

IMPROVING ELL SERVICES FOR K-8 STUDENTS: A SELF-STUDY
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Abstract

In this self-study, the author, a teacher responsible for administering and teaching in an English Language Learners (ELL) program with a population of about 80 students, examines his experiences in 2 years holding the position. The author answers the questions:

1. What factors do new incoming ELL coordinators believe affect student learning?
2. What factors do mainstream teachers of ELLs say affect student learning?

First, a thorough literature review provides a background for understanding the history and regulatory structures of ELL services. Then the author reports on data collected: first, personal journals, and second, reflections of other teachers collected in the form of interviews that were recorded and transcribed. Four newcomer students were selected for in-depth study. Journals and interview transcripts were coded and analyzed for themes. Analysis of the data shows mostly agreement between teachers in their comments about the four students.

Study findings show that students from remote Pacific islands have a more difficult time adapting to an American school than students from more developed nations. Student motivation is a major factor in adjustment and success in school. Data and teacher comments both show significant growth in the students' ease of use of the English language over the period of 1 to 2 years.

Keywords: English language learners, ELL

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Chapter 1: Improving ELL Services for K-8 Students: A Self-Study

It was Doreen's first day at Aloha Elementary and Intermediate School (Aloha School). She recently arrived in the U.S. for the first time from the small, remote Pacific island of Chuuk. She spoke virtually no English. It was early in the third quarter and she was directed to my mainstream grade 7 English class at Aloha School, the placement being determined by her age. I had no prior notice of her arrival. I gave her a seat in the back of the class. A short time later there was some commotion and I looked over to see Doreen angry and swearing. She had learned "fuck you" and was directing it to another student. Fortunately I had an educational assistant who was able to take her out of the classroom to see what the problem was. My student on the receiving end of her outburst explained that he was attempting to help her. She had mistaken his "help" for ridicule.

This situation, while not an everyday example of the English Language Learner (ELL) program at Aloha School, illustrates the circumstances at Aloha School in the year before I took over the position of full-time ELL coordinator. I am now at the end of 2 years of servicing an ELL population that has increased to 80 students out of a total of approximately 500 students at Aloha School. The rare combination of elementary and intermediate levels in one school means I am responsible for providing services for students spread across nine grade levels. The ELL students are taught for most of the day in mainstream classrooms by over two dozen teachers. In the previous 2 years, a temporary hire (a teacher lacking required credentials) filled a half-time position with the responsibility to provide services for over 60 ELL students, along with taking care of the administrative requirements that come with the state and federal oversight of the program. This self-study examines the complexities of providing services considering the legal, logistical, and systemic factors that govern an ELL program in a public school. Through

collection and analysis of mostly qualitative and some quantitative data, I seek to evaluate the ELL program as a whole as well as take a close look at four new arrivals to the school, students who came from foreign countries 1 to 2 years ago.

Background

I did not choose but was rather assigned the position of ELL coordinator. At the time of appointment, I was licensed in secondary English and was in the last semester of the 2008-2009 school year teaching grade 7 English while simultaneously enrolled in the masters program at the University of Hawaii. Coincidentally, an elective class at the university was about teaching ELL students. After the appointment, I enrolled in two classes for the fall semester devoted to second-language acquisition. The three classes would constitute half of the required courses (9 credits) needed to add ELL specialist as an additional field to a teacher license. Two years of experience are also required for licensure, so I started 2 years short of the experience required to be licensed as an ELL specialist and with half the educational credits. To provide an introduction to the job, the district ELL resource teacher provided a short “how-to” book, *English-Only Teachers in Mixed-Language Classrooms: A Survival Guide* by Joanne Yatvin, for summer reading.

ELL Program Administration

Guided by federal directives tied to supplemental federal funding, the Hawaii Department of Education (HDOE) administers special services for English language learners in Hawaii’s public schools. Providing for the needs of students new to the U.S., speaking dozens of different languages, has always been a challenge. This is particularly so now in the light of the financial constraints being experienced since the 2008 recession. Administrators in the HDOE, particularly principals at the school level, are shouldered with the task of devoting resources to

an ELL program that must provide direct daily instructional support for ELL students and also comply with testing and reporting requirements tied to financial support provided by the federal government. The additional federal funds are allocated to schools based on their ELL population and disbursed under the direction of the principal to provide resources for ELL students.

