recess for Ms. Simms's announcement to proceed to the ESOL room, then they "get to go," but if not "sometimes [ESOL students] forget." If the ESOL student forgot to attend class, it did not seem that the

student was reminded to attend the ESOL class either by the ESOL or the fourth grade teacher.

The result of so many scheduling conflicts was that many ELL students received limited to no ESOL instruction. Ms. Murriquillo indicated that “sometimes there are students, who need more time in ESOL but [she doesn’t] have them.” She reported that student’s schedules are already full with other classes or interventions. The consequences Ms. Simms shared are that “[ESOL students] weren’t getting their needs met.” She concluded that due to the new initiative, and scheduling conflicts, “tons of [her] kids didn’t get the services they need.” Ms. Murriquillo shared that her highest ESOL level group was particularly difficult to schedule. She eventually “pulled [levels 4& 5] [every two weeks], Wednesday...like seven thirty, when they had workshop.” Her level four and five ESOL students were therefore provided ESOL instruction once every two weeks, for forty minutes, as the sole ESOL preparation to exit the ELL classification that academic year.

After overcoming the obstacle of scheduling, the next challenge became finding a location to provide the ESOL instruction during the scheduled time. Ms. Simms’s classroom served as the shared space amongst the three ESOL teachers. However, due to conflicting ESOL schedules, class sizes, and other personal issues, Ms. Simms ended up using much of the classroom’s interior. Ms. Harris used the classroom’s storage closet and Ms. Murriquillo used any location available around the school. Because Ms. Harris held the kindergarten ESOL instruction in the classroom’s storage closet, her space also limited her ESOL instruction group’s size. Ms. Harris could only fit at most six students in the storage closet. Moreover, space

limited the length for Ms. Murriquillo's ESOL instruction which "depending on where I was teaching ... [also] determined whether I had more or less time...there are some rooms that are often used, and there are several teachers who normally share and we follow a schedule." Classroom schedules and space restrictions greatly affected the extent that ESOL students received services, the length of time the services were provided and consequently the quality of the services provided.

In the following section I provide a snapshot of the ESOL instruction received by the fourth grade ELLs participating in this study.

Fourth Grade ESOL Levels 3 and 4: Read Rehearse, Present, Repeat

Roger, Mary, Yasmin, Estela, and Guadalupe are scheduled to meet as a group of eight with Ms. Simms daily Monday thru Friday for 30 minutes immediately following lunch. ESOL instruction for one of the days I observed included reviewing a script as a group that the students had been assigned to review for homework and highlighting words that they did not understand. During this lesson, Ms. Simms provided me with a copy of the Reader's Theater routine which she indicated provided the framework for her instruction during that class period (see appendix 2). According to the Reader's Theater routine, the instruction for the week would consist of the teacher reading, and re-reading a script with students, assigning students with characters, and presenting this script to their peers, teachers, and/or administrators.

In class, students appeared to have varying levels of engagement with the script. First, one student forgot his script at home and seemed to be almost in tears. Yasmin later shared during our interview that it is customary for ESOL students who forget their ESOL material to be sent to the principal's office. That day, Ms. Simms

provided the student with another copy of the script, and informed the group that they would be doing choral reading.

Ms. Simms sat with the students and asked them to point out any words that they wanted to cover. One student asked for the meaning of “crocket, faddle dwarf, and shuttlecock.” Ms. Simms informed the students that the author made those words up and suggested replacing them with names of games that the ESOL students were familiar with, such as “Frisbee.” Additional script words included the names of flowers such as “marigold,” “daffodils,” “sun flowers,” and “water lilies.” The teacher enunciated each of the words and often had students repeat. Ms. Simms then proceeded to read the script but eventually realized that her copy differed to the one the ESOL students were reading. By the time Ms. Simms stopped to ask if she had lost anyone, at least one student was looking around the room, no longer following the script. Ms. Simms eventually realized that students were not very interested in the script, or that it was potentially too difficult for them. She offered students a vote on whether or not to continue with the selected play.

Earlier that day, Ms. Simms had a challenging fifth grade ESOL class presentation. The 5th grade ESOL students performed, “The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig.” The performance was painfully difficult for the six ELL students. Ms. Simms had arranged for the students to perform in front of their 5th grade peers and brought snacks to capture the student audience’s interest. While the class had their snacks, the ESOL students lined up in front of the classroom and read from their scripts. Throughout the presentation Ms. Simms constantly interrupted and repeatedly screamed at her students that they were not speaking loud enough, and she also

pointed out in front of their peers that they were not enunciating their words as they had rehearsed in class. Ms. Simms also mentioned the 5th grade students' poor performance to the 4th grade class. When she asked the 4th graders if they wanted to pick another play, the students voted to transition to another play. Ms. Simms then proceeded to her filing cabinet to retrieve a folder with numerous scripts. She called out scripts, "The Principal's New Clothes, A Porcupine Named Fluffy, Double Trouble in Walla Walla, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Little Red Riding Hood." The titles she read are from the Accelerated Reader (AR) program. According to the AR website the book level difficulty for those listed range from 2.4 through 3.8, in other words, appropriate for second graders in the fourth month to third graders in their eighth month ("The Principal's New clothes," ARbookfind.com, 2013). None of the scripts announced seemed to be at the fourth grade level even though the observation was three months into their fourth grade year. By the time she finished announcing the titles, the class time was over and Ms. Simms announced that the students would decide which script they would use the following day in class.

According to effective ELL practices, the use of fabricated or nonsense words when teaching ELLs is highly discouraged because students do not know, as illustrated by the failed presentation, that the words are made up (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2013). Additionally, the use of the Accelerated Reader as an ESOL curriculum framework is problematic since it is not designed to be an instructional tool (Province, 2005). According to a previous study looking at Long Term ELLs, a similar curriculum was used which did not prove to be effective for teaching ELLs. The researcher concluded that "to depend on [the] Accelerated Reader [program] to

create literacy/linguistic growth in ELL students is a fallacy....AR in and of itself is not a literacy program, nor should it be considered one. It is a supplement” (Province, 2005, p.192-193). Krashen (2005) also concluded that there is little to no evidence to supporting the effectiveness of AR.

The next observed lesson also offered very little English instruction, much less Academic English instruction.

ESOL Level 2: Tracing Letters “Mira y Repite” –“Look and Repeat”

Juan is the only fourth grade student participant that is scheduled daily for the hour long ESOL instruction class with Ms. Simms. Juan is the ESOL student with the greatest need, writing at a first grade level and reading at a second grade level. He is one of three fourth graders in the ESOL class of 12 students; the remaining nine students are predominantly third grade students.

Ms. Simms began the ESOL instruction class by reviewing the homework assignment, which many students indicated that they had not completed. The homework assignment consisted of tracing or writing out the letters of the alphabet. The students attempted to inform Ms. Simms that a teacher in the after school program told them not to do the assignment. Ms. Simms was visibly upset that students did not do the assignment and that a fellow teacher had instructed her students not to do the assignment. She then set up the projector and reviewed with the class how to form the letters c, d, and b. Simms then reviewed the student’s homework sheets and noticed that some of the students either had not thoroughly completed the homework assignment or had completed it incorrectly. Ms. Simms then asked the class if she should cover how to write the alphabet but students

responded “no.” One student replied “yes” to the question and Ms. Simms offered to help him privately.

Ms. Simms then proceeded to divide the class into three smaller groups. She created one reading group of three female students and another one made up of three male students. She assigned the groups to read the book, *Puss in Boots* in Spanish. While the students appeared to read, Ms. Simms worked with the six students who had not completed their homework on writing their letters. She would first get the student’s attention, and say, “mira, y repite,” then she would show the student how to trace the letters. Students who did not do their homework but knew how to write their letters would complete their letters and would then wait patiently while Ms. Simms instructed the other group how to continue writing each of the remaining letters of the alphabet. In the course of the ESOL class, a student realized that it was Ms. Simms’s birthday. He asked Ms. Simms, “How much bigger are you?” presumably in hopes to find out her age. Ms. Simms either did not hear his question, or if she did, did not address his comment, nor correct his English.

The reading groups finished the book and Ms. Simms instructed them to ask each other questions in order to quiet them as the other students were focused on writing their letters. When the reading groups became increasingly rowdy, Ms. Simms sent them back to class. She continued showing the remaining six students how to trace their letters until the end of the class period.

Ms. Simms elaborated on this particular ESOL classroom experience during the interview as follows:

This was a class that literally needed to be shown how to hold a pencil and

these are 3rd and 4th graders. They needed to know how to form their letters from top to bottom because they all do it from bottom to top and backwards, every letter. So I literally had to go back to a kindergarten sort of rudimentary teaching and teach them ... the letters the dotted lines, and the arrows, showing them how to form their letters. And, while we spent a good number of days on that task there are some that still don't do it correctly. Yeah, and I spent months doing that with them, giving them sight words, you know, a list of sight words they had to write them across the page using the dotted line thing. It was, and you look at that and you go, 'How did you get to 3rd grade not knowing how to do this? Where were you? And who passed you up?' You know. So, but I don't look at it that way, I look at is this what you need, this is what I'm going to give you, and that's where they were.

It was evident that Ms. Simms believed that the need for half of the ESOL group during this session was the need for all students in the ESOL class. Ms. Murriquillo agreed that often those students with the lowest levels shape the instruction provided to all students in a class. Ms. Murriquillo explained that,

Unfortunately those at the lowest levels always win. They tell us to differentiate but you always find that those, most in need are those that require the most time. Those that need that we challenge them more, well, sometimes we fall short. These are surely those that are bored.

ESOL Instruction for High ELL Determined by Low ELL

Most of the school staff participants tended to emphasize the needs of newcomers or low beginning ELLs. The absence of advanced ELL students' needs

during interview responses until prompted suggested that these students are more likely to be “bored” and to receive less attention. Ms. Simms, for example, suggests that students in more advanced levels have less need. She shared that, “the level 3s and 4s don’t need a whole bunch of scaffolding.” In contrast, Ms. Murriquillo theorized that students who sit patiently as others are instructed tend to be those, in fact, that have greater needs. She explained that:

Those who behave well... fall through the cracks, this is what often happens to them, but we need to keep an eye on these children a lot too because it may seem like they are understanding everything that you are giving them but that might not be the case. I have some students that do not open their mouth at all and not just shyness but they are not motivated in an ESOL course because they see other children who they think, this one is behind, and I am here sitting with them. Also, the way that we group influences a lot. If it’s a small group, there is no timid child that will not speak, because if I have a group of three everyone talks, but of course when you have a group of eight children [this might not be the case].

Ms. Murriquillo explained further that small groups, allow students to feel more challenged:

If the child does not have the feeling that they are learning something, and I do not mean each day, but you have to make them feel challenged, that you expect more from them; otherwise they will conform to mediocrity, what can they do, and doing mediocrity work will not get you anywhere.

Ms. Simms seemed to have classes that varied significantly in size but she did not

seem very concerned with student grouping. She indicated that her groups depended primarily on the different proficiency levels. About groups' size she shared the following:

Depends on [the] different groups, like my second grade group right now started this year at 14 and [by the end of the school year] it's down to 12... then I breaks them into certain groups... There are 16 third graders but I break them into separate groups. One, there's a morning group, and there's an afternoon group just based on the proficiency levels and their specific needs and I do the same thing for the other grades as well so ... yeah that's how it pretty much works and some of the groups are small, some of them are 12.

Ms. Murriquillo notes that the large group size limits the language opportunities afforded to students: "The ESOL program is to target linguistic problems in children, and language. You have to work, I'm not saying that one to one, but it has to be in a small group to be able to monitor how the children are doing." Ms. Murriquillo, who has thirty less students at Maravilla than at the school she worked at in North Carolina, believed that having a small class was a privilege and shared her thoughts on the subject:

It is a luxury for the teacher, a luxury to know that every time you're saying something, it's having an effect and you see it head on, you have the child's face that will allow you to know, that yes, or no, you see their expression, which to me, is the best indicator if what I'm doing is right or wrong. If I have a large group, well you have an assessment at the end of the class; do several throughout the class but it is different, if you can concentrate in less, then, it's

much more effective.

Beyond preference, however, Ms. Murriquillo thought that the “ESOL program that we use [at Maravilla], is not designed to work with large groups, and this is a problem with leadership here.”

ESOL effectiveness was not in fact something that Principal Long specifically noted as criteria she looks for when observing ESOL teachers. She disclosed that teachers are observed routinely “whenever we do [a] walk-through we observe what’s going on and [teachers] give us feedback.” Ms. Murriquillo shared with me that she was not observed regularly and stressed that she has a lot of freedom at the school. She went on to explain the following:

[Administration is] not [doing] enough. I’m not saying that I want them to come and observe me, nor that I want them to dictate what I have to do. But I think if I were an administrator, I would be one of the first people I’d go look, because I feel very free. I can do whatever I want. I’m happy that I can do whatever I want because I do it, but my criteria is not necessarily the best and I think that we should be controlled a little bit more.

Ms. Murriquillo stated that ESOL teachers had a lot of autonomy at Maravilla. Given the schedule and space constraints, it was plausible that ESOL instruction was not consistent. For example, although Ms. Simms provided a classroom schedule for example that outlined groups every day, across all hours of the school day, the fourth grade teachers and ESOL students indicated discrepancies.

Principal Long however indicated that some teachers are rated and formally observed annually. During 2010-2011, she shared that 37 of Maravilla’s teachers

were rated and that Ms. Simms was rated that academic year but Ms. Murriquillo was not. Ms. Simms shared the following about her formal observation experience:

Principal Long came in and observed me for a whole hour with my second grade group the other day. That was my pull out with the 12 kids. And we were doing a lesson on summarizing. She seemed to like what she saw and she complimented me on it but that was using the comprehension tool kit.

That's the specific lesson she wanted to see, when she came in that day even though, we were working on the Velveteen rabbit...I had to stop the

Velveteen rabbit, switch gears, because that's what she wanted to see.

Formal observations are therefore scheduled and unrepresentative neither of the day-to-day instruction teachers provide nor of the ESOL instruction that students receive.

Ms. Murriquillo believes that "administration does not know what's going on in an ESOL classroom." It seems rather that "administration," or Principal Long chooses to see, literally, what she wants or cares to see in the ESOL classrooms.

In addition to the ESOL teachers, I also spoke to fourth grade teachers to discuss about their teaching experiences with students classified ELL.

Fourth Grade Classroom Supports for ELLs

The student participants at Maravilla spend a significantly larger portion of their day in their homeroom class than they spend in ESOL. Students therefore also receive instruction that may contribute to their learning as it relates to speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in English. This section draws on the factors shaping ELL's language learning in their fourth grade homeroom classrooms.

Findings were drawn from interviews with the school principal, and the two

classroom teachers who indicated ELLs in their homeroom classes, Ms. Laressa and Ms. Macken.

Principal Long specified that all homeroom teachers at Maravilla working with ELLs receive a variety of supports. Teachers, she stated “receive articles,” they have access to the “three [ESOL] resource teachers,” and “that’s why [home room teachers] have the computer, we put [ESOL students] on the computer... the computer sets available with the programs on it.” Additionally, teachers she said “have been trained on the brain... different pieces in the development in the brain and acquisition of the language.”

According to the fourth grade teachers with ELLs, however, administration did not provide sufficient resources. Even Ms. Macken who has Special Education training, seemed confident about teaching ELLs and who indicated that teaching ESOL students was simply “good teaching” reported that the resources were not enough. Material to address the needs of ELLs was “not as prominent... as some other resources [available at Maravilla].” Ms. Macken said that “[teachers have] gotten... pamphlets, [suggestions to] check this website out or have you heard about this, but there's not really much follow through.” Ms. Laressa expressed great frustration teaching ELLs with little support, she shared,

I have received no support this year whatsoever with my two English language, my two non-speakers. I’ve gotten a couple ideas of things but basically it’s been: I’ve been putting them on the computer finding websites that are teaching them to read and that they can listen to and see it and type it.

In addition to placing the students on computers, Laressa mentioned that one of the

primary ESOL teachers “gave [her] some spelling lists that had picture cards and a little booklet that you can make with it.” Ms. Laressa felt limited in providing “meaningful [work]” particularly because she perceived that “[the ESOL newcomers] cannot participate in [the] regular lesson.” With little advice on what to do with the newcomer ELL students, Ms. Laressa relied primarily on websites such as Starfall and Lexia. During two of Ms. Laressa’s class observations, the low beginner ESOL students were observed sitting for long periods on the computers with little support even when having technical difficulties. Ms. Laressa revealed that “not having been trained in the field... I didn’t feel that I did them any services this year, because I felt like I didn’t know what to do.”

Fourth grade teachers reported a preference for retaining advanced ELLs in their classroom and cited student improvement. Ms. Laressa explained,

The few [ELLs in level 3] that I had, that, that remained with me are reading on grade level. Struggle a little bit with certain words but they remained with me. They didn’t have as many reading difficulties but overall all of their fluency is very, very, low. We worked very hard to boost that fluency. In fact my highest fluency gain was forty words this year from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, and that was one of my ESOL students who stayed in the classroom with me.

Ms. Laressa suggested that in general students at levels 3 and 4 just need “basic small group instruction.” Ms. Macken also reported that one of her ESOL students was doing so well that she requested he not attend ESOL instruction. Ms. Macken noted:

One student this year has been doing phenomenal, above, way above 4th

grade standards... So towards the middle of the year when we decided how we were going to regroup our groups he went to my above level group and was not seeing the ESOL teacher like he was originally. [Ms. Simms] was meeting with him, checking in with me on his progress but he didn't need that additional support. I was, he was being challenged you know, he was being pushed way above.

Ms. Macken did however make sure that Roger, the student she was referring to understood that he was still considered ELL until he passed the assessment. She shared her feelings with the students that:

Unfortunately, so much of what's going to happen on your education is based on tests, and you have to perform... We can't excuse you from ESOL unless you get this, this and this. You know, and it stinks for [the students] big time... That's a lot for them to wrap their head around.

Ms. Macken shared that her ELL student agreed. "He knew, and he understood that he has to do this this and this in order to be exited [from ESOL]." As teachers, she continued that "you can only do so much finagling to try to fix that, but he is still considered an ESOL student until he tests out of it. I mean, there's nothing we can do and that's, that and that's something that's confining to us, the testing."

Although Ms. Macken indicated that testing can be restrictive, she also believed that testing helps her regroup her students. She explained that "When I do their assessments... I rank them, because I change my groups almost monthly." She noted that what she has found is that "all the ESOL students were not in one group, they were over three different [proficiency levels]." Despite this finding, Ms. Macken

indicated that the students remained in two groups for example in consideration of the ESOL teacher's schedule, rather than the student's needs. Ms. Macken explained that "[the ESOL] teacher can't possibly see three different groups in four different classrooms in three different grades, it's impossible, so we tried to make it work the best we could." Ms. Macken had fewer and higher performing ELLs in her classroom than Ms. Laressa. Macken also seemed more confident in her teaching abilities with her special education background. However, Ms. Simms communicated and worked with Ms. Macken but not with Ms. Laressa. Additionally, unlike Ms. Macken, Ms. Laressa indicated that she was not consulted about either the ESOL placement or grouping.

The previous sections demonstrate that teachers face significant challenges providing ELL instruction. When ELL instruction is provided there is very little focus on academic English. Fourth grade teachers indicated a preference for retaining some of their ELL students in their homeroom classroom. The next section focuses on what this preference may mean for the school, which potentially encourages the retention of many students with an ELL classification.

Formulating Mediocre Expectations and ELL Retention

As I introduced in the previous chapter, testing plays a critical role in the pathway towards ELL classification and ESOL placement. In addition to the ESOL placement test, students classified as ELL are required to take other state assessments included in Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) reporting and calculations. Therefore the school's focus on preparing students for state mandated assessments in reading and math versus the LAS assessments can be problematic as suggested in earlier sections.

In this section I take a closer look at assessments as it potentially shapes student's ELL classification.

Principal Long presented opinions about the ELL participation in standardized state assessments; although she also indicated that students are very well prepared and successful on the state assessments. On the other hand, she considered that it unreasonable that ELLs would be expected to be assessed only one year after arriving to the school. She asserted,

[Students] come [into] this country, in one year you've taken this test [that] for people who've been here forever and a lifetime, who speak English...some of the parents, some of us [adults] can't even pass it. And they have to take that test.

Nonetheless, she declared that ELLs are passing the exams. She shared that all current fourth grade ESOL students met AYP rules: "ESOL students and those students receiving direct services this year in 4th grade which, were 11 students, 11 out of 11 students got proficient or advanced [in the State Assessment determining the school's AYP]. At that school level she indicated that "87% of [Maravilla's] students in [the] limited [English] proficient [category] scored outstanding [in Reading]...92% [in math]." She reasoned that higher score in math was because "[ELLs] feel much more comfortable in math because it's straight, [they do] not have to comprehend and understand all the language."