Job preparation and training for ELL coordinators in Hawaii's public schools is organized by the HDOE, beginning at the top by a statewide ELL administrator. Hawaii is unique in that all public schools spread across six islands of the state are part of one school district. Below the state-level specialist are district-level compliance officers who oversee ELL matters in addition to other programs that involve federal funding and regulatory compliance. In most districts an ELL resource teacher is also hired to work directly with school-level ELL coordinators. At Aloha School, a district resource teacher was in place in Year One of the study. One and one-half days of workshops with the district resource teacher and ELL coordinators from other schools in the district were scheduled soon after the start of the school year to explain and help with the requirements of the job, particularly regulatory and compliance matters. A district resource teacher provided mostly telephone support in Year One. Support at the school level was minimal. The ELL coordinator from the previous year was no longer with the school. The principal was in his second year as principal and had no prior ELL experience. In the budgeting process for Year Two, the district resource teacher position was eliminated. The compliance officer in Year Two ensures that basic regulatory requirements are being fulfilled, but daily resource teacher support was not available after Year One.

ELL Student Demographics

Like the rest of Hawaii, Aloha School has a racial demographic that has always been made up of a combination of minorities, with no one race making up the majority. Nearly half of

the students come from families with some percentage of Hawaiian blood. Nearly all of the part-Hawaiian students and the rest of the non-Hawaiian student population trace all or part of their lineage from settlers from Pacific Rim and Pacific island nations. At Aloha School, and in most Hawaii schools, two nations stand out for contributing the majority of newcomers: the Philippines and the Federated States of Micronesia. More narrowly, in the case of Aloha School, the Micronesians students come from the Micronesians state of Chuuk (formerly Truk), a group of small islands with a population of just over 50,000. The variety of home languages spoken by the ELL students at Aloha School is shown in Figure 1.

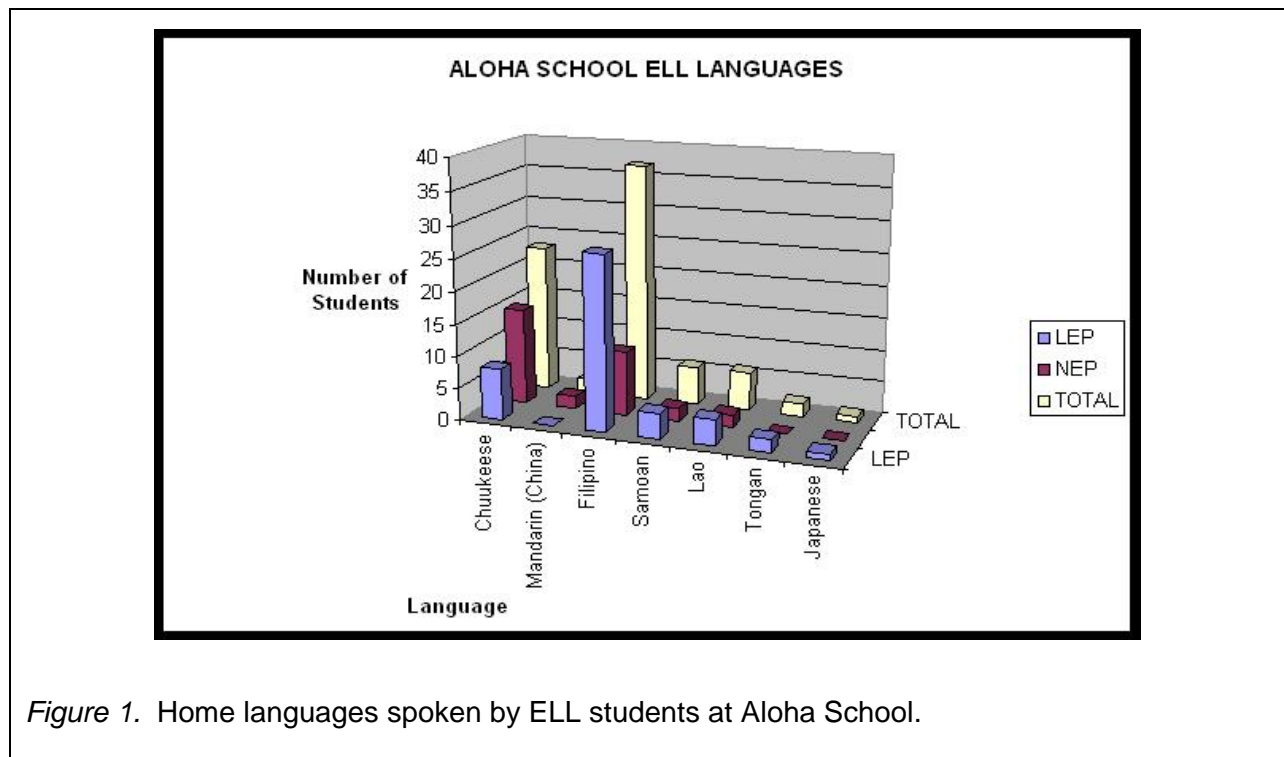


Figure 1. Home languages spoken by ELL students at Aloha School.

ELL Student Assessment

The majority of ELL students at Aloha School either grew up in Hawaii and attended Hawaii (English-speaking) schools from kindergarten or at least attended a school with English instruction in another country before moving to Hawaii. These students are categorized, as

determined by standardized tests, as LEP, or limited-English-proficient. There is only one other designation for students who fall below the cut-off score to be considered LEP. These lower-scoring students are categorized as non-English proficient (NEP). (See Figure 2.)

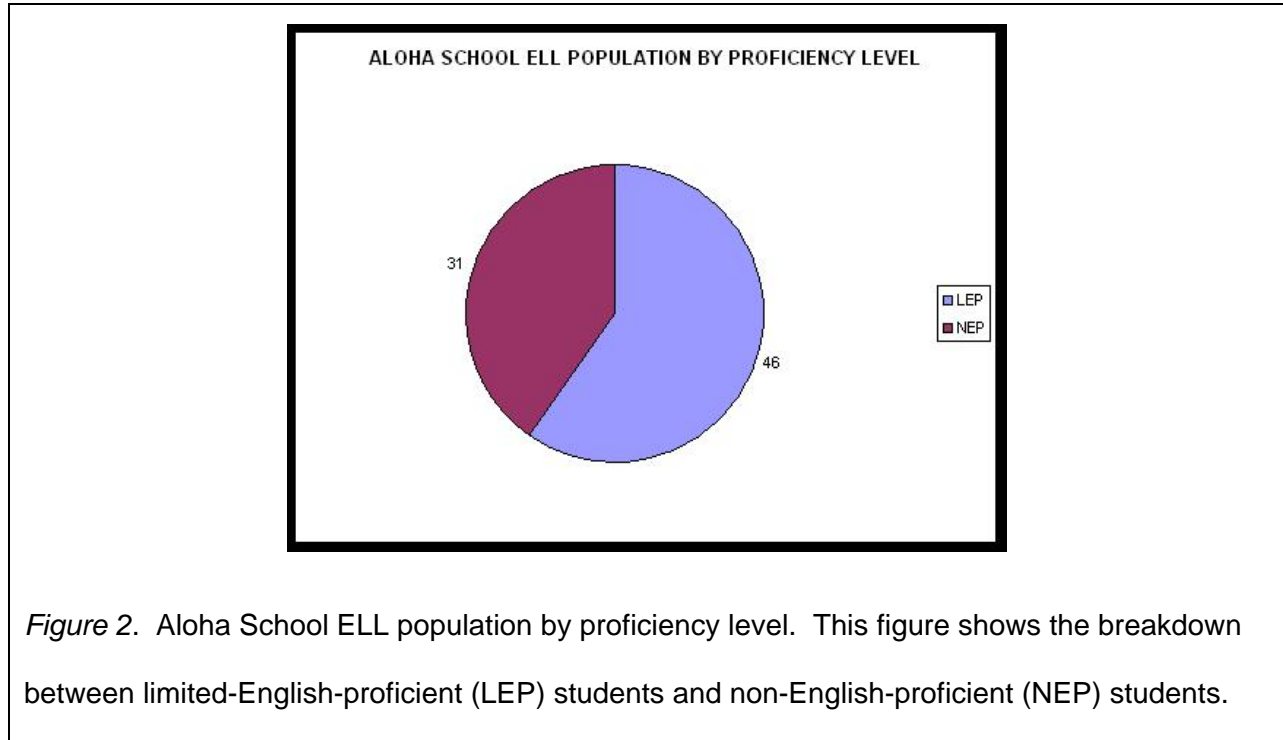


Figure 2. Aloha School ELL population by proficiency level. This figure shows the breakdown between limited-English-proficient (LEP) students and non-English-proficient (NEP) students.