Additionally, Principal Long indicated that various tests are taken into account throughout the year. She and Assistant Principal Brian, "get copies of all benchmarks and [they] red flag if this kid got a 46, what skills were [that] they [need]." She shared

that ELLs and RELs specifically do well:

The students who in 4th grade last year, our REL students, 10 out of 11 got advanced or proficient so they've made great strides so we're feeling really great about our ESOL students. They're... looking at the numbers we've broken up to sub groups, they did very well in reading and math in grades 3 to 5. So, we're sending kids [to middle school], they're acquiring the English skills, they're doing very well. So, we're very pleased when we look at that data, because we follow that all of that data, we have hard data. So, we're so proud of them.

However, the data suggest that most of the fourth grade ELLs have remained with an ELL classification since kindergarten. This persistence in ELL classification does not seem to be a high concern for administrators at Maravilla. In fact, Principal Long proudly shared that her formula for being successful and obtaining such high performing assessment scores for ELLs included: 1) "small group instruction and intervention groups", 2) "double dose so if you have your classroom teacher delivering it to the students first and then they go [to ESOL/interventions] ... they're getting it more than one time", 3) "teachers first of all have passion in what they're doing and they believe in their kids and once they believe in their kids, the kids want to do well." Principal Long also added 4) that she feeds in to the "intrinsic piece, and our kids they're going to college because I told them all, 'you're going to college, you're going to college.'"

Principal Long's stated goals and ideals do not necessarily reflect practices adhered to at Maravilla. First, "small group" instruction is not necessarily adhered to,

at least, not in most of Ms. Simms' ESOL classes which included students in the third, fourth and fifth grades. Second, rather than provide a "double dose" of instruction, ELLs sometimes missed out on receiving classroom instruction. Ms. Laressa revealed that her ESOL students were pulled out "when I did my vocabulary portion of the lesson so they lost a lot of the vocabulary instruction, and then sometimes it went into science, social studies, and writing." Academic vocabulary and writing instruction are two critical components of the four domains required to acquire English proficiency and exit from ESOL placement. The third component, teacher's passion for teaching ELLs was demonstrated by both mainstream and ESOL teachers. All teachers expressed a desire to provide the services they believed ELLs needed. However, fourth grade teachers 1) did not necessarily feel confident about their training to teach ELLs, 2) they did not feel that the materials provided were sufficient and 3) they did not feel supported by administration to help ELLs. The ESOL teachers also expressed that despite their desire to help students succeed academically, they were often marginalized and limited from providing the ESOL instruction they perceived students need. 4) Lastly, Principal Long shared she has high expectations for students to do well academically, and pursue higher education. However, the means to achieve this goal differs from that of some teachers. Ms. Murriquillo for instance suggested to administration she would like to "mentor" ELL students in efforts to "inculcate the need to self-correct and ask for help." Ms. Murriquillo noticed this need was especially important for children who do not have the support at home to do their science projects. She suggested children should feel they can go to a trusted adult at school that could provide such support. However,

administration responded to Ms. Murriquillo that “there are already mentors [at the school], the children in 5th grade go down to help other grades.” Given so many contradictions to Principal Long’s formula for success it is important to consider further ELLs performance on assessments.

Principal Long’s excitement about ELL’s performance on the standardized measures highlights the importance schools place on state mandated assessments in contrast to the state adopted ESOL placement test. This particularly reinforced Ms. Murriquillo’s perception about teaching and testing ELLs and testing in general at Maravilla. According to Ms. Murriquillo, “what schools want is these children to score [high on tests]... that they help the school’s stats.” Given the emphasis on testing, this is perhaps one of the ways that ESOL teachers are encouraged to take on the “support” role mentioned earlier in this chapter for other teachers rather than providing the services necessary for students to exit the ESOL program. Students must perform well on the state assessments and the goal is therefore to ensure that these students are able to perform well on the State’s standard assessment. If students do not perform at proficient status the school runs the risk of potentially losing funding. If students do not test proficient in the ESOL placement test however, there are no consequences to the school. In contrast, if students do not test proficient in the ESOL placement test they continue to receive funding for an additional ELL student the following school year. The result is that the emphasis placed on ESOL teachers is to help teachers, help ELL students pass the state assessments rather than to provide the linguistic instruction that these students need to pass the ESOL assessment. Students therefore retain an ESOL classification while at the same time performing at

advanced levels for the ELL category on Standard assessments, which helps the school stats as Ms. Murriquillo indicated. This focus on having the ELLs pass the state assessment rather than pass out of their ESOL classification is problematic because it potentially limits ELL students from exiting the ELL classification, performing at their full potential and accessing a more challenging curriculum.

Summary

In this chapter I focused on the factors shaping the teaching experiences of teachers serving ELLs in Maravilla Elementary school. In the first part, I presented exclusionary factors which hinder ESOL teachers from providing ESOL instruction. Then I presented a snapshot of the ESOL instruction that is provided after overcoming the programmatic and logistical challenges. Additionally I introduced the challenges and perceptions of the fourth grade teachers for teaching ELLs. Lastly, I presented how the exclusionary practices limiting ESOL instruction, combined with limited access to Academic English or instruction create a potential ELL underclass of students.

Findings in this chapter revealed the following regarding the implementation of ESOL programs in Maravilla Elementary school: First, an administration-driven initiative encouraging co-teaching between grade level and ESOL teachers resulted in limited to no ESOL services for students until ESOL teachers reverted to the Pull out method of instruction. Second, ESOL teachers are perceived as Teaching assistants or classroom support rather than to provide the critical linguistic support ELLs need. Examples of ESOL teacher's marginalization include, being the last to schedule their classes, having limited space to hold classes and store material, and consequently

unspecified lengths for ESOL instruction. Third, when ESOL instruction is provided, the lessons are not aligned with the domains that students need to exit their ESOL placement, ELL classification. In some instances, little to no linguistic instruction is provided. Fourth, classroom teachers reported feeling unprepared and unsupported to address ELL's needs. Fifth, administration's focus on state mandated assessments in reading and math precludes attention for ELLs' continued classification and ESOL placement. The next chapter will focus on home factors shaping student learning and creating a tenuous home school partnership.

CHAPTER 7: EXPERIENCING ESOL: A PARENT'S POINT OF VIEW

In the previous chapter I presented several factors outlining how schools structure exclusionary practices when providing ESOL services to ELLs. Students often do not receive ESOL instruction due to administration driven initiatives, scheduling conflicts and priorities, and lack of space allocation for ESOL services. When ESOL services are provided, they do not necessarily address the four components required to attain English proficiency and exit ELL placement. Additionally, administration's focus on test driven performance creates low expectations for ELLs compared to Non-ELL students which further retains students within the ELL classification.

ELL Parents and Home Support

In this chapter I focus on the home-school relationship that facilitates the English learning opportunities for children who come from households where English is not spoken, or who are classified ELL. First, I introduce how parents support their children's schooling in spite of various cultural, social and linguistic challenges; yet due to linguistic barriers they do not necessarily support their children's English Learning specifically. Second, I focus on the services available for parents to establish a relationship with the school, primarily through the ESOL Parent Liaison. Third, I present how school support is not necessarily conducive to parents' understanding of the ELL classification and ESOL services. Lastly, I present factors that shape the tenuous relationship between parents and school staff that hinders ELL parent inclusion.

Parental Support at All Costs

In spite of the economic, educational, legal and/or linguistic challenges affecting the families in this study, all of the mothers had high hopes and aspirations for their children. All of the participating mothers and father in this study encouraged their children to do well academically and to eventually pursue higher education. All parents indicated that they would support their children's career path regardless of the profession their child decided to pursue. However, the challenges listed previously did sometimes limit the extent to which parents were able to support their children. For example, one parent indicated that their child missed school because they were unable to leave work in time to pick them up at home, and drop them off at school. Some students were regularly unable to remain afterschool because they had to provide childcare for younger siblings. And most notably, although 2 parents indicated helping their children with math and another mother indicated helping her child with reading, most mothers were unable to provide "traditional" forms of support such as help with homework assignments. With the exception of two mothers, most mothers had limited English proficiency and therefore were limited in their ability to help their children specifically acquire English. Nonetheless, as I attempt to demonstrate in this section, parents directly or indirectly went through great lengths and high costs to ensure their children's academic success overall.

Mothers supported their children academically through less traditional means of parent engagement. For example, the majority of the mothers indicated that they spent time talking to their children. Through such talking parents shared a lot of advice, encouragement, and motivation by recommending children to do well and

succeed. In many instances parents also talked about the hardships they experienced and established connections between themselves as parents, their children and their country of origin. Nathalie's mother, Señora Cristina, for example indicated that she,

always talks to [her daughters], since little, I always talk to them. I tell them, I can't give you everything that I want, because there's three and all of that; I give you what you need at the moment. But I tell them to study, so that you all have what you want when you grow up. So I talk to them, I tell them, study, study, you have nothing else to do, study. At least that's what I spend my time doing...I also have an adolescent daughter, and with her, I'm stricter and I let her know more about the realities of life.

Señora Cristina did not find very much value in her ways for supporting her daughters. She reported that her support is simply "talking" to her daughters about the realities of life, and encouraging them to go to school and to do well. However, 'consejos' or nurturing advice were indeed a common thread of support across many of the mothers in this study and in the literature on Latino/a parent's educational support (Auerbach, 2007; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Gandara, 1995; Valdés, 1996; Villanueva, 1996). It is particularly amazing that Nathalie's mother was able to do so as a mother balancing three jobs working at Chipotle, Chick-Fil-A and Nordstrom to help support her family in the U.S and in El Salvador.

Pepé's mother, Señora Lorena also shared how she supports her son by talking to him, and teaching him about Mexico and the hardships that people from her town endure. She also shared Pepé's excitement for learning about his country of heritage,

I talk to him about how my "pueblo" [or town] was, how I was when I was

little ... I talk to him how everything is, how the culture is, and everything, I teach him, and he only stays listening... I say Mexico is poor, there you won't eat hamburgers, nothing like that you'll only eat vegetables from the fields, you'll go to the fields, you'll bring corn husks from the field... there's no Chuck-e-cheese, there's nothing like that... you're going to be barefoot, I say, if you can afford it, you wear shoes....children run around naked. He says, "How embarrassing. How are children going to be naked?"...there you will fill your bucket of water, I say, and you will get a dish and you're going to pour water over your head, and there's also deep holes in rivers full of water and you go and... 'oh yes, I want to know about that, about holes in the river' [says Pepé], and he gets happy.

Both mothers suggest their children greatly benefit from their conversations which foster motivation, highlight perseverance and teach their children about realities they might not personally experienced firsthand. In sharp contrast, other parents provided support by shielding their children from the realities existing in their own worlds.

Some mothers provided examples of how their families went to great extents to protect their children and ensure their academic success. The costs these families had are strikingly high, potentially limiting even their families' economic well-being.

For example, Señora Gladys, Estela's mother, indicated that rather than earn the salary from two jobs, she decided to work only one job in order to dedicate more time to her children.

Previously I had two jobs...and I said, no, you do not dedicate time [to your children]. I say that is the mistake of [many] Hispanics who are only dedicated

to working, just to work and do not pay attention to the children. And if you do not pay attention to them, they get like, ‘my mom does not care, she does not care what I do’ then for [my children], I say to them it is more important for me to be with them ... I get out [of work] at noon because I go in very early but already from noon onwards I’m at home so I have time to see them arrive from school, help them with homework, and be there with them.

Señora Gladys learned the importance of parental engagement in children’s schooling through her own family experience. She shared:

when I came [to the US it] was very difficult, I didn’t understand anything... sometimes parents more than anything Hispanics, dedicate themselves to work ... My mom, she always had two jobs, so for [me and my brother], if we did our homework, good, if not, well my mother never knew if we really did it or how we were doing [in school].

Señora Gladys perceived that her mother’s lack of support resulted in her younger brother becoming involved in gangs, and subsequently becoming imprisoned.

I tell you my younger brother’s experience right now; perhaps because he didn’t have my mother’s support, he got into gangs. He is in jail right now and he’s only seventeen. And it’s due to the same things, because my mom never worried, never ever went to the meetings. I felt like, alone, like if I didn’t have anyone. So I say, all of that affects children because if you, that is, if parents are there at home, but if you do not help [the children], if you do not push them to get ahead they won’t do so on their own. So, I think that has a lot to do with it, with school stuff. Because the teachers there [at school] teach you,

they teach you to learn but we [parents] also have to do our part for [children] to go to school.

Yasmin's mother, Doña Elsa shared a similar commitment to supporting her daughters and faith in the teachers, particularly to teach children English. Doña Elsa explains that she had to reduce her work hours to three given that Yasmin, and her younger sister were skipping or missing school and staying home. Doña Elsa explains,

I'm working ... in the afternoon because in the morning I make sure that the children wake up. I had a problem the other day because I would get up really early to go to work... they would get up late, and sometimes did not go to school or would arrive [to school] really late. When I'm here during the day, I pay attention, make sure they get up early, and that they go to school. That is one of the reasons that I now work in the afternoon because they were missing a lot of school... Yasmin, she was missing a lot of school, and [Roxanne, her sister] was too. They sent me a note from school, they were missing too many days, I told my husband, I have no choice, work only 3 hours, lose out working the 8 hours for the day. So as a parent, parents have to adapt whatever way, one has to adapt based on their children's needs...perhaps not how teachers want... but we Hispanics, we don't have the same facilities as an American...And so this is a great cost...can you imagine, as a parent, how wouldn't you [want to help your child], sometimes one [as a parent], yes, maybe one leaves a lot of responsibility to teach English, but what can one do if one can't help them...

Doña Elsa exemplifies that parents took very extreme measures to ensure that their children attended school because it is where they believe the teachers will teach their children English. Doña Elsa stressed further that as parents you're torn, "you're trying to cover one thing; [but] you don't take care of something else..." Since cutting her work hours to three, Doña Elsa has not been able to significantly help with the household expenses noting that her husband works two jobs and does not spend any time with the children. Doña Elsa also expressed her desire to help alleviate the teacher's load by desiring to help her daughter learn English. However, she recognized that the help that she is able to provide her daughter may not be 'how teachers want' the support. Additionally, she suggested that teachers or schools did not understand Hispanic parents' desire to help their children. She questioned, how could anyone (but suggesting school staff) think that parents do not want to help their children? The mother also suggested that part of the disconnect between parents and school staff was because as "Hispanics, we don't have the same facilities as an American." Since the school staff in large part is not Hispanic, the mother's response suggested that she perceived schools do not recognize the challenges that Hispanic parents face in order to help their children.

In the next section I focus on ways school staff at Maravilla involve parents of current or former ELLs in the school.

The ESOL Parent Liaison "She is One of Us"

Parental engagement at school plays a critical role in the lives of children. At Maravilla, the involvement of ELL parents, or Latino/a parents in general developed due to the dedication and commitment by Ms. Estrella, the ESOL Parent Liaison.

Although her job was primarily to translate, her role evolved significantly at Maravilla. Ms. Estrella shared the following:

Well, initially the description of the work was to translate, interpret for administration as well as for teachers. Translate everything in Spanish, to send notes home that the teachers send [such as] the report cards. And attend to calls from people who have English limitations. But on the other hand, we're also encouraged to do activities where we involve the parents and that the parents participate in those school activities... it is there where the job counts more. So we have to think about activities that interest [the parents] and [that] they also learn right?...not all parents have gone to school, not all finished high school, so we have to meet them and try to program academic activities but also activities where we socialize and provide information about community organizations... where they can go in case they have a problem with someone...

The nature of Ms. Estrella's work requires her to go above and beyond providing traditional school services. She indicated familiarity with various local services ranging from health care, legal support, and many others. Additionally, Ms. Estrella coordinated a yard sale to offset parents' expense for the school uniforms. Most of these endeavors Ms. Estrella did on her own or primarily with support from Ms. Murriquillo.

At the school, Ms. Estrella's focus revolved around creating as welcoming and as inclusive an environment for Spanish parents as possible. For example, she coordinated the Hispanic Heritage Month activities with a culminating potluck

reception with parents. She ensured that bilingual signs and books were on display in the front office area. Additionally, she hosted a Mother's Day Movie Night to watch the Colombian film, *Entre Nos* (2009) which was attended by nearly thirty mothers. This movie Ms. Estrella shared was "for the mothers because that topic... only interests our immigrant mothers who will identify with that [movie]." *Entre Nos* brought to the forefront issues of immigration, hardships, and overcoming all barriers to provide for their children. These issues were rarely if ever discussed at Maravilla. In fact, Principal Long indicated that when her students would say to her, "yes, Ms. Long ... my dad walked... came across... again," suggesting the father crossed the border into the U.S as an undocumented immigrant, Principal Long indicated responding, "ok don't tell me, I don't want to know... don't tell me, we read the story, *Enrique's Journey*." Although Principal Long was in attendance at the Movie night, she only greeted the mothers briefly and left shortly thereafter.

Throughout the academic year Ms. Estrella coordinated two groups which also promoted cultural awareness and parent support, the Ritmo Latin@ dance group and the Spanish Book Club. At the time of this study, Ms. Estrella had coordinated the Ritmo Latin@ dance group for over 4 years. Through this group she shared her passion for music and dance with the students. In the 2010-2011 school year the students had chosen to perform Shakira's *Waka Waka* in combination with more traditional cumbias and folkloric dances from Mexico. Previous performances also included traditional dances from El Salvador. Ms. Estrella and a volunteer high school student originally from Mexico instructed the entire female group the dances and encouraged them to practice for their parents at home. On performance days

parents were encouraged to attend and help the girls get ready. At least two of the participant's mothers were observed helping their daughters get ready. Mothers whose daughters were performing came prepared with makeup kits, folkloric Mexican or Salvadoran dresses, and leis to decorate their daughter's hair, hands and feet. The mothers seemed just as excited as the daughters about their school performance and some mothers even offered to help by passing out dresses during transitions or helping other girls get ready whose mothers were unable to attend.

The second group Ms. Estrella coordinated was the Spanish Book Club which was available before school, and featured several books in Spanish that students could check out and take home. The goal of the club was, "to motivate [students] to read at home with dad or mom, especially the children in kinder, first and second grade who are the ones that are most motivated to read." She mentioned that for many students, "once in the third grade, it's almost like they forget Spanish, and they know that they can socialize more in English so they lose interest in stopping by to pick a book. But we keep insisting and the one who comes well [does]...it's based on the child's preference.

Ms. Estrella also invited selected parents primarily those with children in kindergarten, to "Leer es Divertido," (Reading is Fun) a program where Spanish speaking parents come after school and read to their children, play games and interact with staff. She revealed that she recruits parents based on their availability and willingness to participate in the program. Ms. Estrella shared the following about that after school program,

Parents come for an hour with their child, we teach them reading strategies,

how to read with them, and then we learn from the parents too, it's not just parent learning from us, but we also learn from them when they share stories. We want the children to be there to hear the stories their parents share. That is one of the objectives that goes alongside with the academic objective, so that children can see that their parents are intelligent, that they are useful, and that they have learned things in their own language, and that they should value their maternal language.

Ms. Estrella purposefully attempted to be inclusive and to cast parents in a positive light particularly in front of their children. She made several efforts to ensure that parents felt welcomed at the school. For example, Mary's mother for example shared that she "likes the way Ms. Estrella is, though she's only a Parent Liaison at the school... she helps Hispanic parents when they go to read stories in their pajamas, she's in the room, with books in Spanish. She reads [the books] in Spanish...."

Mothers seemed connected because "[Ms. Estrella] knows all of our names, [and that] of our children." Additionally mothers shared that Ms. Estrella made herself available when asked. According to Juan's mother, Ms. Alejandra, if a mother asked for help filling out a form, Ms. Estrella would quickly respond "Yes, come!"

Ms. Estrella indicated however that she had to work very hard to obtain parents' support. She shared that at first, parents did not trust her. She's had to "win [parents] over a little at a time." Now Ms. Estrella feels that they recognize her as an ally, "she's one of us," and for that she shared, "I like that they feel that way."

The Missing ELL Piece in School Activities

Although parental engagement should be a school-wide effort, the

responsibility for working with the Spanish speaking parents was primarily taken on by or given to Ms. Estrella. Ms. Estrella's position at Maravilla is sponsored by the County ESOL division. Maravilla is one of several schools that she is required to support. However, as Ms. Estrella explained because "[other schools] don't have many [ELL] students... they ignore [the Spanish speaking parents]." If there's an extreme case on the other hand they contact Ms. Estrella, she calls the parents, translates what they need to do and then calls the school secretary to let her know the information was relayed. For the most part she has remained at Maravilla. The ESOL Parent Liaison's roles at schools seem to be primarily defined by each school's needs rather than by the ESOL division. For ESOL translators, ELL classification and ESOL program services do not seem to be a focus for either for the population they work with, or the schools they serve.

At Maravilla, Ms. Estrella indicated that parents were not informed about their child's placement because 1) parents misunderstand the ESOL program's purpose,; 2) parents misunderstand their children's English abilities; and/or 3) parents did not seek the information about the ESOL program. Ms. Estrella reported that,

[Parents] think, 'but my child already understands...' Yes, the children understand and they do not know why they are giving them help in English. There are some [parents] who are more curious and at the very beginning of the year come and ask, 'is there someone to help my daughter or my son to understand English because they do not know it.' Then one explains, look there is a special teacher who is the ESOL teacher. But there are other [parents] that since their children were born here, they think, they watch

television in English, they speak to their siblings in English, why are they in ESOL? And they're not interested to come [to the school and] ask, 'what is this program?'

In other words, parents who wanted to learn about their children's ESOL placement or about the ESOL program in general were expected to actively seek the information. This expectation was very different than that for other activities such as the reading and math nights which are naturally provided for parents. Ms. Estrella seemed frustrated with parents who misunderstood the ESOL program. She shared that parents required repeated explanations,

Even when [it is mentioned] in the Parent Teacher conferences [parents] are like, ok, 'where did that [ESOL] class come from.' Ms. Estrella indicated that it's not until parents hear it about three times that they say, 'ahhh, ah before [they learn English] there's the ESOL program.'

Parent teacher conferences served as a way for parents to obtain information. However, these meetings are held once a year approximately two months after the beginning of the year in fourth grade, but it is not until May or at the end of Kindergarten when most students are classified ELL. Additionally, teachers shared that they were restricted with how much information they could provide parents. For example, a teacher shared that they were not allowed to write "negative" reports, such as if a first grader is reading at a kindergarten level. The teacher then gave examples of what she is expected to include in her reports: the student has shown improvement (even if only improved by learning two words); they are making progress, even if they are still reading below grade level. Juan's mother for example revealed that his

teachers report, “[Juan is] doing well, he behaves, he does his homework, assignments, and each day he’s learning more.” The teacher’s progress report does not reflect that Juan 1) is in ESOL, 2) is writing at a first grade level or 3) that he reads at a second grade level in the fourth grade.

Even when information is available for parents through school events, these events are not necessarily held at the local schools. For example, a county wide Hispanic Parent Night was held during the course of this study at a school that was a 30 minute drive from Maravilla. Approximately 25-30 parents attended the countywide event; however, none of the attendees appeared to be from Maravilla. Additionally, the event did not include a workshop specifically for ESOL services. The Hispanic Parent Night offered workshops on Mental Health, Safety, Homework Help, and a Career and College Readiness workshop that was cancelled the day of the session. Although the largest percentage of students in ESOL across the state and county are Hispanic, there was no session highlighting the program for parents.

ELL and Advocacy

In addition to having a limited understanding of the ESOL program, and its services, parents also have a limited understanding of how to advocate for themselves or for the additional services they need. Parents are ill informed about what the advocacy process entails. Ms. Murriquillo observed that parents do not complain, or when they do, they do not do it in a place where their voice will be heard. When parents do complain to her in particular she confessed:

I tell [parents] well you have to go to the board, which is the place where everyone goes to make the complaints... [parents] either complain to the

teacher or the liaison--We are very limited in what we can do, but if a parent goes to the board it is effective, but they don't go, I don't know if it's because we haven't explained, what happens at the board...

Limited understanding of "what happens" at the board potentially frightens many parents. Ms. Murriquillo concluded that "perhaps [staff at Maravilla] should I don't know, tell parents that they have rights, because yes, as parents they have rights..." Informing parents about their rights and empowering them to use their rights is critical for parent engagement. Ms. Murriquillo highlighted that, the only time that parents have their rights read to them is when students are provided with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Students who are classified ELL do not receive an IEP and therefore also do not have their rights read to them as students receiving special services.

Additionally, Ms. Murriquillo indicated that perhaps Maravilla is not doing enough to empower parents to bring forth their voice. She explained,

I think that you first have to listen a little more to families, know what they need... I'm not talking about if they need food, those are basic needs but how can they help them? When parents are comfortable with us, they come and ask us. But a parent is not going to ask, just like that, and it is they who hold the key right? Because it is they who have the children and we should get to the parents in a better way, I don't know how but parents should be able to have more of a voice.

Ms. Murriquillo hinted at the excluding climate that was present at Maravilla. She shared that there is a need at Maravilla for a paradigm shift from merely

tolerating ELLs and their families to including their needs and services as part of the mainstream program at Maravilla. As Ms. Murriquillo says, “it’s not about tolerance, it’s not a question of tolerating, it’s acceptance...”

Home-School: A Tenuous Relationship

For four years, or at least as long as Ms. Murriquillo has been at Maravilla, a multicultural team has been working in the county to provide training to schools on diversity and inclusion. She mentioned that “[the multi-cultural committee] is dedicated to visiting the schools and assessing how they can help resolve issues.” However, she also shared that most of the issues that they help resolve are on the surface such as “don’t expect Latino children to look directly at you.” At Maravilla she maintains that the needs are beyond that, “it’s not something we are born with, it’s not easy, but working with this population we have to be more prepared.” One of the ways to be prepared as Ms. Murriquillo explained earlier is by listening to parents and perhaps understanding their experiences.

In order to listen to parents, parents must first feel welcomed at the school. Principal Long shared that one of the challenges at the school is the relationship between her office staff and the Spanish speaking parents. Because many parents have limited ability communicating in English, her staff has complained that the parents are “a little irritating” and “offensive.” On the other hand she indicated that parents “don’t have enough patience and they will say “somebody speaky espanus?” She expressed that “[parents] have...to be a little bit respectable... [Spanish speaking parents] need to say “good morning” you know “How are you?” “Is there someone [who speaks Spanish]?” Principal Long expressed this concern to Ms. Estrella saying,

“[Spanish Speaking parents] have to be more tactful... because they can get a little irritating.” The staff complained that “[Spanish speaking parents] just come right in [their] face [and] they don’t even speak [to them].” Some steps have been taken in order to address some of the linguistic barriers, between the office staff and ELL families. Principal Long shared that the office staff have taken “classes” and they also have “cheat sheets.” She also indicated that her staff tries, and “know ‘Buenos Dias’ when we say it before 12, and after 12, ‘Buenas tardes’ so we’ve taken the classes, we’ve all taken the classes, it’s very difficult.” To appease her staff Principal Long indicated that perhaps next year she will have to teach Spanish speaking parents the importance of “greeting” and not to “become demanding.”

In addition to language, Principal Long shared that immigration status has been a big deterrent to parental involvement for parents of ELL students. She explained that many parents do not participate because of their immigration status, and that many were captured in an immigration raid. Many of these families lived in fear that their children too would get “snatched by immigration” and for this reason would not allow them to go on field trips. Rather than protecting children and families from fear, some of the staff members seemed to ignore or maliciously use fear against students and their families. For example, Ms. Estrella indicated that one of the cafeteria workers threatened to call the police when two students (one Hispanic and one African American) had accidentally swapped their jackets and thought that their jacket was stolen. One of the student’s father called Ms. Estrella that evening afraid that the police and/or immigration would show up at their doorstep.

Despite so much attention given to immigration and immigration raids,

Principal Long was not aware that undocumented parents were ineligible to obtain a state identification required for all school visitors. She indicated that the identification issue had never come up and therefore that a situation had not posed any problem for parents. Ms. Estrella on the other hand indicated that many parents are afraid of coming to the school. She reported that parents would flag her over to see them outside of the school because they don't understand that the school accepts any identification, further explaining that "[parents] don't understand that, and some don't have [any form of identification]." Recognizing that not having proper identification could potentially affect family engagement, Principal Long mentioned during our interview that the topic would be addressed in a future "off the record" conversation with parents.

Although all parents in this study were immigrants, many of the school's ELLs were not. However, Principal Long seemed to believe that the majority of ELLs were immigrants. She shared that many of the parents or students entering Maravilla, "hadn't had any formal learning in their own countries - none." Additionally, she added that "quite a few [students now attending Maravilla] were living, we believe, in caves." Although many mothers shared that they had limited formal education, only one mother suggested not having attended any schooling. Additionally, although some of the mothers suggested experiencing extreme poverty, many of these mothers lived in developed cities and towns suggesting they had not been living in caves.

Principal Long noticed that as a result of a disconnect between school and home, many of the ESOL students in particular were no longer using their heritage language. In order to address this, she asked Ms. Simms and Ms. Estrella to provide a

workshop for Maravilla's staff. The workshop she described consisted of a vignette on "what kids would say, what they're thinking, how they were perceived."

Additionally, teachers were encouraged to read the book, Enrique's Journey. The book relates the story of a teenager who migrates to the U.S in search of his immigrant mother. Principal Long was convinced that,

[The workshop and book] changed the mindset of the staff... they had to really see and hear anecdotes...we had to educate them. And not only that about the culture, what is expected, don't go to somebody say, 'look me in the eye,' have your space because different cultures have different kinds of expectations... you have to respect that culture. So we had all of that in our staff development because that's important.

Ms. Estrella shared that "[school staff] seems so sympathetic [at first] but soon after everything goes back to being the same." By "the same" Ms. Estrella seems to mean exclusionary.

Many of the parents that were interviewed shared that they felt excluded from school activities or entirely from the school, particularly as a result of language. Mary's mother for instance indicated that she had attended events geared for "helping [parents] help [their] children, but they're in English." She shared that at one event she attended, everything on the screen was in English, and what they were saying, was also in English. Although she understood a little bit, she didn't understand the point of the presentation. Quite contrary to Mary's mother's situation, Mary's father went for a teacher conference meeting with Ms. Simms. Although Mary's dad asked Ms. Estrella to translate, Ms. Simms indicated that she spoke Spanish and took him

away to another room. Mary's dad reported having difficulties understanding Mary's progress in class due to Ms. Simms's limited Spanish.

On the other hand, Yasmin's mother shared that she noticed her Spanish was not being translated to English properly. Yasmin's mother said, "I don't know how to speak much English, but there are things that I do understand but I don't know how to say [them]. And one time, I was telling the interpreter [Ms. Estrella] something, and she didn't tell the teacher as I had told her..." She suggested that the liaison may have failed to translate certain things on purpose, and questioned "reasons" she may have for doing so. Since that time, Yasmin's mom indicated has not relied on an interpreter, and she also indicated that she has not attended many events because all of the events are in English.

In addition to language, parents and staff suggested hidden prejudices against children of immigrants and/or racial tensions between African American and Latinos at Maravilla. For example, Selena's mother indicated initially that English or language barriers are the greatest challenges for parents attending school events. However, further along in the interview she shared that childcare can also limit parental involvement. Selena's mother then shared an experience that happened when her daughter was graduating kindergarten, and which visibly continued to affect her four years later:

My daughter was graduating kinder and so, I came with my two sons, and the principal, when she saw me with the twins, she made such a face and said, 'this was not a place, not a social hour...that this was a special program where my daughter was graduating.' What I did was get out, I stood at the door, and

I was interested in seeing my daughter, she was my daughter, and I made a big sacrifice to come [to the school], and the way [Principal Long] treated me, I'll always have that in me. They shouldn't be that way. They should see the sacrifices that mothers make, and not treat people that way...

Selena's mother was one of the mothers with the most experience with English. She seemed particularly offended because Principal Long did not think she understood. She explained further,

I felt so bad that she said that in that way, she thought I hadn't understood, she said it in English and must've thought, she doesn't speak English and said it that way. And she kept looking [at me]. And since that time... I don't show up. My sons were less than a year, and since then, I didn't show up to school because of that, the way [Principal Long] treated me.

Mary's mother, Ms. Lucero also shared an experience where she suggested her child was treated differently because of race. She explained that she gave her youngest child, who also attends Maravilla, a \$5 dollar bill to purchase ice cream during lunch. When he asked for the ice cream in the lunch line, he was told that they did not have any, but he was not returned the \$5 dollar bill. Mary's mother said,

they think just because he's Hispanic and she's American they're going to discriminate against my son... [the cafeteria worker] didn't give him the ice cream...he's little he doesn't know, [the cafeteria worked figured] he won't even say anything... but [as a parent] one feels bad.

Despite this negative experience, Mary's mom did not visit the school for fear of retaliation. She went on to say that "[the cafeteria staff] might look at him [in a bad

way] or say something, not give him something to eat... I just left it like that.” Mary’s mother indicated that although she trusted that Ms. Estrella would help, she preferred just leaving the situation alone.

Summary

Parents are undoubtedly an important part of student’s development and academic success. Research indicates school, family, and community collaborations have positive effects on student academic success (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2003, 2005; Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001). In this chapter I first shared ways parents whose children attended Maravilla elementary school were able to contribute to their child’s schooling, in spite of being unable to contribute to their children’s English learning. At school, I found that the ESOL Parent Liaison created the strongest link between parents and the school because of the various cultural activities she developed for engaging the Spanish speaking parents. However, I also found that information about the ESOL program was missing at the school, district, and county level. Additionally, I found that albeit perhaps unintentional, prejudices about immigrant families, the Spanish language and racial tensions create exclusionary practices hindering ELL parent involvement. The next chapter will take a closer at students’ understandings of their ELL classification and experiences.

CHAPTER 8: EXPERIENCING ESOL: THE STUDENT POINT OF VIEW

In chapter 5, I focused on the macro policy shaping the education of ELLs in the state and at Maravilla. Next, in Chapter 6, I looked at the instruction provided for ELLs and the factors that shape the Teacher's experiences teaching ELLs within one of the student's most important micro systems the school. Then in Chapter 7, I focused on the current and former ELL's parent schooling support at home, another important micro system. Additionally I look at the meso relationship between home and school. In this chapter, I focus on student's ELL experiences, particularly about their perceptions about their ELL classification and ESOL supports.

Student Overview

In total I interviewed nine students for this study at Maravilla. The student sample included students who came from households who speak a language other than English at home, and/or who were initially placed in ESOL when enrolling in school. Each of the students enrolled in school at various points as noted in an earlier chapter. All students indicated being assessed for English proficiency. All students either shared themselves that they were in ESOL, or in one instance a mother indicated that her daughter had been placed in ESOL. Two methods of ESOL instruction seemed prevalent across the four schools (Maravilla, Chalate, Zorrillo, Tulipan) within the Mid-Atlantic state; one student participated in a push in approach for instruction where the teacher came to the classroom, and all the eight others participated in a pull out method of instruction where students received ESOL instruction in a setting outside of their regular classroom. Three of the eight pull out students (former and current ELLs) indicated that Spanish was used in their ESOL

instruction either through material such as bilingual books, the language spoken during parts of the lesson or through class activities such as translating from Spanish to English. Seven of the nine students had an ELL classification since kindergarten. Students also had different perceptions of their current or former ELL classification. Sentiments about the ELL experience range from two who were confident and had exited, two who were confident despite continued ELL classification, two who were content with ESOL placement and three students who had strong feelings against their ELL classification.

Only three ESOL students indicated participating in the after school program or summer school during their fourth grade year; all three indicated that the services were not necessarily helpful. Two students indicated that they were not eligible for the additional ESOL support; two indicated that they did not use the services even though they may have been recommended for the services.

Some students reported receiving support at school and/or at home. At school six students indicated support from current or former teachers, two students mentioned the ESOL Parent Liaison, and one indicated the school principal. Two students indicated that no one in particular helped them at Maravilla. At home, all students indicated that their parents supported them to some degree; four students mentioned that siblings helped. Additionally, two students indicated family members (cousins, sister in laws, aunts) helped them with their language if needed. One student indicated that a lady who was living with her family in their apartment also helped her with school.

Students expressed there was a lot of interest for learning Spanish further even

though many had limited Spanish fluency. Two of nine students taught themselves how to read in Spanish using El Silabario. The remaining seven expressed an interest in preserving or learning Spanish further in the future. Two students indicated that Spanish was not valued at Maravilla. According to two of the students, religious education during their fourth grade year seemed significant for their development in Spanish. Both of the former ELLs exited ESOL placement at the second grade, have Advanced levels in Spanish, and both were recommended for and placed in the Gifted and Talented program. One of the students, however, was withdrawn from the G/T program by her fourth grade teacher. Despite their ELL classification, all three boys appeared to be more confident about their English and schooling in comparison to the female ELLs.

Pepé: Honor Roll Student and Recurring ELL

Pepé was the only ELL classified participant that did not have a linear ESOL path from K through the fourth grade. Pepé shared that an ESOL teacher would come into his classroom from kindergarten through first grade to provide ESOL instruction. However, in the second grade, Pepé indicated that he received limited to no ESOL services. Pepé's ESOL instruction resumed when he was in the third grade. In the fourth grade, Ms. Simms became Pepé's ESOL teacher and he began to be pulled out of class. According to the class schedule Ms. Simms provided in November, Pepé was not expected to attend ESOL instruction for the 2010-2011 academic year. Thus, he only attended ESOL periodically. Pepé's mother also believed that Pepé had exited the program. Despite his score and his mother's beliefs, Pepé mentioned that when the ESOL teacher paged the ESOL students to come over to her classroom, he was

one of the students she listed in the announcement.

In the ESOL classroom Pepé said that he “read[s] books, play[s] silent bingo and other stuff...like read a book, and do a [state assessment writing practice].” When asked, Pepé indicated that ESOL helps him because “[ESOL] makes me understand better the story... and it gets me more smart.” However, when asked if he liked being in ESOL or if he would rather not be in ESOL later on in the interview, Pepé divulged his dislike for the placement. He described the preferred not being in that class, “because I miss class and then I don’t get things done.”

Pepé revealed some of the difficulties he faced learning two languages simultaneously. He was “reading [in English] and reading in Spanish.” He described he had difficulty learning both Spanish and English because he had difficulty retaining vocabulary: “I couldn’t get all the words in my mind.” Pepé was not proficient in Spanish. In spite of this challenge to learn both English and Spanish, his confidence in his ability to manage his other academic courses did not suffer.

Unlike other participants in this study with an ELL classification, Pepé was very confident and perceived he was already doing well academically. For instance he noted that the homework “it’s kind of easy” and insisted that he does not need any help to complete it at home. In addition he views his academic performance proudly boasting, shared that he’s doing well academically: “I’m already good, I’m already getting A’s and B’s... I get honor roll.” Consequently, Pepé did not plan to partake in the ESOL summer school program, nor did he take part in the after school program for additional support. At the time of the interview, Pepé was in Ms. Macken’s fourth grade class, and in Ms. Simms’s ESOL class. In school, Pepé liked his teachers and

viewed them in a positive light. He was able to articulate exactly how they encouraged him to do well. He said, “all of the teachers help me do well in school.” Some of the ways they help is through encouragement, for example, “they make me read a book and write what I read, like summarize it, then put in a [state assessment writing practice] and write it.”

At home, his mother seems to be the greatest support for Pepé. He indicated she helps him for example, when it’s time for field trips, she signs up to volunteer, or signs the permission forms so that he can attend. She encourages him to go to classes and he says that he obeys. She also encourages him to “get A’s” and to “read a little bit more.” Pepé’s mom also suggested various other ‘consejos’ she provides her son in order to encourage and motivate him to progress in school. For example, in addition to doing well in school she encourages him to learn both English and Spanish so he can find a lot of work if they decide to return to Mexico.

Despite his difficulty learning English and Spanish, Pepé expressed he would like to learn French and Chinese in the future. He also plans to go to a university because he wants to have a career in “something that involves fixing.”

Roger: “Pending Exit Status”: Classified ELL without ESOL Instruction

Roger was born in Oaxaca, Mexico and studied through the fourth grade but started over his early childhood education from kindergarten onwards when he arrived to the United States. He described his English learning experience at first as “hard but then it started to get easy.” In school he was initially placed in ESOL with Ms. Harris. He found ESOL to be helpful “because [the ESOL teachers] teach you how to speak English.” The ESOL activities included “games in English and

Spanish, and ...they read us books...they make us do homework.”

When recalling his experience with ESOL, Roger noted a decline in the amount of time he spent going to ESOL classes. He stated, this year, “I don’t go [to ESOL] that much...if you get the greatest level in English you can just go one day a week.” According to Roger’s performance on Ms. Simms’ language assessment report, Roger was still slightly below 80% across each of the four domains with the exception of speaking which was at 93%. Ms. Macken recommended that he stay in class rather than attend ESOL class. Still, Roger sometimes would go to Ms. Simms’s class, but it was primarily for “tests.”

Although Roger used to stay in the after school program, this year when he asked for the form to participate “they said I can’t because I’m on grade level.” When Roger did participate in the after school program, he said “it helped me with my homework, but nothing else.” Despite his obvious disappointment of not being able to participate, his educational expectations had clearly waned based on his experience with the program. By Roger’s response, it appears that he expected more from the after school program than just additional help doing his homework. During the interview with Roger’s mother, Señora Nohemí mentioned not receiving a letter of recommendation for the ESOL summer program. Since she works two jobs, cleaning houses and babysitting she was worried that Roger would stay home alone during much of the summer. After visiting their apartment, I understood her concern. Broken glass from beer bottles covered the ground creating a trail from where I parked my car to the side of the house; two young teens were “play” fighting shirtless in front of the building and the stairs reeked of alcohol and urine. Since Roger had an ELL

classification, I asked Ms. Simms who was the only person that would be teaching the ESOL portion of summer school if there was any possibility Roger could attend summer school. After, I explained to her his mother's concern, Ms. Simms provided him with a form for the summer program. A few days later however, Ms. Simms mentioned to me that because Roger did not return the form and that there were no more spaces available. I was unable to ask Roger why he did not return the form, but I suspect that the "ESOL" classification or Ms. Simms teaching the class may have had something to do with his disinterest.