Within the group of over 30 NEP students are a dozen or so more needy students. There is a great disparity between these students and the several dozen other ELL students at Aloha School. Most of these needy students are in the higher grades, and all are recent immigrants from non-English-speaking countries. These students shall be referred to as newcomers. Of particular concern are the middle school newcomers. Students in the lower grades (for example, kindergartners) can discover reading and writing in English alongside their native-speaker classmates, as all students at this age are in the beginning stages of literacy. As the age of the students increases, however, the English literacy gap between newcomers and native speakers of

the same age increases. Yet new students are placed in their age-appropriate grade level, in mainstream classes alongside their native English-speaking age-level peers.

Challenges

An early challenge in ascertaining the needs of the NEP students is the gap between BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency).¹ For many mainstream teachers, and for the novice ELL teacher, it is easy to misdiagnose a student's language proficiency when that student socializes well with his or her peers. The student is easily perceived as being not much different than the average student. When it comes to understanding a grade-level textbook, however, that NEP student has great difficulty.

Novice writing skills are more easily recognized. However, for at least two reasons students don't get a lot of practice in writing. First, the school year was shortened due to budget cuts. Second, the annual Hawaii Scholastic Achievement test (HSA) does not include a writing component. The HSA test is the most visible measure of student achievement and is given to all students in the school. It is mandated by the federal government under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).²

Many NEP students also show a reading gap that can be surprising to an inexperienced ELL teacher—a gap between decoding and comprehension in initial reading assessments. Students' ability to sound out and pronounce the words in text (decoding) is generally well ahead of students' understanding of the meaning of the words (comprehension).

¹ BICS and CALP will be explained in depth in Chapter 2.

² HSA and NCLB will be discussed in Chapter 2.

Students' development of oral language skills is also easy to overlook. The mainstream teacher generally would hope for a quieter classroom. However, quiet is not necessarily the same as focus; for an ELL student it can reflect a lack of proficiency in the student's new language.

Level of Service

In order to address the diverse needs of the students, in Year One I organized larger group classes to support the LEP students as well as those NEP students approaching the LEP level. Services were not provided on a daily basis for these students. Individualized and daily services were provided for the newcomer NEP students, particularly those at the middle school level.

School Attendance

The NEP population changed several times throughout the year due to students moving away and new students arriving. This transience is not unusual in the ELL population since many families rely on government or private charity assistance and need to move as subsidized housing opportunities become available. Because of the statewide school system, students can expect some consistency as they move from school to school. Also, because of the geography of the islands, students cannot move very far from their previous school unless they move to another island. Students who relocate on the same island can maintain contact with their old schoolmates and still be part of the larger island community.

Classroom Versus Standardized Testing

Federally required standardized test results, administered annually and available from the previous school year, help in understanding the needs of students in four domains: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. Administering the current-year test in the third quarter of my

first school year provided fresh data and, since I administered most of the tests personally, helped to personalize students' faces with their results.

Armed with my data, I started servicing students in my first year with a wide and varied approach. I worked with nearly all the ELL students and employed a variety of curricula. For a first-year coordinator without previous experience, it was not always clear which of the several instructional strategies employed were most effective in improving the students' English language skills. However, the students were making progress. Aloha School administers reading tests quarterly to all students who are reading below grade level. At the beginning of the year, six middle school students were not able to enroll in the lowest middle school reading classes due to their newness to the English language. By the third quarter, as a result of their improvement on the quarterly reading assessment, four of those initial six students were ready to be placed in a leveled reading class with native English-speaking students. In the fourth quarter the final two students were ready to join their middle school peers in the leveled reading classes.

Standardized test results for the year, however, were less encouraging. Aloha School did not meet HDOE Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs). Only 2 students scored well enough on the annual test to exit the ELL program. Ten percent, or about 7 students, is the goal.

Purpose of the Study

After a learning curve in the first year, there is a need to assess strategies and adjust plans for Year Two. The purpose of this self-study is to examine what factors affect learning for ELL students. This study will look at both the program as a whole as well as take an in-depth look at four NEP students who arrived from foreign countries in Year One of the study. First the author

will examine his own journals and reflections; then the perspectives of seven other adults working with the four newcomer students will be analyzed.

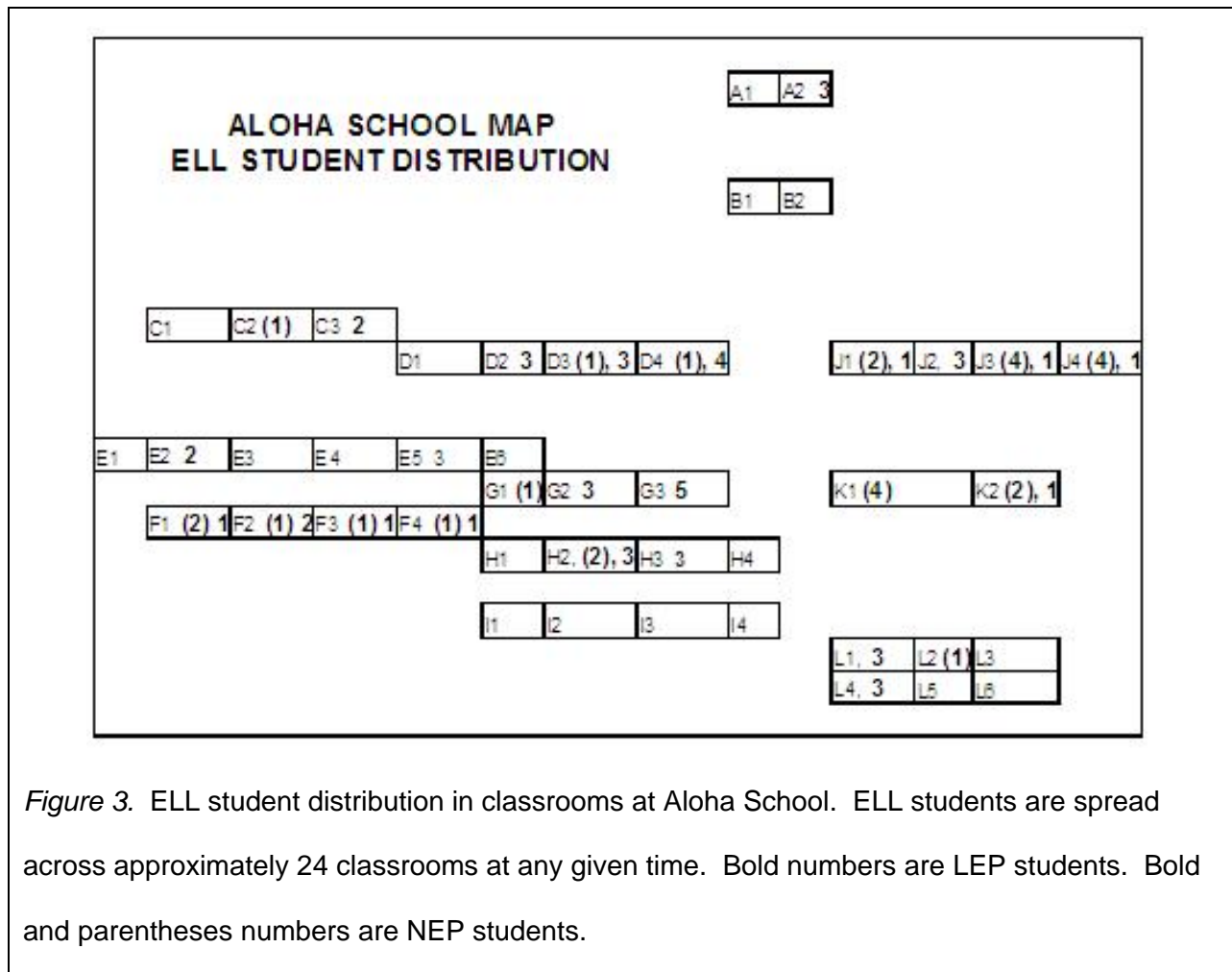
Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the questions:

1. What factors do new incoming ELL coordinators believe affect student learning?
2. What factors do mainstream teachers of ELLs say affect student learning?