When asked, Roger said he was supported both at school and at home, and that he too provided help at home. Roger was the only student to mention the school Principal as someone that he could go to speak with in case he had any school problems. However, Roger may have also mentioned Principal Long because he actually had problems at school in the past and she helped him by "telling my classmates to stop being mean or rude." At home, Roger shared that his brothers are one of his greatest supports, "they help me in everything." He indicated that the homework is sometimes a little hard, but his older brother and/or mother help him with the assignments. At the time of the interview, Roger's eldest brother was a high school student in 9th grade, and the second eldest was a middle school student in 7th grade. Roger recognizes that language seems to be one of the greatest barriers for his mother to help him with school. "It's hard for my mom 'cause she doesn't really know how to speak English." Roger references other avenues to help his mother learn English. Despite the inability of his current school to help his mom to help him," he noted that "another school can help... in the summer she goes to a church, and they

teach her English.” He too serves to translate between her and her employers, and sometimes when his older brothers are in trouble. Additionally, because Roger is familiar with the grading system in Mexico, he translates the equivalence of grades for his mother in terms of the scale used in Mexico.

In the future Roger plans to continue learning Spanish in middle or high school because “when I grow up, my words in Spanish are going to forget and they can help me.” He also told me that he hopes to be a teacher although he did not seem clear which grades or what he wanted to teach. He was aware that to become a teacher he would need to go to the university. However, the only information he shared he knew about college is “that it helps you more, [college] helps you how to be a teacher. They teach you.” Roger’s mother says he’s putting so much effort into his studies because he wants to “get a scholarship”

Mary the Resistant: The ELL Student Hoping to Exit ESOL

Mary was born in the United States to parents who migrated from Oaxaca, Mexico. She has been attending Maravilla since Kindergarten when she started school. Before starting school, Mary knew very little English. She indicated that “I didn’t really know [English] because I didn’t go to pre-k.” She remembers vividly her first visit to school with her dad. She remembers her shock when she saw lockers, which she had previously seen only on television, she told her father, “look daddy, it’s lockers.”

Mary’s first year in school appeared traumatic. She shared, “I was so scared.” She was matched with Anne a peer who at the time was in ESOL. Anne she told me “helped me... because she [spoke] Spanish and English.” Anne however could not

always be available. One time Mary shared that her teacher “told me to move my card, I didn’t know what she was saying.” Mary then began to cry, because “I always didn’t know what to do. I cried because I didn’t know what to do.” Mary now attributes Anne’s ability to help her was “because she went to pre-k and I didn’t.” Despite this disheartening experience in kindergarten, Mary proudly recalls a parent teacher conference in kindergarten where her teacher shared with her dad that “I was so smart.” Mary was placed in ESOL in kindergarten and continued with the same ESOL teacher through the first grade, Ms. Harris.

First grade appeared to be a very abnormal period in Mary’s schooling. Mary indicated that she was affected because of “stuff from the past,” and this affected her learning. Mary did not share what “stuff” she referred to, nonetheless, her parents shared had separated at least for one year before Mary started school. Mary shared that she sat in class and would often day dream, she “started to think like I was sleeping but with my eyes opened, and I didn’t pay attention...” Mary in fact questions “how I passed” the first grade. Mary indicated that the teacher recommended that she “try medicine” so that she could “memorize” but that her father refused. He said that she did not need medication.

By the second grade however, Mary reportedly regained focus, and “started to pay attention... I was fine.” She continued ESOL, in Ms. Murriquillo’s ESOL class. The following year, in third grade Mary also did well, in fact, during the Parent Teacher conference, her third grade teacher told her father that, “[she] just needed a little more help with math and that’s it.” Mary was extremely delighted. Ms. Simms became Mary’s ESOL teacher for third and fourth grade.

Mary self-disclosed early on during the interview that she was in ESOL. She noted that she would go to ESOL for about half an hour, but as noted in chapter 6, they often “don’t go [for ESOL instruction]...” When they do attend ESOL, they usually work from a book series: “Joshua T Bates... we have a little binder that has the activities and questions about the stories we read. Because this is a big book we haven’t finished it.” Previously students in ESOL would practice Reader’s Theater but “later on in the year... our reading benchmarks weren’t really that high so we started to read that book.” As Principal Long reported in a previous chapter, benchmarks are very important and this suggests that Ms. Simms was required to provide additional reading support.

Mary responded vaguely, on whether or not ESOL was helping her. For instance she said, “we only have a half hour and that’s little time, we don’t get to do much.” It appeared to me that was Mary’s polite way of saying that the ESOL program was not helping her much given the little time for instruction. Mary also indicated that “everybody” in her ESOL group did not like attending that class because “sometimes it’s boring.” Mary noted that Ms. Simms is aware of the student’s dislike for her class. Mary expressed that “[Ms. Simms] agrees with that, [she says] that ‘if you can pass, you can get out of this dumb group.’” Mary did not indicate that she disliked Ms. Simms; however, she did seem to dismiss Ms. Simms’s evaluation of her performance on the LAS links assessment. Mary stated, “I think I passed ESOL, well for Ms. Simms, I didn’t pass her score, that’s her score. But the ESOL department has to get the *real* score.” She confidently disagreed with the teacher’s assessment with the exception of the “listening” domain because she

recognizes listening difficulties. Her listening score, 65% was indeed the lowest of all her scores on Ms. Simms's LAS performance evaluation for Mary, followed by a writing convention score of 75%, all other domains were above 80%.

Mary seemed to strongly dislike the ESOL class. She indicated "we get to do a lot of work, and she leaves us homework and that makes it more homework." The ESOL homework is a continuation of the worksheets from class. In a follow up interview she added that she would get in trouble "cause sometimes I didn't do my homework... sometimes I had to read the dictionary ... my back hurt a lot to write all the words... so I could find the definition." Mary's comments suggested that she saw little variety, value, or interest to do her ESOL homework assignments.

Mary appeared to have low self-esteem, and low motivation. She described herself as an 'F' or 'N' (Needs improvement) student. She described others however, particularly her younger brother as "really smart," she shared he went to pre-kindergarten, and stressed that he was "in Honor roll." Her placement in ESOL also seemed to encourage ridicule from peers. She expressed that "'cause the ones that are in ESOL, they get to do different stuff, and sometimes they laugh about you, 'cause you're in ESOL, and you do not know English, and sometimes they joke around and say 'ahhh ESOL students'." Although Mary assured me that "I really [didn't] care," about other people's jokes about her ESOL placement, her body language, looking down while yanking grass out of the ground, in a saddened tone communicated that in fact she did care, and was potentially bothered more than she let known about her ESOL placement. The isolation that Mary felt may in fact be contributing factors for her lax view about reading, ESOL, homework, and school in general.

I was able to follow up with Mary half way through her fifth grade year when she continued to attend Maravilla. At that time, she indicated that she was no longer receiving ESOL instruction but remained with an ELL classification. Instead of ESOL, she was enrolled in the Reading Triumphs program, a comprehensive intervention program reportedly designed to help “students reading two grade-levels below” (“Reading Triumphs”, paragraph 1, 2013). Mary sounded excited about her new class, she said, “Yes! It’s really nice,” she indicated that she likes that Ms. Jackson, “puts... words and you have to pronounce it, and we read stories, and sometimes we do activities, she puts up some word parts, and we have to beat her to say more faster than her, and to say it right...” Mary insisted that she was doing well in the class and meets with her almost every day for about 45 minutes. Once Mary “improve[s] [her] reading” Mary will then go back to ESOL. Mary indicated she wants to go back to Ms. Simms’s class, “so I can get over with ESOL!”

Mary perceived a great sense of exclusion both at school and in society as the daughter of immigrants. For example, she shared that in school, “the [students] that are in ESOL want to be with the ones that are not in ESOL.” As an ESOL student, Mary did not want to be segregated from her peers. In the Mid-Atlantic state, Mary seemed to feel an outsider because of her parent’s undocumented status. As a second generation Mexican American, she identified as American but also with her parent’s immigration status. Despite being a US born citizen herself she exclaimed, “sometimes, you admire people that are from here, that have a good life that they’re not immigrants, that their parents aren’t immigrants.” She indicated that although she “was proud to be from here too...they treat immigrants bad... and that’s my parents that they’re talking about.” She concluded that at times she would have preferred

having been born in Mexico.

In the future, Mary indicated that she wanted to continue learning Spanish. She mentioned that she wanted to be a professional singer. However, she also wanted go to college primarily because of her father's encouragement. Her father seemed to be the most academically involved in Mary's schooling; after our initial interview he was determined to learn more about the ESOL program and ask about Mary's ESOL placement. I do not know whether or not that resulted in Mary's additional reading support instead of ESOL placement in fifth grade. Unfortunately, after a follow up interview, Mary's mother shared that her husband had been deported one day after Mary's fifth grade graduation. Mary's mother also shared that because she became the head of household, she was unable to keep up with Mary's progress and was not sure if she had exited out of the ESOL placement.

Estela: The Second Generation ESOL Student

Unlike the other students participating in this study, Estela began school already speaking English. She shared that "in pre-k I used to only speak English," primarily because she does not know or really speak Spanish at home. She describes herself as shy, particularly with respect to speaking Spanish because "I don't feel like I talk it good." Although Estela did not seem to be confident about her Spanish, according to Estela, Ms. Barbara from her previous school "used to help [her] in both English and Spanish, so I really learned from her."

At Maravilla, Estela is classified ELL, and placed in ESOL. Estela finds that ESOL helps her particularly sounding out words that she does not know. These unknown words may appear when she is reading or trying to recall a word. Additionally she mentioned that

she struggles with longer words and spelling them correctly. Her view of the 4th grade is “it’s like kind of hard, because we have this big binder that has a lot of papers that we have to do for assignments.” If students do not finish the assignments, they continue them for homework. Estela mentioned that sometimes however she “comes to a question that I didn’t really get” but that she is not able to ask the teacher since she’s doing it for homework. It seems that Estela perceived that she needed additional strategies and support that ESOL is not providing.

Despite Estela’s expressions that ESOL helped her, for the most part Estela resented her ELL classification and ESOL placement. She shared that “sometimes I’m doing fun things in the classroom, and Ms. Simms like she needs to take us to ESOL, so I have to stop the fun things.” In addition to not perceiving ESOL as something fun, she also felt it hindered her learning in other classes. Estela noted that once it conflicted with a math lesson that she wanted to learn. She revealed that “when we learn new division, I don’t get to learn it real well because I get pulled out. And I want to learn like division.” Additionally, Estela too feels segregated from her peers. Estela explained that “I go to ESOL, and some people don’t, I don’t want to go to ESOL.” Lastly, she mentioned that she already perceives that her English is well, the [language] that I need more practice on is Spanish.”

Estela indicated that she shared with her mother her disinterest in the ESOL class, but nothing has been addressed. Señora Gladys, Estela’s mother said that Estela cried when she found out she would continue in ESOL the fifth grade year. Although she herself was an ESOL student, Señora Gladys, was unaware about the ESOL Exiting process. In the meantime, Estela’s frustration with her ESOL placement continues, as she expressed that “there’s some things that I do know and I get tired of keep on doing it again.”

Estela previously stayed for the after school program, the ESOL program's additional support, but stated that her mother has not been able to pick her up recently. Her mother mentioned Estela's waning enthusiasm to participate in the afterschool program by stating that Estela did not feel she needed to stay after school because they only offer homework help and she does that either way when she gets home. Also, despite the recommendation for Estela to participate in the summer program for ESOL students, Estela she was not planning to participate. Nonetheless, in the summer school program which she had been recommended to participate as an ESOL student. Although she was interested in the other summer classes, but she did not think that her mother really supported the idea.

In the future Estela plans to take Spanish in school, "because when people talk to me in Spanish, I really don't get what they're saying. So I want to learn more Spanish because, my friends they talk Spanish, so sometimes I don't get what they're saying." Her friends were the only ones she identified as individuals whom she can practice Spanish with. Ms. Laressa, her fourth grade teacher sometimes needs a translator and Estela indicated: "I wish I could translate to her." Unable to do so, she asked a friend, so that she can then relay the translation to Ms. Laressa.

Despite her own inability to help her fourth grade homeroom teacher, Estela identified all three of the fourth grade teachers as supportive because they taught her things she had not previously learned. In particular, she mentioned Ms. Estrella the ESOL Parent Liaison was also someone Estela mentioned as someone who could help her, and she referred to her as "the Spanish teacher." In contrast to teachers that help, Estela left the ESOL teacher off the list of supporters. She did not specifically identify Ms. Simms, the ESOL teacher, as one of her supports. In turn, Estela reported she had not shared her frustrations with the

ESOL class with Ms. Simms, particularly because she is “too shy.”

Estela expressed that language will play an important part in her future goals. She plans to go to college and aspires to be a bilingual doctor. She indicated that speaking English and Spanish could benefit both her and others because she would be able to translate to other doctors and their patients. I was unable to follow up with Estela on her progress but learned that she continued with Ms. Simms for ESOL during her last year at Maravilla.

Yasmin: The “I Don’t Tell No One” ELL

Yasmin initially attended pre-kindergarten briefly at Maravilla. However, her parents moved to another district within the county and as a result she did not attend school for the rest of the year. She attended kindergarten through the second grade at Chalate elementary school. Yasmin remembers both her previous school and teachers warmly. At Chalate, Yasmin seemed to enjoy several supports, particularly one teacher who she repeatedly said was “really strict” but “fun,” and who “from her strictness she really helped me in my English.” Yasmin said that this teacher contacted her mother because she felt Yasmin needed additional help after school. Yasmin stayed every weekday an additional hour with the teacher to address concerns with her “English, learning, writing, reading, and fluency.” Her teacher provided her and a peer with additional work. After school, Yasmin and her friend had access to a computer. When teachers had meetings, they gave them treats, and Yasmin said, “it was fun and we learned a lot.” Combined with additional work, Yasmin indicated that the teacher gave her feedback and had high expectations. For example, she described that at her old school, “[the teacher] starts checking [assignments], she called you, she made you do it, she didn’t care how much time it took.” Yasmin

repeated that her teacher, “she did fun things, but ... she was strict.” Additionally Yasmin felt more supported by her peers, specifically, more “Hispanic people she could hang out with.”

In contrast to her schooling experiences at Chalate Elementary school, Yasmin considered Maravilla to be “the opposite” in many ways. Yasmin began at Maravilla in the middle of the second grade. Although she had attended Maravilla for almost two years by the time of the interview, she recalled her experiences at Chalate much more fondly. For example, she indicated that she “used to love to go to art in [Chalate], but I don’t like art that much here [Maravilla].” She stressed that at Chalate, “you barely had substitutes” but Ms. Laressa her homeroom teacher had spent a significant portion of the school year on leave.

Yasmin had been placed in ESOL at Chalate. At that school Yasmin remembered being required daily to take home “little book bags” containing two books, one in Spanish, and one in English. She indicated that those book bags were available at Maravilla but they were not used as part of the ESOL program. When referring to ESOL at Chalate, Yasmin associated fun with ESOL “[they] did fun activities, and it was more fun in ESOL. Over there.”

At Maravilla, Yasmin confirmed what previous student mentioned, that ESOL materials and instruction were comprised of a binder focusing on the Joshua T Bates series. These binder activities Yasmin assured me would continue until the end of the school year. Yasmin sounded disappointed with the worksheets in her ESOL class; she noted that “it’s more fun reading books than doing a lot of pages.” When I asked Yasmin about the plays from the Reader’s Theater I observed and noted in a previous

chapter, she said that yes, they stopped using Reader's Theater. Yasmin indicated that some of the reasons for the discontinuation of Readers Theater included because "[ESOL students] got bored of that and it was hard performing." Instead of Reader's Theater, students preferred reading, so Ms. Simms "found [them] a good book to read, [for] every grade." However, it seems like all of the students have been working on the Joshua T Bates book series for some time.

Yasmin indicated other ESOL activities at Maravilla which included watching movies, and at the end of the school year, Ms. Simms gives students a bag full of goodies. When I asked Yasmin if she thought that the class helped her with English, she indicated "uhhh not a lot." When I asked Yasmin further about why she thought the ESOL instruction wasn't helpful, she indicated that "if it really helped me, I'd be learning new things every day." Although she acknowledges learning something, she shared that she "used to learn [more] in my old school...I read books, and then the teacher... she did all these kinds of fun activities to make us learn and stuff. But here we only have one activity that we have to do for the whole year, so that, that really doesn't help." That one activity Yasmin explained consisted of "reading the book, and doing pages about it, and that's the only thing [they] do."

Another reason she expressed dislike for her ESOL class is because of scheduling. She stressed that she is really behind in writing, which was confirmed by Ms. Simms's evaluation on the LAS Links assessment; she had a 45% for writing conventions (see Table 3). Yasmin blamed ESOL for being behind in class because ESOL takes up class time. In fact, the day of the interview she seemed appreciative that Ms. Simms would not be pulling the ESOL students out of class. Additionally,

not only did the ESOL class affect her writing class, but other classes she enjoys. She complained that sometimes she has half of the time in social studies, half of the time in chorus, or sometimes she misses science. Additionally, she too felt segregated from her peers. She indicated that in class they get “extra time, we get fun times, sometimes they take cupcakes or stuff and we don’t get to enjoy with our class, we have to eat it afterwards when everybody is packing up.” She stressed her disappointment further: “it’s... it’s not comfortable.”

Yasmin sounded really frustrated with her ESOL class and placement. One reason she rationalized that she should not be in ESOL is because she considers that her Spanish is “way worse” than her English. She compares herself to a classmate, one who she considers has similar English ability, but knows more Spanish than her, gets bad grades but is not placed in ESOL. I later discovered that the peer she refers to is Selena, another participant, but former ELL. Yasmin argued that despite Selena having bad grades, “[Selena] doesn’t have to be in ESOL, and I do.” Yasmin suggests that ESOL placement was given to her as a punishment regardless of her English ability. However, when I asked Yasmin if she shared her frustration in the ESOL program with anyone else, Yasmin responded visibly disheartened: “I don’t tell anyone...yeah, I have to take [ESOL].”

At Maravilla, Yasmin indicated that she sometimes stays for the after school tutoring. The day of the interview was one of those days. However, rather than obtaining the “homework” help that it was intended to provide, Yasmin was observing her fourth grade peers in the Ritmo Latin@ dance group (something that her religious mother would highly disapprove). While watching her peers dance to

Shakira's Waka Waka tune, Yasmin sat with her notebook on her lap, hurriedly completing portions of her homework assignment.

In addition to providing little to no support for ESOL students, Yasmin claimed that the staff during the after school program did not allow students to speak Spanish. She explained:

They don't like us to speak Spanish, and like one of my friends she doesn't know absolutely nothing in English...and she was asking me in Spanish how to tell a teacher something and then the teacher... was like 'it's time to speak English it's not time to speak Spanish.'

Yasmin appeared to be very disappointed that teachers had such a negative view of Spanish, not necessarily because of that specific experience, but because she connected it with her home life. She revealed that she feels

bad because ... that's the language that my parents speak, and all of my family speaks, and it's rude to be like that with other people's language, and it could offend a lot of people, because that's what people want to speak and that's what they want to... that's their language...

Unfortunately, Yasmin herself indicated that she's lost a lot of her Spanish since starting school. She shared:

First of all I started speaking Spanish as a little girl, but then I started school, now I started forgetting a lot of Spanish. And like, I don't know how to say the Spanish words like I used to, because I mess them up with English words, now I know more English and less Spanish.

At home, Yasmin's mother did not seem to be familiar about her daughter's

experience in the afterschool program. Yasmin's mother explained that she has been working hard for the last three years helping her daughter read Spanish through bible verses. Yasmin's mother also did not seem aware of Yasmin's ESOL placement. Yasmin however indicated that both her mother and father were very supportive as well as an older sister, and a visitor that was currently in town from Miami.

Although Yasmin was born in the United States, and her family has a legal documented status, she seemed very aware about immigration policies. For instance she indicated that was one of the ways her mother helped one of her siblings, by filling out a lot of papers so that he could get a legal permanent status:

My brother, just so that he could learn English and so he could have his college degrees, and stuff, [my mother] she did a lot of hard work so that he could get his residencia [permanent residence]. She did a lot of hard work to get that.

Additionally, she shared that she was aware of her friend's immigration story:

I have a friend, when she was coming underground, "la migra la agarro." And so, it's like this "carcel" that they have, there that immigration has, and they caught her, so she had to go to that, there's a "carcel," she spent a lot of time there, until these family members you have to pay so that they could get out of there. She came here, really skinny. She like barely forgot everything...

During the fourth grade Yasmin indicated that she definitely wanted to go to college but was unsure what profession she wanted to pursue. I attempted unsuccessfully to schedule a follow up visit with Yasmin during her fifth grade year. However, I did learn from another participant that she continued with an ELL

classification and ESOL placement.

Juan: The “Passed Up” Fourth Grader

Juan was born in the United States but was sent to El Salvador when he was only three years old to live with his grandmother. There he remained until he was eight years old. At the time of the interview he was eleven years old in the fourth grade. According to Juan’s mother, he went to first and second grade in El Salvador, however, “he didn’t know anything, as he couldn’t even speak... in English nor in Spanish.” When I asked him if he preferred to have the interview in Spanish or English, he indicated Spanish. He was the only one of the nine students I interviewed at that school to indicate such preference. Despite his request for the interview to be conducted in Spanish, soon into the interview I realized that Juan had very limited Spanish-speaking skills.

Juan shared that he lived in El Salvador though he remembers very little of the time he spent there. He recalled that his grandmother enrolled him in school, and that classes mainly consisted of “only drawing and reading in Spanish.” According to Juan, one reason that he did not learn in El Salvador was because “they didn’t teach him much, because he had to come here [to the United States]...” When he returned to the U.S., Juan attended Maravilla. With 25 days left to the end of the school year Juan was placed in second grade. Juan attributes his late start in second grade to be the main reason why he was not offered ESOL at that time. Instead he learned English in the second grade by being paired with a classmate who would translate for him. He also shared proudly that he taught the teacher Spanish and the teacher taught him English. Despite missing almost the entire second grade, he seemed surprised

himself that he “still passed” to the third grade

He began his ESOL placement in the third grade with Ms. Simms. He expressed that “yes” he enjoys the ESOL class, and likes to go “because [they] play games.” In his ESOL he also “learns books, reads, uhmmm many things.” Juan stressed that reading in Ms. Simms’s class helps him, that he considers reading to be easy, and enjoys it so much that he sometimes falls asleep reading books over the weekends. However, his responses regarding reading contradicted classroom observations and assessment results because he did not appear to be able to read very well. For example, in class, I observed his fourth grade teacher, Ms. Laressa reading to him the questions to an assessment. She also noted that he was reading at a second grade level and writing at a first grade level. Juan is one of the two students that seemed satisfied with their ESOL placement.

Juan did not mention any additional ESOL supports at school, but mentioned some support at home from his mother and brother. At home, Juan participates in a group geared on teaching youth according to Juan, on how to “become men,” where they talk about jobs and how to pay their bills. Although Juan was confident about both his Spanish and English, Juan’s mother expressed a lot of frustration that Juan does not learn Spanish in school. She revealed that Juan’s younger sister who was in second grade at the time could read Spanish better than Juan. However, she also noted that Juan’s older brother had repeated the first grade four times, and she does not know why Juan “turned out like the other males...whom don’t retain anything, like they don’t pay attention or anything.” Despite her frustrations with his lack of abilities in either language, she did not indicate going to school to ask why. At home,

Ms. Alejandra said that work prevents her from devoting a lot of time to each of her children. She says that she spends at least twenty minutes with each of them, but Juan often does not take advantage of the time. Nonetheless, Juan identifies his mother and an older brother as source of support at home.

Immigration was a topic severely affecting Juan's home life. During the interview Juan explained that his father wanted to return to El Salvador because his sixteen year old daughter was really sick. Unfortunately she passed away before he was able to go see her. The father debated on whether or not to go, because if he leaves "he won't be able to come back." Juan's mother disclosed that she did not have a legal status which is an additional reason why she works so much:

the only thing I think about is that if one day, by chance [I am] deported, I will take my children, Then, I, they won't study, they'd lose all of that, but as I tell them, I ask God that I am allowed to stay here until they are able to fend for themselves... I want to look for part time employment, I want to work, and go to school, so I ask God every day when I rise, and when I lay down to sleep. For God to help me, so that we can continue our struggle here and when they're able to defend themselves, may God do his will.

Juan's mother added that her family has already been affected by deportation. Her eldest son, the 23 year old that Juan mentioned during our interview as someone he considers as his support at home, would be deported soon.

As for the future, Juan is still trying to figure out what he would like to do professionally. He indicated that his father expressed an interest that he play soccer when he grows up. However, he did not think that would be the right job for him, or

what he wanted to do. When I asked his mother about what she wanted him to do, she also indicated she didn't know what he wanted to do, and indicated that she would accept whatever he chose. Although Juan has participated in an afterschool club he reported is "training him to be an adult" and exposing him to various jobs, he seemed to retain very little knowledge about his future career in that he expressed limited knowledge about possible professional fields. During the interview, Juan shared that he would be moving soon because his parents had separated. Juan expressed throughout our interview that he did not want to leave Maravilla Elementary School. Unfortunately, this reality became more pressing as it became very difficult for Juan's mother to pick him up. During the very last few days of school, Juan and his sisters were always the last of the students waiting to be picked up from school. The principal noticed that they were the only students waiting and had not been picked up. One day I observed the principal insist in calling their parent. The parent liaison, Ms. Estrella was unable to locate a working phone number for them, and when he noticed the principal was becoming more anxious and angry, Juan eventually "remembered" his number. It seemed clear then that Juan and his younger siblings would likely not return to Maravilla next year if they were not able to arrange more reliable transportation.

The following year I was unable to contact Juan's mother whose cell phone was disconnected. I learned from another student that he was not attending Maravilla. The fifth grade promised to be a difficult year for Juan. He would be starting at a new school, which he did not want, he would continue to have significant academic needs just when he was beginning to receive the reading accommodations from his teacher,

and he would have one less support at home, his brother.

Guadalupe: The Content ESOL Student and Self Taught Spanish Reader

Guadalupe was born in the United States. She went to Pre-kindergarten at Tulipan Elementary a school, another school close in proximity with a high Latino immigrant population in proximity to Maravilla. When she started school she did not know how to speak English and thought it was very difficult to learn. Guadalupe shared that “it was hard when I was in pre-k and kindergarten, ‘cause I, in pre-k, I didn’t really get my teacher, I couldn’t get English. So they teached me more, they teached me the words, we did fun activities, so that’s how I learned to speak in English.”

Guadalupe began kindergarten at Maravilla. Her difficulties learning English continued and she was placed in ESOL. Now in the fourth grade she mentioned she takes ESOL, and goes to class twice a week. In her ESOL class she indicated that she likes “projects, [and] research about like books.” Her ESOL class consists of six students. When I asked her to elaborate on other things that she liked or disliked about the class, Guadalupe stared at me blankly and stayed silent. Guadalupe is one of the two students who appear content or satisfied with their ESOL placement. Guadalupe also shared that she particularly liked Ms. Simms because she considers her funny.

Guadalupe indicated that she also participates in the after school program and the summer school program available as additional supports for ESOL students. Prior to our interview I observed that Guadalupe was in trouble with her teacher because she had not completed her homework. I asked her if she attended the program

yesterday. She revealed that she had attended but that she hadn't finished because they had spent the time outside. Guadalupe noted that on other days the after school program offers a variety of activities which included, going to the computer lab, getting on a computer reading program, participating in a math program, and playing fun games. However, she indicated that the activities themselves did not really help her academically with the exception of the computer reading program which she explained helped her with reading. When I asked her further she explained why she does not pick books in Spanish through the computer reading program. I probed further and she shared that her fourth grade teacher, Ms. Macken does not let her. She recounted one time when she had selected to read a book in Spanish, and Ms. Macken came by and told her that she had to read in English. Ms. Macken did not explain why she could not read in Spanish but Guadalupe shared that since then she has not attempted to read a book in Spanish at school again even after she was no longer in Ms. Macken's class. During my interview at the end of 4th grade, Guadalupe indicated that her reading preferences included reading comic books, "because I like bubbles, what people say in the stories." Most recently in fifth grade she prefers Dr. Seuss, picture books, and continues to enjoy comic books.

At home, her parents are her greatest support. She indicated that her father helps her by encouraging her to read 15 minutes each day. Even though she shared that both of her parents cannot read themselves in English or Spanish, they encouraged her to learn for herself. Guadalupe visibly enjoyed sharing about her Spanish abilities. She indicated that she learned to speak Spanish at home, and has been teaching herself how to read and write Spanish over the course of a year. When I

asked her to tell me how she was teaching herself Spanish, Guadalupe proudly shared, “I learned by myself. And uhm, it’s a book. It’s called a Silabario, where there [are] sentences about sound and that’s how I learned how to read and write in Spanish.” She explained that her father purchased the book for her. He encouraged her to teach herself Spanish “because when I’m big, like when I sign papers, and all that stuff, uhm I won’t have to ask someone if they can read it.” Her father encouraged her to be self-reliant, and to read and write well both in Spanish and English.

Guadalupe indicated that she has also been attending Saturday catechism classes in Spanish. In those classes, Guadalupe was asked to read, and she indicated that she had to read in Spanish. Guadalupe expressed happily that her mother was going to sign her up to do the “confirmación” which required additional classes in Spanish. In addition to her mom and dad, Guadalupe indicated that a lady that rents the apartment with her family also helps her with math.

As for Guadalupe’s future aspirations, Guadalupe initially indicated in fourth grade that she wanted to be an artist. By fifth grade Guadalupe also aspired to be a doctor (pediatrician), and/or a teacher to help kids in English. Guadalupe aspires to go to college but also expressed that financial costs would be a deterrent to pursuing that goal. She shared, “I don’t know if I’m going to go or not, you know how you have to pay for classes, and sometimes when you don’t pay I think you might have to go...” Although her fifth grade teacher has spoken to her about college she couldn’t remember what she told her. Most of the information she has learned about college has been through her own initiative “from the TV and computers”:

[I've learned] that you have to pay like \$200 something for the classes. And it's too much money for them to spend on classes 'cause then you don't have any more money. [If] you can't pay the classes...then you'll have to leave.

Guadalupe's reading preferences, combined with low teacher expectations, and financial doubts sound like her academic aspirations will indeed be difficult to pursue.

Nathalie: The “Highly Bilingual” and Gifted Former ELL

Nathalie attended kindergarten in El Salvador prior to migrating with her mother and sister to the U.S. Nathalie shared that her schooling experiences in El Salvador were similar to those she was having in the United States. Focusing on the similarities between schooling in El Salvador and the U.S., and she said “we had the same things that we do now.” In El Salvador, she indicated that “we ate like normally... We had lunch, we had to buy it. We had different food.... The lunch hour was like the recess time, you could do whatever you want.” She did not elaborate much on the actual classes or their content; however her responses suggested that she wanted me to understand that her schooling experiences in El Salvador were indeed comparable and transferable to those in the U.S. She did seem to forget that most schools in El Salvador at the elementary level are half days, and rotate via morning or afternoon shifts. However, Nathalie remembers mostly attending in the morning. By the end of her Kindergarten Nathalie reported she had learned how to speak and write in Spanish. She then legally migrated with her mother and sister to the United States.

In spite of her prior experiences with kindergarten, when she arrived to the U.S., she enrolled at Maravilla and was placed once again in kindergarten. Although she was now repeating kindergarten she did not seem to be resentful of the transition “[she] couldn't speak

English.” In kindergarten, most of her classmates she shared spoke Spanish and her teachers were very supportive. She said that, “if I didn’t know what to say in English, they’d help me, they’d translate it for me in Spanish, then I can say it better” If the teachers who were not native Spanish speakers were unable to translate the word, her Spanish speaking peers were there to help. Also she was assigned to Ms. Murriquillo as her ESOL teacher. She participated in ESOL kindergarten through the first grade for about a half hour. Nathalie recalls that Ms. Murriquillo spoke to her in Spanish sometimes and she would also give her assignments in both languages to help her. Ms. Murriquillo’s ESOL assignments she shared were similar to the Bi-literacy assessment I administered as part of the larger study. The assessment consisted of translating words, developing and correcting sentences in both English and Spanish. She stressed that now in the fourth grade she was not in ESOL anymore but recalls that “at first it was a little difficult.” Then she noted that it got “easier and easier and then then I could understand it better.” She shared confidently that she was so confident in her English abilities that “I was the only one that was raising my hand to tell the answer.” She exited ESOL by the second grade.

Nathalie was the only one of the nine participants who was placed and remained in the Gifted and Talented program. Nathalie indicated that Ms. Henry her third grade teacher initially recommended her for the program. Ms. Henry

told [her she] me that I was going to be in [gifted and talented], I never heard of it so I just thought it was going to be like a group that we do in the back but we had to go to a different class.

The Gifted and Talented (G/T) class is led by Ms. Jovan, a language arts teacher trained to work with gifted students. Principal Long indicated that Ms. Jovan was one of

Maravilla's prized teachers who is sought after for her work with gifted students. Nathalie's G/T group includes 10 students in total, who are pulled out of class for instruction. Nathalie shared, "we're advanced, [and] that's why we go to her room. We always read a book, if we finish a book, we have to read another one, we have to talk about it, write about it, write... she gives us writing journals for the weekend to write [about] what we did."

Nathalie seemed to be confident and seemed to enjoy the activities in her G/T placement. Nathalie pointed out further that her G/T class, "it's fun, we have, we learn different things, we learned the Jacob's ladder and stuff, yeah it's easy sometimes." Jacob's ladder is a Reading Comprehension Program targeting "reading comprehension skills in high-ability learners" which helps "students move from lower order, concrete thinking skills to higher order, critical thinking skills ("Jacob's Ladder," n.d., para. 1). This material was developed by the Center for Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary. In addition to reading, Ms. Jovan provided students with various opportunities to exchange work and ideas through group collaboration and by working with partners. Previously in addition to being pulled out for the reading portion, she was also pulled out for G/T math. This year however Ms. Jovan pushed in to Nathalie's math class.

During the summer, Nathalie's family moved and she began fifth grade at another school within the district. At her new school Nathalie continued her G/T classification, and noted several other teachers that she admired which she perceived also very supportive. At home, her mother continued to encourage Nathalie. Although her mother was aware that Nathalie had been placed and exited from ESOL, she was unaware that her daughter was placed in the G/T program. Nonetheless, she was also aware that her daughter's confident and self-driven attitudes lead her to excel academically. Moreover, she continued to

encourage her daughters to continue learning Spanish as well as English. This was also one of the reasons that she enrolled her also in in Spanish Catechism classes that year.

In the future, Nathalie indicated that her “dream [is] to go to college.” In college she shared that she wants to learn a lot. Although she confessed that she does not know what she wants to be yet when she grows up, she expressed an interest in pursuing medical school as well as becoming a model.

Selena: The Two World Navigator And Former ELL

Selena began her education at Maravilla in prekindergarten. Selena indicated that she only knew “a little bit” of English before starting school. She said that she learned because her mom taught her “a little bit,” and she also attributed learning English from Barney videos.

According to district data, Selena did not participate in ESOL during the third grade. However the data did not indicate any student’s ELL classification prior to third grade. In other words the report only noted students currently classified ELL or who have a Reclassified ELL status. Although Selena reported knowing “a little bit of English,” she does not remember being in ESOL but, she did seem to vaguely remember possible ESOL placement in Kindergarten. She remembered for example, “they always used to test me for English, because since my parents were from somewhere else they didn't think that I knew English that much.” Selena’s mother also indicated remembering that Selena may have been in ESOL through the second grade. As Ms. Simms indicated in a previous chapter, students are placed in ESOL if they come from homes where English is not the home language, it is therefore conceivable that Selena was placed in ESOL and she simply did not remember.

Selena expressed that since she only knew a little bit of English when she began her schooling, at her first the assessments were hard. Since acquiring more language skills she said that the reverse is true, “now that I'm in 4th grade, I know like a bit of Spanish but a lot of English.” Selena however reported learning to read using el Silabario that her mother purchased and also borrowing books from the Spanish book club.

Selena was one of a few selected students to participate in the G/T program last year. Consequently, Selena's grades dropped down from straight A's to A's and B's. Both Selena and her mother blamed Selena for her removal from the program. Selena shared that she was not told why she would not be in the program anymore. She remembers learning she was replaced when the G/T teacher failed to call her name and called another student instead. In the G/T program, Selena reflected there was “a lot of work to do... we had to write summaries, we used to use maps, like bubble maps and stuff... we had reading and math class. I was in both of them. In reading we used a lot of books, and in math, we used advanced math.” Despite the additional work, Selena seemed to enjoy the challenge.

Although Selena shared to benefit from previous school supports, this year it seemed like she was no longer receiving much of those supports. For example, she indicated that her teacher is "a little mean." Selena's mother was aware of this “incompatibility” between the teacher and her daughter. In fact, Selena attributed this relationship as a possible reason that she was no longer in the G/T program which she really enjoyed and provided her with a more challenging curriculum. Selena was also previously attending the afterschool program for homework support. Selena's mother

indicated that when she was in the program she would obtain straight A's but since she was no longer offered the after school program, her grades dropped.

When discussing her daughter's removal of the G/T program, Selena's mother explained that her daughter had complained to her several times. However, she recommended to Selena that she could win her teacher over by doing what her teacher says. In a follow up interview with Selena, I learned that the G/T program no longer existed at Maravilla, and that Ms. Jovan the former G/T instructor was now her fifth grade teacher. Selena was happy to have Ms. Jovan as her teacher because she felt that Ms. Jovan was different from other teachers in that she cared about student's progress. Selena explained that unlike other teachers, "if you're not doing well in [a particular] subject, she usually gives you homework based on the subject, or she talks to your parents about more help they can give you too." She enjoyed this about Ms. Jovan because "some of the other teachers, they just try to make you get the answer, but not really teach it to you." Her teacher's support was something she viewed as helping her to improve.

With respect to the future Selena has developing goals which include attending college. In fourth grade Selena indicated that "when I grow up I want to be like in charge, like a principal, so that I can have a class that shows like little kids how to speak Spanish." By fifth grade, she indicated that she wanted to be a lawyer, because "[she] would really want to help people with problems like crimes, or like when they just get blamed on something they didn't do... so that would be a little helpful for them."

Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth look at the ESOL experiences and trajectories for each of the students participating in the study. Despite previous schooling experiences outside of the U.S prior to enrolling at Maravilla, both students who had immigrated with years of schooling in their home countries were retained and had to start from kindergarten. Several students described what could be labeled as frustration and disappointment with their ESOL placement which resulted in sentiments of alienation. Some students were frustrated by the lack of challenging opportunities in their ESOL class to learn new things including their heritage language. I also introduced some of the factors that students indicated were important in their education. In particular, I asked students about whom they identified as supports both at school and at home. Many students identified a particular teacher, and their parent/s, siblings or extended family as people who are supportive. In the following chapter I will take a closer look at how the relationships across the various environments at Maravilla Elementary school shape student's educational trajectories and ELL experiences.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION, POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

I began this dissertation with a quote from *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), which notes:

[A]ny ability grouping or tracking system employed by a school system to deal with the special language skill needs of a national origin-minority group must be designed to meet such a language skill need as soon as possible and must not operate as an educational dead end of permanent track. (p.)

Today as the number of students classified as ELLs is increasing in U.S. schools and many continue along the path to become long-term English language learners, it is important to understand these students' language learning and schooling experiences. Much of the research on this issue is based on quantitative reports that document the number and demographics of students in ELL (Rebecca. Callahan, 2013; Gandara & Hopkins, 2010) and on the experiences of immigrant students at the middle- and high-school levels (Olsen, 1997; Stromquist, 2011; Guadalupe Valdes, 1998; Guadalupe. Valdes, 2001). My dissertation makes a contribution by presenting an in-depth qualitative account of the language learning and schooling experiences of U.S.-born students with an ELL classification. This research also includes the voices of ELL students' teachers and parents across school and home environments, which is also becoming of growing importance in the literature (Worthy, Rodriguez-Galindo, Assaf, Martinez, & Cuero, 2003). Moreover, the cases present an in-depth study of nine elementary students' experiences with an ELL classification at one school in a Mid-Atlantic state. In particular, the purpose of this study was to explore and understand the language learning and schooling experiences of children initially

classified ELL. My study therefore focuses on a single grade, fourth grade, and a single school, Maravilla Elementary School. The purpose of this case study was therefore to understand the language learning and schooling experiences of children initially classified ELL, attending the fourth grade at Maravilla Elementary School.

Three questions guided my research:

- 1) How do students originally who are classified ELL understand their English-learning experiences and schooling?
- 2) What school factors contributed to students' ELL classification/ESOL placement/maintenance?
- 3) How do home and school environment interaction influence students' language learning and schooling experiences?

To gain a better understanding of this research in the context of educational research literature, three frameworks were used for this research, (1) Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory, (2) social capital, and (3) funds of knowledge. Additionally, this research used a case-study methodology. I arrived to Maravilla Elementary school, the site for my study, through my participation in a larger research project. Consequently, prior to this specific research, I had invested a lot of time at Maravilla. My cases are fourth-grade students at this school, particularly students of Mexican or Salvadoran heritage who arrived to school from Spanish-speaking households. The students are therefore the main participants for this study and were recruited based on data collected through a larger study and through the support of the school's ESOL, fourth-grade homeroom teachers, and the parent liaison. In addition to the students, the students' parents, fourth-grade teachers, ESOL

teachers, the school's parent liaison, and the school's principal were also recruited for participation.

This chapter consists of three sections. In the following sections I first summarize my findings for my three research questions. I then revisit Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory, looking at the home and school microsystems and the interaction between the two (meso) as it relates to student's language-learning and schooling experiences. Lastly, I include implications for policy and practice as well as recommendations for future research.

Research Question 1

- 1) How do students who were originally classified ELL understand their English-language-learning experiences?

Students who were originally classified ELL had a variety of English-learning experiences and a spectrum of confidence levels about their abilities and placement. For example, Nathalie and Selena were the only two of the nine participants who had passed the ESOL placement test and who no longer had an ELL classification. In other words, they were the only two students able to exit ELL classification. Overall, both students were generally confident about their academic progress. They seemed to have favorable views of both the English and the Spanish language. Nathalie enrolled at Maravilla after attending kindergarten in El Salvador. Prior to enrollment at Maravilla, she was academically successful and knew how to speak, read, and write in Spanish. Much of her success may be attributed to her dual frame of reference, which motivates students being able to compare their performance to prior schooling, for example in their home countries (Ogbu, 1991; Suarez-Orozco, 1991; Valenzuela,

1999). Similarly, Selena, the only other “former ELL” student, was U.S.-born, yet taught herself how to read and write in Spanish. For both Selena and Nathalie, linguistic and academic success is based not only on learning English but learning Spanish as well. Whereas Selena did not recall her ESOL experiences, Nathalie said that she was quickly able to understand English. Nathalie revealed that her ESOL teacher, Ms. Murriquillo, often provided her with bilingual work during her ESOL instruction and that soon she was the only student answering most of the questions in class. Although these students did not receive formal bilingual instruction in school, these findings support literature suggesting that students who receive bilingual instruction have more positive attitudes about their academic abilities, about bilingualism, and about continuing their education, such as by attending college (Lambert and Cazabon, 1994; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2001).

Roger, Pepé, Guadalupe and Juan, four of the students who had not yet been able to test out of ESOL, expressed that they had favorable English-learning experiences at Maravilla. However, two of these students, Roger and Pepé, indicated that they received little to no ESOL instruction and instead remained in their fourth-grade class based on their fourth-grade teacher’s recommendation. Both students indicated that when they did attend their ESOL class, it was primarily for assessment purposes rather than ESOL instruction. Pepé, the student who had been receiving ESOL services intermittently since pre-kindergarten, indicated that he actually preferred not to attend ESOL because when he did, his fourth-grade classwork was negatively affected. Juan and Guadalupe were the other two students who were

confident about their schooling despite regularly receiving ESOL instruction. This inexplicable confidence is juxtaposed by not only their own lower expectations of themselves and their schooling but also by their ESOL teacher's assessment of their reading skills. As Ms. Murriquillo suggested, these students have settled for "mediocrity." For example, Guadalupe reported reading "Dr. Seuss" books, books with "bubbles" and "comics" in the fourth and fifth grade. Although it is preferable that Guadalupe read any book rather than not read at all, the low expectations ELL-classified students learn to have for themselves are problematic.

One reason that two of the students, Guadalupe and Juan, were confident despite their ELL classification is perhaps a result of social capital, or network gained from their ELL classification rather than as a result of the ESOL instruction. Guadalupe, for example indicated liking Ms. Simms because "she was funny." Guadalupe, who shared she had negative encounters with two other teachers at Maravilla, may perceive Ms. Simms, the ESOL teacher, as the closest network she has at school. Her interest in ESOL or confidence through her ELL classification did not stem from the knowledge acquired but rather by the perceived support or interest she felt from her ESOL teacher. Although Juan performed severely below grade level, he appeared confident about his reading and writing in both English and Spanish. Juan and Guadalupe both appeared content or satisfied with their ESOL placement and suffered from what is referred to in the literature as *counterfeit social capital*, the manifestation of low teacher expectations and limited academic content (Jussim & Harber, 2005; Ream, 2003; Thompson, 1998).

One of the confident ELL students, Roger, did not receive ESOL services yet

had remained with an ELL classification since kindergarten. He was one of two participants born outside of the United States, but the only one of the immigrant students with an ELL classification. Prior to arriving in the United States, he completed a fourth-grade education in Mexico, where he learned to read and write in Spanish and learned multiplication in math. However, upon arrival in the United States, he was placed in pre-kindergarten but advanced to kindergarten quickly. Roger, currently a fourth-grader, was just achieving the academic grade level he had previously attained in Mexico five years prior. He will also be starting fifth grade at the age of 12, and will potentially be graduating high school at the age of 19 years of age. Although Roger seemed confident about his academic progress and indicated a desire to pursue college to teach, research finds that immigrant and English learners who are held back are more likely to drop out of school (Oakes, 2008; Rumberger, 1995).

Although Pepé was confident because he makes the “honor roll,” it was fairly clear he does not fully understand that the honor roll in the ESOL track is not equivalent to honor roll in the Gifted and Talented G/T track, achieved by his former ELL peer Nathalie, for example,. While ELLs (at the intermediate level) are rehearsing the same scripts over and over and reviewing the same books and material that some students indicated they were bored with, Nathalie is in G/T, receiving curriculum that encourages students to read critically and try a variety of challenging activities. The prevalence of placing students into ESL tracks or stratification in schools is as prevalent in the literature for ELLs as it is for students of color (Attewell, 2001; Cicourel & Kituse, 1963; Lucas, 1999; Matute-Bianchi, 1991; Oakes,

2005, 2008; Valdés, 2001).

Three of the four “confident” ELL students continued their ELL classification the following year at Maravilla. Guadalupe, whom I interviewed for a follow-up interview, reported that Roger and Pepé were also in her ESOL class. Juan, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, moved and attends a different school. I was therefore unable to confirm whether or not he continues with an ELL classification. Since Juan was reading at the second-grade level at the end of his fourth-grade year, I presume that the difficulties in the reading and writing portions of any assessment may prevent his exit from ELL classification without additional supports for his particular needs. I was unable to follow up with all of the students during the fifth-grade year. I am uncertain about whether the ELL students with positive views about their placement remained as confident given their return back to the ESOL classroom in fifth grade.

The remaining three participants, Estela, Yasmin, and Mary, described their language-learning experience in a negative way. They expressed views of boredom with coursework that did not challenge them academically, scheduling conflicts with other courses, feeling segregated from non-ELL students and in general a great dislike toward their ESOL placement. Estela was the only one of the nine participants to indicate that she spoke English when she first began pre-kindergarten. However, she had been in ESOL just as long as if not longer than students who did not speak any English when entering school. Estela, Yasmin, and Mary each described frustrations with the ESOL classwork. They reported that it was boring, and that it was not useful because there were a lot of things they were learning that each of them

consistently shared they already knew. Yasmin indicated that her ESOL class also conflicted with her writing class. Writing was precisely the domain she needed to pass the LAS exam and exit ESOL placement. Estela indicated that ESOL has previously conflicted with her long-division lesson in math class, something she expressed she wanted to learn and that she obviously needs to learn. All three individually shared missing out on “fun” activities in the classroom and reported feeling segregated from their peers. The ESOL placement for the three students in brief was best expressed by Yasmin: “It’s not comfortable.”

Although the students shared with me their frustrations with their ESOL placement, students appeared hopeless about changing their ELL classification and exiting the program. Yasmin confessed in a disheartened tone, “I don’t tell no one ... I have to take it [ESOL].” Although Yasmin’s mother was aware that her youngest daughter was in ESOL, she was surprised when I asked her about Yasmin’s ESOL placement. Estela’s mother indicated that her daughter cried when she found out she would continue ESOL in fifth grade. However, up to that point when I conducted the interview, it did not seem that Estela’s mother had come to the school to ask about the exiting procedures. Mary, on the other hand, suggested that there was no need to tell anyone, as Ms. Simms already knew about the students’ dislike for the program. She indicated that students made it obvious that they did not like attending her class. Mary revealed that Ms. Simms’ response to students was agreement, and she encouraged them to “pass the dumb class.”

Estela, Yasmin, and Mary particularly seemed to lack self-confidence compared with the other ELLs and voiced their resentment towards the ESOL

program. According to Finn (1989), two distinct models predict high school dropout: frustration/self-esteem, and participation/identification. The first model suggests that schools themselves produce low self-esteem levels, mechanisms which result in behaviors nonconducive to learning (Finn, 1989). Students' frustration and self-esteem levels are therefore important to watch for because these students are already indicating such negative characteristics at such an early point in their educations, further supporting Bronfenbrenner's concept of alienation in schools.

In addition to not learning the English required to achieve English proficiency, the school was potentially subtracting children's heritage language through subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999). For example, Guadalupe shared that she was told she was not allowed to read books in Spanish at school. Yasmin's friend was told not to speak Spanish and was offended that her "parents' language" was not allowed in school. Other students reflected how when starting school they knew more Spanish than they did at the point of our interview. The students recognized the value of being bilingual and its value for communicating and helping others as well as for their future careers. One important finding is that although most of the students reported some loss in their first language, L1, students also reported striving to teach themselves Spanish. This was the case both for Selena and Guadalupe, both of Salvadoran heritage, who both shared that learning to read Spanish with "El Silabario." Other students were also acquiring more language support outside of the school, such as through Catechism classes.

This study focuses on the language-learning experiences of fourth-grade students initially classified as ELL at one school. Most of the research on English

learners focuses on 1) immigrant students and 2) students in middle or high school. This research therefore contributes to previous ELL research by including students' experiences in earlier parts of the long-term English language learner pathway. This study includes fourth grade at one school with the following characteristics: 1) seven U.S.-born students, 2) two immigrant students, 3) two students who exited ELL classification, and 4) seven students who continue with ELL classification. The students are all of Mexican or Salvadoran heritage. Given the growing number of ELLs in schools across the nation, and the high dropout rate particularly for learners acquiring English, this research suggests the urgency of addressing the needs of students on track to becoming long-term English learners.

Research Question 2

- 2) What school factors contributed to students' ELL classification/ESOL placement/maintenance?

Based on the in-depth analysis of ESOL policies and practices at Maravilla Elementary School, I can identify several factors that were found to contribute to students' classification, ESOL placement, and trajectory within the ELL classification. Several of these factors were previously discussed in chapter 5. However, in this section I will highlight some of the key findings. First, pre-kindergarten is optional within the Mid-Atlantic state and county, limited slots are available only at certain schools, and enrollment is available only during particular timeframes. Less than half of the participants, four of the nine, attended pre-kindergarten for an entire year. Policymakers have made attempts to enroll greater numbers of ELLs in preschool (Garcia & Frede, 2010, p. 5). However, this study

found that when students from homes where English is not spoken enroll in preschools, these students are not necessarily provided any specialized language instruction. An increase in pre-K among non-native English speakers is important particularly in communities such as Maravilla's that have established growing immigrant communities. Galindo (2010) found the importance of English proficiency at school entry has a high statistical significance and has an independent effect on achievement for students over time (Garcia & Frede, ed., 2010). This finding suggests that the earlier students obtain access to specialized language instruction, the more beneficial this will be for students. Nonetheless, the results of this dissertation suggest that the quality of language instruction matters in terms of building early positive language-learning experiences.

At Maravilla, ELL classification was first determined based on the Home Language Survey (HLS), and, at the time of the study, the LAS Links assessment. Findings from this study indicate that students' placement is dependent on the assessment used rather than on English-language proficiency. For example, students failed to exit ESOL placement because they had a low score on at least one of the four domains on the LAS assessment. Comparisons of student performance with the WMLS-R for English proficiency, however, suggest that students with an ESOL placement would have exited such ELL status in another state using a different assessment. These findings support research suggesting greater need to further study the validity of assessments used for ELL classification and placement, and for revisiting classification criteria (Abedi, 2008).

ESOL placement is further authorized via the parent letter of notification, yet

parents had little to no understanding of their children's ELL classification. For example, three of the seven parents in this study were aware of their children's ESOL placement. However, six of the seven parents with children classified ELL did not remember receiving the ESOL notification letter. This ambiguity suggests that parents may not have necessarily authorized for their children to receive ESOL instruction or, if they did sign, were not necessarily aware what they were signing. Romo and Falbo's (1996) study found similar results of Latino parents who had little understanding of written information they received yet were likely to accept placement into low-track coursework without fully understanding or questioning the school's offering. In addition to limited understanding about the letter and the ESOL instruction it offered, parents were unfamiliar with their children's ESOL progress. Furthermore, findings also revealed that parents were not provided an accurate account of their children's academic progress. Juan's mother, for example, was told that her son behaved well, but was not told that he was three grades below in reading and two grades below in writing.

The majority of the participating ESOL students at Maravilla have remained with an ELL classification since kindergarten. Three out of the four students who began their schooling in pre-kindergarten remained with an ESOL placement. Although Freeman and Freeman (2004) suggest that many students remain with an ESL placement because of interrupted schooling, neither parents nor students indicated a lapse in student enrollment, with the exception of one student. Juan was the only participant who would be classified as a student with interrupted formal education (SIFE) according to the NY State Department of Education's (1996)

definition because he functions more than two years below the fourth-grade level.

It is important to consider why the remaining six students continue to have an ELL classification. Findings suggest various school factors contribute to this long-term ELL placement. First, the school administration imposed new co-teaching expectations between ESOL and homeroom teachers that resulted in various programmatic challenges. Since ESOL and homeroom teachers had limited to no time for coordinating lessons, the consequence was often that ESOL teachers were relegated to walk around as teaching assistants, helping all students and not necessarily ELLs. By the time ESOL teachers reverted to pull-out instruction, students had missed a lot of ESOL instruction. Second, ESOL teachers at Maravilla are marginalized within schools. This finding confirms earlier research of marginalization of ESOL teachers in the literature (Brooks, Adams, & Morita-Mullaney, 2010). At Maravilla, ESOL teachers are required to wait to schedule their classes by accommodating all other school and class schedules. Also they do not necessarily have an established location to provide ESOL instruction, and location availability usually determines the length of ESOL instruction. ESOL teachers are required to support reading and homeroom teachers with lessons that replace ESOL instruction.

This study's findings report that the students' limited English instruction is shaped by the low status of the ESOL program, which results in limited to no ESOL instruction. For example, ESOL teachers indicated that there were instances when no instruction was provided because ELL students simply did not have any space in their schedules. In other cases, ESOL instruction was provided to some students for as

little as 30 minutes once every two weeks. Thomas and Collier (2002) found that ELLs who had attended schools where they were placed in mainstream classes but offered no services performed lowest in mathematics and reading and also had the highest dropout rate in comparison to students receiving structured English immersion, ESL, bilingual, or two-way immersion. However, this study's finding suggests that part of the reason students remain with a long-term ELL classification is potentially because they do not receive the services that they are expected to receive. Moreover, the students' reports and ESOL classroom observations further indicate a lack of quality in the ESOL instruction provided.

The school administration plays an important role in establishing an environment conducive to teaching and learning. At Maravilla, the principal demonstrated very little understanding and potential unwillingness to learn about the needs of the ELL population. She provided very little leadership and support for the ESOL staff to address the various programmatic concerns affecting their roles at Maravilla and the services offered to students. ESOL classroom observations were planned and assigned. For example, Ms. Simms was told when she would be observed and specifically what she needed to present for the lesson plan, regardless of what occurs in her usual day-to-day ESOL instruction. When Principal Long arrived for the ESOL observation, Ms. Simms stopped her regular class instruction to "present" the lesson plan the principal had requested for the observation. Thus the principal was not able to observe Ms. Simms' usual teaching practices in the ESOL classroom. In the homeroom classrooms, teachers complained of limited material, professional development, and resources. Principal Long suggested that computers

with software were in the classrooms particularly to serve ELLs. Observations confirmed that indeed computers were set up particularly for newcomer students. However, classroom observations showed that students sat at the computer for long periods with little additional support from teachers, even when they were experiencing technical problems.

Not surprisingly, one of the principal's main concerns was student performance on the state assessments and achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which included ELLs. Principal Long was proud that ELLs had performed well in the ELL category, but seemed very unconcerned that so many of the ESOL students had remained with an ELL classification for so many years. Principal Long's perception and responses contradicted my findings about the ELL students' demographics. She seemed to believe that many of the long-term ELLs were immigrant students, who spoke mostly Spanish at home and who had limited formal education prior to arriving to the United States. Most of the current ELLs, were U.S.-born, had negligible Spanish skills, and had received most or all of their education in the United States. Principal Long's pride in ELLs' performance on the state's assessment suggested lower expectations for ELLs and also demonstrated a gap in understanding current ELL students at Maravilla.

Principal Long reported that Maravilla practiced several keys to success, which resulted in the high ELL performance on state standardized assessments. However, the recommendations for success did not match my interviewees' responses and observations at Maravilla. One example of a successful practice the principal reported was small-group work. Small-group instruction is one of five

recommendations for effective literacy and EL instruction in elementary grades (Gersten, Baker, Shanahan, Linan-Thompson, Collins, & Scarcella, 2007). Although small groups can vary based on a number of factors across schools, a study found that smaller groups consisting of three to six students coupled with direct instruction had higher gains in comparison to groups ranging from six to 15 students (Kamps, Abbott, Greenwood, Arreaga-Mayer, Wills, Longstaff, Culpepper & Walton, 2007). In Juan's case, for example, Ms. Simms' class, which served the lowest ELL levels, was observed to have over 12 students. Although there are studies focusing on teachers, such as Gandara, Maxwell, and Driscoll (2005), that outline nine key findings about challenges reported by teachers of ELLs, more research and training are necessary to address the important role administrators have in addressing the needs of ELLs in schools.

Research Question 3

- 3) How do the home and school environmental interactions influence students' language-learning and schooling experiences?

At home, findings noted that parents had high aspirations for their children, regardless of parents' own educational histories. Parents indicated that they would support their children's future academic and professional pursuits. However, many parents were unable to help their children in "traditional" ways due to language barriers as well as parents' own formal education. Instead parents used their funds of knowledge to talk to their children about their cultural experiences and life experiences and provided various "consejos," or nurturing advice. Two parents also purchased a book sold in El Salvador for their children to teach themselves how to read in Spanish. These parents'

awareness and knowledge of culturally relevant material available in their home country provided their daughters the opportunity to learn how to read in Spanish. Students also recounted many ways their parents helped them, ranging from filling out forms to purchasing materials teachers recommended for their learning.

Parents had very little information and understanding about the ESOL programs. Several mothers indicated unawareness that their children were in ESOL, much less the specifics of the ESOL program or placement procedures. Parents also reported being disappointed with additional after-school and summer resources. Parents primarily complained about the after-school program. Their expectations were often unfulfilled; they hoped the children were staying after school to obtain the homework help they needed, yet students often arrived home without having completed assignments or with incorrect answers.

Parents faced several barriers to helping their children's language learning and schooling. Six mothers had less than a sixth-grade education, one had finished high school, and one had attended some college in the country of origin. Only one of the mothers had attended school in the United States. She attended through the 10th grade and dropped out. She was placed in ESOL herself, yet did not fully understand the ELL placement or exiting process. Despite several mothers working more than one job, they were still able to make significant sacrifices for their children's schooling.

At Maravilla, one of the driving forces for parent engagement was Ms. Estrella, the parent liaison, who was instrumental in involving parents. Her role is critical for parents but somewhat overwhelming because of the lack of support from other colleagues. This role of "martyr" for the parent liaison has been documented in

the literature (Brooks, Adams, & Morita-Mullaney, 2010). Brooks et al. (2010) refer to ESL teachers as the “go-to” people to address the needs of ESL populations. Rather than attempting to address the needs of these students or parents themselves, other staff members pass it on to the ESL teacher without second thought. For example, the principal would show up and greet the Spanish-speaking parents. However, rather than staying to support her staff providing the activity, she would leave promptly after her welcome greeting. Consequently, the parent liaison became instrumental in getting mothers to participate in cultural activities and the reading program and to support their daughters in the dance club, which brought parents to school to watch their daughters’ dance performances. However, the parent liaison provided little explicit information about the ESOL program. The district and county also provided little information about ESOL during events, even when specifically addressing the needs of Hispanic students.

The school administrator wanted ELL parents to be involved in more proactive ways, yet the parents did not feel welcome at the school. The principal reported that Hispanic parents needed to advocate for themselves. However, the school did not provide an inclusive environment for parents to participate. For example, the principal complained that her office staff felt disrespected by the Spanish-speaking parents who would walk right in without greeting and ask for a Spanish speaker. The principal also felt that one workshop on culturally sensitive issues particularly dealing with immigration was sufficient. However, the Spanish-speaking staff at Maravilla in particular reported that there was a greater need to go beyond simple tolerance and acceptance for the growing Hispanic immigrant

community.

Many parents mentioned that their involvement was limited due to language. They noted that they would not attend many events because they were often in English. In addition, several mothers shared growing tensions between the school staff and the Hispanic mothers and children. Mothers shared child-care concerns during events and feelings that their children were being discriminated against. Growing anti-immigrant sentiments across the nation created additional barriers. Many of the mothers without documented status were unable to obtain the state license or a state-issued identification required to visit the school. Instead, mothers would wave down the parent liaison to go outside to meet with Ms. Estrella. The tenuous home-school relationship created few opportunities for parents to learn about their children's ELL classification, ESOL placement, or the exiting process.

Bronfenbrenner, Funds of Knowledge, and Social Capital

Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory suggests that human beings develop through their interactions across their environments. The relationships and interactions at home with their family, at school, and with their communities can therefore affect students' development. Bronfenbrenner theorizes that disconnects between two systems, especially between the home and school, result in detrimental effects for the child, including alienation. Alienation is defined by a "lack a sense of belonging, to feel cut off from family, friends, school, or work—the four worlds of childhood" (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, p. 430). For example, children suffering from alienation at home may not be able to adequately focus and perform well in school. Students suffering from alienation at school will have greater difficulties and are less

likely to be successful academically. The supports within each of the microsystems and across systems, such as between the home and school (mesosystem) may have potentially empowering or alienating effects on the child's development and consequently their performance in schools.

Micro home. Bronfenbrenner indicates that alienation can stem at home as a result of various social and financial evolutions, including the "employment of both parents outside the home" which results in "havoc in the home" (p. 430). He argues that work life and home life are often incompatible due to the macro policies that do not support such relationships. For example, a new parent often receives maternity leave from his/her place of employment at the time the child is born, yet this is usually available primarily to the mother, rather than father, and only for a limited amount of time. The result is that parents struggle to balance stressful work and home environments; the consequence is that children are raised in households with limited parenting roles.

Parental engagement in the academic lives of their children has a profoundly positive impact on their education (Ascher, 1988; Baker and Soden, 1998; Chavkin, 1993; Chavkin and Gonzalez, 1995; Epstein, 1996; Floyd, 1998; Petersen, 1989). This study found that the participating parents expressed commitment to help their children succeed academically. All of the parents expressed high hopes and aspirations for their children to do well academically, professionally and with life in general. However, these parents experienced several challenges hindering their engagement both at school and at home. Most mothers shared difficulties balancing multiple employments, across various locations, with varying modes of transportation

which also resulted in varying availability at home for their children. Although some mothers indicated that they purposefully attempted to arrange their work schedules so that they were available at home by the time their children arrived from school, this was not always possible. For example, one mother worked three jobs, two jobs at fast food restaurants and one at a department store. Other mothers cleaned houses and/or babysat and their schedules depended on their employer's need. The distance between employment sites or from home, and their source of transportation also influenced the time that parents were able to spend at home with their children. When I spoke to fathers on the phone about their child's participation and asked them for an interview, the fathers I spoke with indicated that they were unable to participate because of work. Some of the mothers also reported that their husbands had less time at home with their children because of their work schedule. A mother also indicated that her decision to reduce hours at work to become available at home created a financial burden on the household, resulting in her husband working more hours and spending less time at home enjoying his children.

Despite parents' limited time at home due to employment obligations, student participants did not express or suggest alienation at home during the interviews. For example, Juan's mother, who was separated from her husband at the time of the interview, specifically indicated that work, for her, is not an option, "[she] work[s] to provide nourishment" for her family of nine. She indicated that with her limited time resulting from work and with the number of children she has, she was only able to allocate approximately twenty minutes to each child. Although twenty minutes in a twenty-four hour day sounds like an almost insignificant amount of time to devote to

a child, it was practically all of the time she was able to devote balancing work and home obligations as a single mother. Nathalie's mother similarly indicated that her daughter has achieved much of her success, herself. The mother reported always rushing from one place to another and often had limited time to provide Nathalie and her sisters. She even provided an example where she was unable to get off of work to drive Nathalie to school, and shared Nathalie's disappointment, crying because she could not attend school that day. However, neither Juan, nor Nathalie (nor any of the other student participants) complained about their limited time with their parents at home during the interviews. Instead, Juan, for example, seemed to express appreciation for the actions his mother would take, which he perceived specifically to help him do better in school. Nathalie also did not complain about the limited time her mother was able to devote given her hectic work schedule. Rather than feeling alienated at home, these students appeared aware of their parents' limitations and acknowledged the various efforts they made to support their success.

Funds of knowledge at home. All students indicated positive views of their home experiences despite the various social, economic, and linguistic challenges affecting their immigrant parents. This finding suggests that the potential alienation that could be experienced by students across their home environment has been countered up to this point of the student's development by other factors, such as support at home. One of the concepts that helps explain the students' perceived support countering the alienating effect is considering parents' funds of knowledge. As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, funds of knowledge, refers to "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for

household or individual functioning and well-being” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133). Despite parents’ work and household schedules, formal education levels, and limited English abilities, parents provided a significant amount of support for their children, often more than the support they themselves realized they provided.

Moral support is one of the most prevalent ways that parents in this study reported participating and providing help to their children at home. This finding supports previous research on Mexican and Central American parent support (Auerbach, 2006). Many of the parent participants provided such support through ‘consejos,’ or advice motivating students to do well in school supporting previous studies (Auerbach, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Gándara, 1995; López, 2001; Valdés, 1996; Villanueva, 1996). Most mothers in this study similarly indicated spending time in conversation with their children as the greatest way that they provide support for their children’s schooling. These conversations included the transmission of parents’ funds of knowledge, such as telling their children about life and experiences in their country of origin, telling them about “the realities” of life in general, and engaging them in cultural traditions, such as religious participation. The mothers and father shared their funds of knowledge primarily as a way to encourage their children, particularly motivating them to do well in school.

The importance of preserving at home the Spanish language was expressed by all parent participants as something of considerable importance for their children. However, parents encouraged their children to speak, read, or write Spanish in different ways, if at all. Some parents, for example, assigned the responsibility that

their child learn and practice Spanish on the student themselves. Consequently, many of these parents also complained that their children were not able to speak Spanish properly; that they spoke primarily English with their siblings; or that it was frustrating for the parent to speak Spanish with the child and they reverted to speaking English. The loss of the heritage language is of important concern because for the student, it can potentially result in a loss in communication with their greatest ally and advocate, their parents. This troublesome loss in communication between immigrant parents and their children due to the loss of their first language has been repeatedly accounted for in the literature (Fillmore, 2000).

Some parents did provide supports at home for their children to maintain their language. Two US born students of Salvadoran heritage, for example, reported that they learned to read in Spanish because their parents had purchased *El Silabario*, a booklet that is used in El Salvador for beginning readers. Guadalupe, one of these students, came from a household where both of her parents had limited formal education and could not read in Spanish themselves. However, the parents' knowledge of culturally-relevant material available and used in their home country provided their daughter with the ability to learn how to read in Spanish here in the United States. Other mothers reported religious practices, such as reading or memorizing verses from the Bible or catechism classes, as ways that they encouraged their children to learn Spanish. Additionally, Nathalie's mother indicated that she would have her daughter create grocery lists and make notes at home to further support her preservation of Spanish. Religious teachings and practices have been previously reported as parent funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992). Parent's knowledge

of culturally relevant material, even despite their own limited formal education, suggests ways that parents' experiences in their home countries can provide support at home, as well as support their children's academic success. These funds should be explored as ways for further engagement at home and also in promoting student academic success.

Micro: School. Bronfenbrenner (1974) referred to schools as breeding grounds for student alienation. Recent studies have supported such claims noting that schools foster alienation in addition to academic disengagement (Anderman and Maehr, 1994; Bryk and Schneider, 2002; Furrer and Skinner, 2003; Goodenow, 1993; Johnson, 2009). Maravilla Elementary School is a public school in a Mid-Atlantic State serving a low income and growing immigrant population. The school offers a variety of services targeting students' academic successes from the pre-kindergarten through the fifth grade. The school's team includes classroom teachers, administrators, and additional support staff with a diverse range of specialties and experiences. Additionally, there are various programs, clubs, and services that are available for students throughout the day as well as before and after school. Some of the school offerings, specifically for student participants, included, but were not limited to: the ESOL program, ESOL teachers, Ritmo Latin@ dance group, after school homework club, and a Spanish book club.

Seven of the nine participants remained with an ELL classification through the fourth grade and were assigned ESOL services during the day and afterschool homework support also at Maravilla. Bronfenbrenner's theory posits that students' development is shaped by the interactions they have with individuals in their

respective environments. It is therefore important to consider the perceptions and supports experienced by classroom and ESOL teachers who interact with ELLs regularly. For instance, all three of the classroom teachers reported having very little training in their education programs, specifically addressing the needs of ELLs. The two teachers with ELLs in their classroom indicated that they do not have adequate support from the ESOL teachers, nor from the school administrator to address ELL's needs—particularly the newcomers. When administration required the classroom and ESOL teachers to co-teach, they were not provided mutual planning time to prepare for their collaboration, nor a clear explanation of the expectations for such collaboration in addressing ELL's needs. ESOL teachers, on the other hand, complained that fellow teachers, and the administrators in particular, attributed little value to the ESOL services they provided the students. ESOL teachers did not only have trouble arranging their ESOL schedules, but there was limited space for ESOL instruction as well. ESOL teachers also reported having limited to no expectations for providing “ESOL” services, but rather, were required to “assist” reading specialists. Additionally, administrators provided limited to no feedback for the ESOL services they provided. The lack of preparation for classroom teachers to address the needs of ELLs, and the devalued rank for ESOL services and teachers supports notions that schools are indeed breeding grounds for alienation; and in this case, for teachers. These negative experiences for teachers obviously impact their interactions with students.

The exclusionary environment experienced by teachers addressing ELLs also influenced the language learning and schooling experiences of some of the student

participants. Several ELL students who attended ESOL services complained that they did not like the class, and one student perceived that even the teacher described student's ESOL placement in a "dumb class." Students who particularly felt that they did not belong in ESOL also shared a sense of helplessness and isolation. The students felt that there was nothing that could be done about such placement, and that there was no one they could turn to for help.

Students who attended the after school homework program also had negative views of their experience. Not only did students report not obtaining the homework support that they were expected to receive, but students also reported that they were told they could neither speak Spanish nor select books in Spanish to read. Therefore, although Maravilla appeared to offer students various supports in personnel and services, ELL students in particular did not seem to share positive experiences with such services. These negative experiences presented examples of how schools can, in fact, serve as breeding grounds for alienation as suggested by Bronfenbrenner.

Meso: Home-school. The importance of parent engagement has been discussed in previous chapters and in the previous section. The parent liaison was instrumental in attempting to engage parents, despite their hectic work schedules, limited formal education histories, language barriers, and mixed immigration statuses, among other factors affecting the immigrant community surrounding Maravilla. Ms. Estrella nearly singlehandedly served half of the school's population, from assisting families in filling out lunch forms, coordinating a Reading is Fun program, and hosting a number of cultural events and activities to translating report cards quarterly. She also facilitated the Spanish Book Club and the Ritmo Latin@ dance group.

Parents, therefore, often noted Ms. Estrella as their key point of contact at the school.

However, similar to the other staff working with Latina/o children, Ms. Estrella also expressed feelings of alienation within the school. She complained of receiving little support, particularly from administration. Additionally, although Ms. Estrella was asked to provide training to teachers and staff about serving students from immigrant households, she perceived the effects of the workshop to be short-lived at Maravilla. In most instances, she or Ms. Murriquillo were the only staff who would be contacted to assist Spanish speaking families.

The limited willingness by school staff to interact with immigrant parents was apparent during the interview with Principal Long. For example, Principal Long indicated that the following school year it would be necessary to train Spanish-speaking parents to greet the staff in English when visiting the school because her staff was getting offended by parents speaking to them in Spanish. A disconnect between Principal Long and the families was more apparent when discussing the state issued identification requirement when visiting the school. She indicated she had no knowledge that undocumented immigrant parents were ineligible to obtain a state issued license or identification card. It did not seem, however, that Ms. Estrella had shared with her that parents would sometimes flag her outside of the school in order to talk with her because they did not feel that they had the documentation necessary.

Principal Long seemed to also be disconnected from the lives and experiences of some of her students, ELLs in particular. For example, she shared that she told students that she did not want to hear about their or their parents' immigration stories because she had attended a workshop and read a book about immigrant youth.

Additionally, although Principal Long indicated she knew all of her students by name, she did not seem aware that her ELL student population was mostly U.S.-born and primarily spoke English at home. During the course of the interview she indicated that current ELLs were immigrants, had limited formal schooling and primarily spoke Spanish at home. Principal Long indicated that ELLs did warrant greater resources, particularly when first enrolling in schools; however, she also shared that such resources would only be attained through parent advocacy. She admitted that this would therefore be practically unattainable given the linguistic, cultural, and legal challenges afflicting some of the families.

Parents reported interest in their children's academic success, but they also expressed numerous barriers for their involvement in schools. Among the barriers, parents included primarily language, transportation, and child care. Parents indicated that they would not attend the school events because they were not always provided in Spanish. They, therefore, would not go because they did not consider it beneficial if they did not understand the scope of the presentations. Workshops, presentations, or meetings were also sometimes held at other schools within the county which required transportation and additional time to commute. This was often problematic for parents who relied on public transportation, whose work schedules were inflexible and made it difficult to catch a shuttle, and/or who had additional children requiring meals to be prepared or childcare. Childcare was also a concern for events held at Maravilla. One of the mothers indicated that she was only partially able to attend her daughter's kindergarten graduation because there was no childcare at the school. Although the mother was comfortable with her newborn twins present at the

graduation, she noticed that the principal seemed disapproving when she saw her children. The mother reported watching her daughter's graduation from the door to avoid any inconvenience. Lastly, several parents noted other challenges which were intertwined with discrimination and/or racial tensions present at the school between the Hispanic population and African American staff and leadership. For example, a parent expressed feeling unwelcome by the principal who did not say hello when he addressed her. Another mother shared that her son was discriminated against when purchasing ice cream in the cafeteria because he was Latino. Parents attributed these examples as reasons that deterred them from attending school functions. This study's findings resonated with other studies which found liaisons of critical importance for parent inclusion and similarities in barriers for parent involvement (Zoppi and MacDonald, 2007).

Macro: Title III and school. Students implementation in this study were selected based on three criteria: 1) they were in fourth grade during the 2010-2011 academic year, 2) the student was initially classified as ELL when first enrolled in school, and 3) the student is of Salvadoran or Mexican heritage. Nine students were originally classified as ELL, most of whom have been enrolled in school since prekindergarten or kindergarten within schools in the US, and within the Mid-Atlantic state. Two of the students are first generation immigrants, and both had completed some school in their respective countries. Of the nine student participants, two have exited the ELL classification by the second grade. One of the students that exited was one of the two immigrant students. Six of the seven students remaining in ESOL were born in the United States, yet two of the students had spent at least a year of their

childhood in their country of origin. Despite most students attempting to test out of the ELL classification for approximately six times by the end of the fourth grade, the majority of the students continued with an ELL classification beyond the fourth grade.

Students received ESOL services as their main preparation for the LAS assessment, the state-adopted assessment which determined when students could exit the ELL classification. However, a number of macro and micro (school) factors resulted in students receiving limited, inconsistent, or no ESOL instruction. The quality of ESOL instruction was also limited and is not necessarily aligned with the LAS assessment. Gersten, Baker, Shanahan, Linan-Thompson, Collins and Scarcella (2007), reported five recommendations for effective literacy and EL instruction in the elementary grades. These recommendations included 1) screening students for reading problems and monitoring their progress, 2) providing intensive small-group reading interventions, 3) providing extensive and varied vocabulary instruction, 4) developing academic English, and 5) scheduling regular peer-assisted opportunities. The fourth grade ESOL lessons observed did not fully represent any of the recommendations. Students' reflections of their ESOL work also did not support the recommendations reflected by the research. Instead, students reported completing worksheets while reading one book for most of the second half of the academic year. Mary also reported looking up definitions for long list of words in the dictionary "until her back hurt." According to some best practices available, given the Common Core requirements, among the first ten things to avoid for teaching vocabulary in any content area is to "have students look up lists of words in a dictionary..." (10

principles for Effective vocabulary instruction, 2013). Students also complained that while they were in ESOL, they missed portions of classes, such as writing—which could have potentially helped prepare them to exit the LAS assessment as it is one of the four domains students must pass to exit their classification.

The interaction, or lack thereof, between the selected state assessment, class instruction, and inconsistency of services provided to ELL student is a macro factor shaping the Long Term English language learner track.

Macro: Immigration.

A macro force that played a significant role across all environments was immigration. The majority of the students were U.S. born, thereby U.S. Citizens. However, all of the parents were first generation immigrants, with the exception of one who was 1.5 generation and arrived as a child and attended most of her schooling in the US. All ten interviewed mothers and fathers were born either in El Salvador or Mexico; six of these parents remained with an undocumented immigration status. One of the two immigrant fourth-grade-student participants also had an undocumented immigration status.

Students with a mixed-status family were particularly affected socially and/or academically by their immigration status. Roger, the only undocumented student participant, indicated that he was studying and doing well academically because he wanted to get a scholarship to go to college. His mother also indicated that she tells him and his siblings who were in high school at the time, that she expects them to stay out of trouble so that they will not be deported. Although Juan was born in the United States, he, too, was affected by the current immigration policies. Juan's oldest

brother, who he mentioned during the interview, was deported to El Salvador.

Additionally, Juan shared that his sister had passed away in El Salvador and that his father was torn between traveling back to El Salvador and not being able to come back to the United States; or staying in the United States and not seeing his daughter for the last time.

Mary is perhaps the student whose schooling was most affected by immigration, despite her own U.S. citizen status. Mary's father was deported four months after my follow up interview with Mary. Based on the first interview, I learned that her father was the person that was most involved in Mary's education and a strong advocate for Mary. During our initial interview he seemed to ask a number of questions about the program. I encouraged him to speak with his daughter and that may have been the reason that Mary was no longer receiving ESOL services in fifth grade; but, rather, a Reading Intervention that she expected would help her test out of the ELL classification. Since his deportation, Mary's mother shared that she has had to become the primary earner, and with an undocumented immigration status of her own, she has faced several challenges. As a result of the added financial responsibility, she indicated that she did not have time to go to the schools to see how her children were doing academically. Mary's case is a troubling one because she already demonstrated signs of alienation during the initial interview. She expressed negative views about her place in society as the daughter of undocumented immigrants and even noted that sometimes she wished she had been born in Mexico out of frustration. She also shared negative feelings about her placement in ESOL, because she felt segregated from her peers. This case clearly reflects how interaction

across all environments shapes students' experiences and development. According to a recent report, one in five children whose parent had been captured in a raid had a difficult time keeping up academically after an immigration raid; they attained one year less of education than those with documented parents; they suffered from poorer health; are more likely to suffer from aggression, anxiety, and withdrawal; experience higher rates of poverty; and have less access to nutrition (Satinsky, Hu, Heller and Farhang, 2013).

Yasmin was the first in the family to be born in the United States. Her parents had arrived with a documented legal immigration status. However, her brothers and sisters remained in El Salvador. Yasmin, therefore, seemed very knowledgeable about the lengthy paperwork that needed to be filed in order to reunite her family in the United States. Her middle school-aged brother also seemed to be having a difficult time adjusting to a new environment, which her mother shared, was affecting the family at home.

Parents reporting an undocumented status expressed social challenges and economic hardships. However, they did not necessarily believe their undocumented status was an obstacle for being involved in the school. For example, half of the parents with an undocumented status preferred to be interviewed at the school. They did not report having problems visiting the school or supplying an identification card. However, they did not seem to be actively engaged in the schools and this may be in part because of the economic hardships that their families experience, which requires them to have multiple jobs.

Policy Recommendation

Although this qualitative study by its very nature focused on a small sample of children at a single primary school; the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the school and the district in which the research was conducted are fairly typical of Mid-Atlantic state schools. Further, the school and the district I focused on were following statewide Title III policies. These conditions enabled me to draw some conclusions and recommendations that might extend to other settings. This study's findings provide a contemporary understanding about the schooling and language-learning experiences of students who come from Spanish speaking households and who were initially classified ELL, and in most cases have remained with such a classification. It explores the various factors which affect their home and school environments and the interactions across such environments. Based on the study's findings, I make the following recommendations:

- 1) There needs to be accountability at the federal level specifically addressing ELLs' linguistic placement, classification, progress, and exit. One example includes the use of an assessment and ESOL Curriculum across all states. Although flexibility is warranted, given the diverse linguistic needs, there should be far greater alignment between the ESOL instruction, assessments, monitoring progress and exit.

- 2) All teachers—ESOL and mainstream teachers alike—should receive the adequate training, resources, and schedule availability to provide academic English instruction. This training requires Colleges of Education to provide more courses related to ELLs and their needs, given the growing population for both teachers and administrators. This may also require hiring more ESOL/Bilingual teachers.

3) There needs to be more transparency and accountability for providing parents with accurate information about the ELL classification, ESOL program and services available for students with an ELL classification.

4) Students (and their parents) should be able to monitor the student's progress as an ELL in their ESOL placement. They should receive an individualized language learning plan informing them of the specific need that they have, and a plan to address those needs. Students should be provided with the tools to monitor their progress.

5) Expanding ESOL/Bilingual programs to include prekindergarten or head start. Students who need linguistic support should begin receiving language services when they first enroll in school, including pre-kindergarten, rather than waiting until they enroll for their kindergarten year.

6) Students should be actively encouraged to maintain their heritage language. Before/After school programs addressing culture or heritage language could help students to develop a stronger foundation in their first language, which can then be transferred to their second language, English. This will promote inclusiveness, acceptance, and bilingual global citizens.

7) Leadership and Inclusiveness: School administrators should also be required to learn about ELLs and their linguistic needs. They should be familiar with the services and resources available for ELLs. They should establish inclusive practices at school promoting transparency and advocacy. Administrators should be required to adopt a holistic view about their students to ensure that they provide an inclusive environment for their students and their families at the school. This

responsibility should be a school-wide effort rather than solely assigning it to a parent liaison.

8) ESOL has been reported as the most common and least effective program for providing language instruction to ELLs. Rather than dismantling the program entirely, there should be more research and practice in aligning the program to the needs of current ELLs to avoid Long Term ELL classification, or permanence in the program.

9) Additionally, of particular importance, is recognizing that the majority of ELLs lack fluency in their heritage language. Only two of this study's student participants had exited an ELL classification by the fourth grade. Both former ELL students had a strong foundation in Spanish, their heritage language. This study's findings, therefore, support the use of additive bilingual/dual immersion programs to address ELL's language learning and schooling.

Future Research

This study suggests the need for further research across multiple environments. First, it would be important to look more closely at the student experiences longitudinally. Now that there is a new ESOL placement assessment in schools across the Mid-Atlantic state, it would be interesting to learn more about the different characteristics and experiences amongst students that have exited the ELL classification versus those that remain with such a classification. Specifically, further research on how this long-term track affects their educational trajectory and access to college is warranted. Second, given the various barriers hindering ESOL instruction at Maravilla, it would be important to learn the extent to which ESOL services are

actually provided at each grade level, and across all schools. Thus, future studies should look at both the quantity and quality of the ESOL experiences of ELL students. This study suggests that many students who are expected to be in ESOL are not really receiving much, if any, services. Third, further research on parents' funds of knowledge can provide additional resources for students to learn or maintain their home language. Lastly, given the lack of clarity about how students are able to exit the ESOL program and the accuracy of the placement tests, future studies on these issues should be considered as well.

APPENDIX 1

Table 4: Interview Length and Location

Participant	Interview #1	Location	Interview #2	Location
Pepé	11 min	School	n/a	n/a
Selena	21 min	School	27 min	Home
Nathalie	*9 min	School	25 min	Home
Roger	16 min	Home	n/a	n/a
Mary	39 min	School	32 min	Home
Yasmin	43 min	School	43 min	n/a
Estela	26 min	School	n/a	n/a
Juan	35 min	School	n/a	n/a
Guadalupe	28 min	School	52 min	Home
Ms. Estrella	53 min	School	n/a	n/a
Pepé's Mom	43 min	School	n/a	n/a
Selena's mom	47 min	School	n/a	n/a
Nathalie's Mom	41 min	School	n/a	n/a
Roger 's Mom	55 min	home	n/a	n/a
Mary's Mom & Dad	120 min	home	n/a	n/a
Yasmin's Mom	90 min	home	n/a	n/a
Estela's Mom	51 min	school	n/a	n/a
Juan's mom	38 min	school	n/a	n/a
Guadalupe's Mom	12 min	school	n/a	n/a
Laressa	29 min	School	n/a	n/a
Olivia	11 min	School	n/a	n/a
Macken	33 min	School	n/a	n/a
Murriquillo	68 min	Coffee shop	n/a	n/a
Simms	56 min	School	n/a	n/a
Principal Long	72 min	School	n/a	n/a

APPENDIX 2

Table 5: Student Maximum Variation

	Pepe	Selena	Nathalie	Roger	Mary	Yasmin	Estela	Juan	Guadalupe
Gender	Male	Female	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female	Male	Female
Heritage Country	Mexico	El Salvador	El Salvador	Mexico	Mexico	El Salvador	El Salvador & Mexico	El Salvador	El Salvador
Family Structure	Both parents	Mother & Stepfather	Mother & Stepfather	Mother	Both parents	Both parents	Mother & Stepfather	Separated parents	Both parents
Language Spoken home?	Spanish & English	Spanish	Spanish & English	Spanish & English	Spanish & English	Mostly English	English	Spanish & English	Mostly Spanish
Initial Schooling	US	US	El Salvador	Mexico	US	US	US	El Salvador	US
Schooling outside US	No	No	Yes-K	Yes- K-4 th	No	No	No	Yes-unsure	No
Grade started in US	Pre-K	Pre-K	K	Pre-K	Kinder	Pre-K	Pre-K	Unsure	Pre-K
ELL class. (4 th grade)	Current ELL	Former ELL	Former ELL	Current ELL	Current ELL	Current ELL	Current ELL	Current ELL	Current ELL
ESOL Level	Level 4	Exited	Exited	Level 4	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 4
4th grade Teacher	Ms. Macken	Ms. Laressa	Ms. Olivia	Ms. Macken	Ms. Laressa	Ms. Laressa	Ms. Laressa	Ms. Laressa	Ms. Macken
FARM	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Not Eligible	Eligible	No data	No data

APPENDIX 3

Interview Protocol

STUDENT

Selection Criteria/Family Demographics:

Where were you born:

Where does your mom come from, was she born in the US?

If immigrant: (do you know how long they've been in US)

Where does your dad come from, was he born in the US?

Intro/Education/School:

1) Did you go to another school before coming to TH/MP? How long have you been at TH/MP? How do you like it?

2) Can you tell me about the different classes you take during a regular school day?

3) What job/career do you want to be when you grow up?

4) Do you plan to go to college?

Language:

1. How many languages do you speak? What are they? Which language do you think you are most comfortable with? Why?

Where did you first learn English? Home? School? Church? Community Center?

2. Did you ever have or are you in ESOL? Can you tell me about your experiences in the program?

Neighborhood:

1. Tell me about your neighborhood. About likes/dislikes.
2. Where are some of the places that you go in your neighborhood? (park, library, community center, malls, church, other?)
3. What are some problems/challenges that you or your family experience in your neighborhood?
4. If you or your family faced a problem, is there someone/somewhere in your neighborhood that you trust/would ask for help?

Home:

1. Tell me about your family.
2. Is there someone else that helps you at home? How do they help you?
3. What are some of the problems that prevent people at home from helping?
4. Do you feel that you help your parents in any way?
5. Do you think that the schools help your parents to help you when you have problems with school? If yes, how do you think schools help parents? If no, how do you think they could help parents?
6. Is there someone at home that you could talk to about your problems? Would they be able to help you?

School

1. Can you tell me about your experiences as an ELL student?
2. What are some ways that your teachers help you with school or are helping you become (career/profession they indicated at the beginning)?
3. Do you feel that anyone at school helps you learn about opportunities outside of school—for example, opportunities at a University, at a community center, museum?

If yes, who? Can you give me an example?

4. Is there someone (it can be anyone) at school that you look up to? Why?

5. Is there someone that you feel that you can trust and that you can talk to at school?

Who? Why?

Macro Challenges:

1. What are some of the problems that bilingual/ children of Salvadoran immigrants are facing in the United States?

2. How do you think schools are helping these children with these problems? Do you think they can help? If yes, how?

3. Do you feel welcome at your school? in your community? In the United States?

Parents

Selection Criteria/Family Demographics:

What part of El Salvador were you born:

Did you live in other parts of El Salvador:

What part of El Salvador was your spouse born:

Did she live in other parts of El Salvador:

Parent's Education & Occupation:

1. Can you tell me about your education experience?

2. Are you attending classes now? (English classes, literacy, vocational training

Immigration History:

1. When did you come to the United States? (year, how old were they)

2. How do you think your life as an immigrant in the United States has affected your

experiences in US? your children's educational, language learning experiences?

Home:

1. Who lives at home with student? (both parents, mom, dad, siblings (how many? Are there any in another country? uncles, aunts, cousins, non-relatives-family friend or rent with someone?))
2. What are ways that you think that Salvadoran parents/families provide their children with support?
3. Would you say that you and/or your spouse provide your child with (academic, moral, emotional, etc) support? How?
4. What are some of the challenges or problems your family/immigrant families face in order to provide children with support at home?
5. Is there someone else that you trust and/or helps your child at home? (sibling, cousin, aunt)

Parent on Child's Education/Career:

- 1) Can you tell me what classes your child takes in school?
- 2) How do you think your child's school is doing to prepare your child academically?
- 3) Is your child in ESOL? Can you tell me how this program works, how was your child identified? Purpose? Progress checked? Assessment?
- 4) What are the types of supports that you know are available for child at school?
- 5) Do you/your spouse go to the school often? Why or why not?
- 6) Have you ever needed to go to school for any reason (ie. Behavior, grades, class, etc)? What happened? How do you feel that the school handled the situation? Did you feel that you could advocate for your child or for yourself? Why or Why not?

7) Do you come to the parent teacher meetings? Are you able to communicate with the teacher? Can you tell me about parent teacher meeting experiences you've had?

8) Can you tell me about other events or activities held at school which you have attended (performances, sports games, math nights, Hispanic Heritage month celebration, etc)?

9) What support do you feel is available at schools for parents?

10) Do you feel that the school is welcoming for children? For parents?

Language:

1. How many languages do you speak? What are they?

2. What languages does your child speak?

3. How important is it that your child learn Spanish? English?

4. Are you taking classes in Spanish (church, community center)? (if yes, Where?

How do you like them? Why are you taking them? Do you think they're helping you?

In what ways do you think they're helping you? Do you plan to continue taking

classes in Spanish in the future (ie High School)? Why or why not?)

5. Are your children taking classes in Spanish (church, community center)? (if yes,

Where? How do they like them? Why are you taking them? Do you think they're

helping him/her? In what ways do you think they're helping him/her? Do you plan to

encourage your children to continue taking classes in Spanish in the future (ie High

School)? Why or why not?

6. What do you think that Teachers? Principals? Community Members? Etc think

about your child learning Spanish?

Neighborhood:

1. Tell me about your neighborhood, what do you like or don't like about your neighborhood?
2. Where are some of the places that you go in your neighborhood? (park, library, community center, malls, church, work, other?)
3. What are some problems immigrant parents experience in your neighborhood?
4. What are some problems that children of immigrants experience in your neighborhood?
5. How many places do you think are available for you to get help in your neighborhood/community? (it can be a center or family/friend/etc living in community)

Macro Challenges:

1. What are some of the biggest problems that you think that are facing Salvadorans in the United States? How do you feel that these problems affect their children?
2. How do you think schools are helping these children with these problems? Do you think they can help? If yes, how?
3. Do you/your family feel welcome at your school? in your community? In the United States?
4. How do you think that schools can be more supportive of immigrant families?

Teachers

1. Can you tell me about yourself, what lead you to be a teacher?
2. How long have you been teaching? What subjects have you taught? What

languages do you speak?

3. How do you think that the growing immigrant community at the school/in your classroom has impacted your teaching?

4. What are the challenges that you perceive are affecting children of Salvadoran immigrants in the nation? In their neighborhoods? In school? at Home?

5. How do you think that state/district/school is addressing these challenges (particularly language learning)?

6. What supports are available for ELL students at this school?

7. What supports do you receive to address ELL students? What supports do you feel that you need?

8. Are you observed, provided coaching, professional development etc to teach/support ELLs?

9. Do you incorporate student's language in the classroom? (ie. Allow student to use heritage language in assignments/assessments etc).

10. How important do you think student's heritage/native language is in school for their academic success? For their identity development? For obtaining support in school? For obtaining support at home? For participation in society? For professional/college?

11. Can you tell me specifically about the ESOL program? (ELL placement/classification, ESL curriculum, testing, exit process).

12. To what extent do you think that students classified as ELL are provided the language services, and/or accommodations they need or qualify to receive? Why or why not?

13. How much focus do you place on Academic English when handling ELL?
14. How likely in your experience would English language learners benefit from placement in additional supports such as Gifted/Talented? Special Education?
15. What are some of the things that you take into consideration for recommending exit ESOL?
16. How often do parents of immigrant children come to visit you? Can you tell me about these experiences?

ESL Teachers

1. Can you tell me about yourself, what lead you to be a teacher?
2. How long have you been teaching? What subjects have you taught? What languages do you speak?
3. How long have you been teaching? What subjects have you taught? What languages do you speak?
4. How do you think that the growing immigrant community at the school/in your classroom has impacted the schools/classrooms?
5. What are the challenges that you perceive are affecting children of Salvadoran immigrants in the nation? In their neighborhoods? at Home? In school? in your class?
6. How do you think that state/district/school is addressing the challenges?
7. What supports are available for ELL students at this school?
8. What supports do you receive to address ELL students? What supports do you feel that you need?
9. How satisfied are you with the resources (technology, class space etc)?

10. Do you feel that ESOL time is given a priority in student's class schedule?
11. To what extent do you focus on Academic English when handling ELL?
12. Are you observed, provided coaching, professional development etc to teach/support ELLs?
13. How often do parents come to visit you? Contact you?
14. Do you incorporate student's language in the classroom? (ie. Allow student to use heritage language in assignments/assessments etc).
15. How important do you think student's heritage/native language is in school for their academic success? For their identity? For obtaining support in school? For obtaining support at home? For participation in society? For professional/college aspirations?
16. Can you tell me specifically about the ESOL program? (ELL placement/classification, ESL curriculum, testing, exit process). How involved are you in the placement/ exit process?
17. To what extent do you think that students classified as ELL are provided the language services, and/or accommodations they need or qualify to receive?
18. How much focus do you place on Academic English when handling ELL?
19. How likely in your experience would English language learners benefit from placement in additional supports such as Gifted/Talented? Special Education?
20. How do you monitor progress? Communicate this progress to families?
21. How often do parents visit/contact you? Can you tell me about these experiences?

Principal/Administrator

1. How long have you been at this school? Can you tell me how you came to be the principal at this school, background in Education etc?
2. What are the challenges that you perceive are affecting children of Salvadoran immigrants in the nation? In their neighborhoods? In school? at Home?
3. How has the state, county/district, school addressed the growing immigrant community?
4. What have been some of the challenges specifically affecting the school/teachers/students due to the growing immigrant community?
5. Are there any benefits/contributions to schools resulting from this immigrant growth? (ie. More funding?, leniency on MSA's?)?
6. What kinds of support if any is the school providing to children of immigrants?
7. Can you tell me about the history of ESOL program at MP/TH? What is its purpose? How are students selected for the program? How is progress monitored? How does student Exit ESOL? What tests do ELL students take?
8. Do all classified ELL students receive ESOL?
9. How often do you evaluate services provided for ELL students?
10. What kinds of support if any is the school providing to the immigrant families? teachers? staff?
11. What are kinds of support is the school providing to teachers with children of immigrants in their classroom?
12. Do you conduct classroom observations? What do you look for when you do?
13. Can you tell me about TH/MP's parent school relationships?
14. How important do you think student's heritage/native language is on language

learning, aspirations for doing well in school?

15. How representative are English language learners in additional supports such as Gifted/Talented? Special Education?

16. What is the school doing to address growing numbers of ELL students? Can you explain classification, programs available, testing required, exit procedure? What accommodations available? Can you tell me about the effectiveness of the program?

17. How much in advance does school prepare for ELL services?

18. Latinos/ELL students have a high drop out rate in county, is school/teachers, staff doing anything to prevent this at the elementary level?

19. Do you consider this school to have a diverse teacher, staff, administration? Why? Why not?

20. Does the school participate in creating or bridging networks between school and community, universities, museums, institutions, others?

21. Does the school encourage modeling behaviors for children of immigrants to learn about institutions or to address problems that they may experience? What are some ways that the school provides problem solving strategies for children of immigrants?

22. Is there something that you would like to share about the supports provided for children of immigrants, and/or their families, challenges experienced by school?

Parent Liaison

1. How long have you been at this school? Can you tell me how yourself and how you came to be the parent liaison at this school, background in Education etc?

2. What are the challenges that you perceive are affecting children of Salvadoran immigrants in the nation? In their neighborhoods? In school? at Home? Do you think that they affect student's education/language learning?
3. How has the school addressed the growing immigrant community?
4. What have been some of the challenges specifically affecting the school/teachers/students and especially parents due to the growing immigrant community? What have been some of the benefits if any for growing Salvadoran immigrant community?
5. What kinds of support is the school providing to children of immigrants?
6. What kinds of support is the school providing to the immigrant families? (events, workshops, classes for family, other?) What is your role in creating these? How do you go about in preparing these activities/events/ etc?
7. What are kinds of support is the school providing you to work with children of immigrants and their families? (professional development, training, ???)
8. How often do parents of immigrant children come to visit you?
9. How has language affected your interaction or relationship with students children of Salvadoran immigrants?
10. Do you incorporate student's language in the school/events/displays, etc? How do you think that helps or doesn't help all students, children of immigrants in particular and their families?
11. How important do you think student's heritage/native language is in school for their academic success? For their identity? For obtaining support in school? For obtaining support at home? For participation in society? For professional/college?

12. How important do you think English language acquisition is for students' academic success? For schooling in general? For their participation in Gifted/Talented, Honors, Advanced Placement classes? For obtaining support in school? For participation in society? For professional/college?
13. How do immigrant parents get informed about G/T, Honors, AP, College info sessions etc at this school? Are language services provided? Who can they contact for additional information?
14. What is the school doing to address growing numbers of ELL students? Can you explain classification, programs available, testing required, exit procedure? What accommodations available? Can you tell me about the effectiveness of the program?
15. Growing number of ELL students, Do all students classified ELL always receive the language services, and/or accommodations they need or qualify to receive? Why or why not? If yes, who keeps track, how is this being tracked?
16. How much in advance does school prepare for immigrant students' need and/parent?
17. How well do you think the school is in preparing children of immigrants to pursue college? What are some of the programs that are provided with college going information?
18. Do you consider this school to have a diverse teacher, staff, administration? Why? Why not?
19. Does the school participate in creating or bridging networks between school and community, universities, museums, institutions, others?
20. Does the school actively advocate protecting or promoting needs of children of

immigrants? Can you give me some examples?

21. Does the school encourage modeling behaviors for children of immigrants to learn about institutions or to address problems that they may experience? What are some ways that the school provides problem solving strategies for children of immigrants?

22. Are there specific individuals that students can go to for guidance, or feedback? Are there specific individuals that parents/family members can go to for guidance?

23. Is there something that you would like to share about the supports provided for children of immigrants, and/or their families, challenges experienced by school?

Community Representative

1. How long have you been working for this organization? How long have you been in this community?
2. What are the challenges that you perceive are affecting children of Salvadoran immigrants and their families in the nation? In their neighborhoods? In school? at Home? Do you think that the challenges affect student's education?
3. What are the types of services that you provide immigrant families/children at this organization/center?
4. How has the state, county/district helped your organization address the growing immigrant community?
5. How may it have negatively influenced the extent that you are able to help this community?
6. Is there something that you would like to share about the supports provided for children of Salvadoran immigrants, and/or their families, challenges experienced by this population?

APPENDIX 4

Reader's Theater 5-Day Routine

Lower level readers: James Marshall's Fox series, i.e. *Fox on Stage*, *Fox in Love*

Mid-range readers: Marc Brown's *Arthur* series

Upper-level readers: fairy tales by James Marshall, i.e. *Hansel and Gretel*, *Cinderella*

Monday:

- 1) Teacher reads aloud script(s)
- 2) Students talk about content and meaning of the story
- 3) Teacher presents a mini-lesson designed to demonstrate and make explicit some aspect of fluent reading.
 - A. Why and when a good reader might need to slow down or speed up
 - B. How a reader uses the circumstance a character faces to decide how to convey the character's feelings
- 4) Teacher distributes copies of scripts (only the copy for home)
- 5) Students practice reading the script either independently or with a buddy
- 6) At end of session, students are encouraged to take their copy of the script home to practice

Tuesday:

- 1) Teacher passes out the second set of scripts to each group (on this set, specific parts were highlighted in color)
- 2) Children practice reading as a "company" for the first time.
- 3) When they finished, the children pass their scripts to the left, so that each ended up with a new script and a new role to practice.
- 4) Rehearsal begins again.
- 5) Teacher provides coaching and feedback like:
 - *"Remember that D. W. just rode her bike for the first time. How do you think she might sound?"
 - *"Could you read that again and pause for the comma? Let's see if it makes for sense."
 - *"I noticed how you "punched" the word never in that sentence. That really helps the listener get the meaning."
- 6) Scripts continue to be read and passed until the end of the session.

Wednesday:

- 1) The routine for this day is exactly like Tuesday's; students rehearse by reading the highlighted part and then exchange scripts to practice another role.
- 2) In the final 5 minutes of the session, signaled by the teacher, students in each group learn to negotiate and quickly determine roles for Friday's audience performance.
- 3) The teacher encourages the children to pay special attention to their performance role when they practiced their at-home copy of the script.

Thursday:

- 1) Students spend the session working together reading and re-reading their performance roles in preparation for the next day's production.

2) During the final few minutes, students can (not always) make character labels and discuss where each will stand during Reader's Theater performance.

Friday:

By Friday, each performer was ready, having read the script, on average, 15-20 times. Every week each group performed before a live audience, i.e. other classrooms, parents, the principal, of the other Reader's Theater groups.

****The anticipation of an audience is what made reading practice seem like a dress rehearsal****

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