Program Organization and Structure

Planning for the ELL program at Aloha School begins in the teacher preparation days before students arrive. My first concern is a very practical one: When and where will the English Language Learners learn? Inclusion, where students identified as part of a subgroup learn alongside their proficient classmates, is the ultimate goal. At Aloha School the largest population of special needs students, those in the Special Education Department (SPED), was following this policy almost exclusively. For the ELL program, this was not a practical choice. Spread across nine grade levels, the 80 ELL students at any given time are distributed between approximately 24 different classrooms. To service them in the mainstream classroom would result in seeing less than a handful of students at a time, and infrequently. (See Figure 3.)



In the special education department, multiple special education teachers, each one assigned an educational assistant (EA), service the special education population, averaging more than one adult per grade level. Federal laws provide for a much greater amount of money to be appropriated to schools for special education students as compared to funds dispersed for ELL students. Therefore, special education students can receive daily support all day in the regular classroom from positions paid for by federal funds. Because of a lack of manpower, for ELL students at Aloha School in both Years One and Two it is the responsibility of the mainstream teachers, almost exclusively, to differentiate teaching in order to meet the needs of most of the

ELL students most of the day, while the one ELL teacher focuses on the helping NEP students and working with larger groups of LEP students in pull-out sessions.

Besides the logistics of grouping a wide range of students, other factors that affect the organization of services are administration directives, some originating at the school level and others guided by state and federal policies. Students in grades K and 1 benefit from what is an uneven distribution of additional resources. Funded by a federal grant with specific restrictions, ELL students in grades K and 1 receive services from a part-time paraprofessional teacher (PPT). While the restrictions were not explained and followed strictly in the first year, in the second year, in adherence to the conditions of the grant, only kindergarteners and first graders were helped by a PPT, and only in their mainstream classrooms. In the case of Aloha School the PPT rotates between the two kindergarten and two first-grade classrooms. The ELL coordinator coordinates testing for these grade levels and checks in with the teachers but rarely sees students in the two lowest grades. This was good at Aloha School for two reasons. First, letting go of the lowest-level students gave me more time to work with the many other students in higher grades. Second, compared to teachers with a credential in elementary education, I lack the knowledge and experience that comes with working with students at the kindergarten and first grade levels.

Scheduling middle school students, who move from teacher to teacher for six periods per day, is much more complicated than working with the lower-grade students, who mostly stay with one teacher all day. The school administration, desirous of meeting federal testing and grade promotion goals, and in adherence to state and federal guidelines, requires all students to enroll in four mainstream “core” classes: social studies, language arts, science, and math. In addition, some students may also be required to take a remedial reading or math class, or both. The effect is that the ELL coordinator is left to pull these students from whatever non-core and

non-remedial periods that remain open in the students' schedules. For the most part, this is during time otherwise assigned to physical education, gardening, music, or art. Thus, while it would make sense to group ELL students by ability level for pull-out classes, students are instead scheduled for service in whatever periods remain open after their core and remedial classes.

The scheduling parameters described give a glimpse of the challenges the ELL coordinator faces before even beginning instruction. There are also professional development meetings, school-wide testing schedules, and special events that affect the availability of students and meeting rooms. Also, in Year Two, a directive came out that the ELL coordinator is not to mix students in widely different grade levels for safety reasons—an older child may harm a younger child. A general guideline to work within three clusters was ordered: grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8.

The intersecting policies and directives described explain what can be referred to as the school environment and are factors out of the control of the ELL teacher.

Chapter 2: Review of Previous Research

There are many resources to guide the novice ELL teacher in establishing a theoretical foundation, learn practical skills, and navigate the federal requirements that apply to an ELL program. A synthesis of several sources is used to explain here the basics that the ELL teacher needs to understand, particularly in the HDOE system. First, federal mandates in regard to education, and specifically in reference to ELL programs and the history of how they came about, will be explained. Then how these federal policies filter down to the HDOE will be discussed. Finally, a review of practical strategies, approaches, resources, and activities gleaned from a review of published ELL specialists and my personal experience will be examined.

History of ELL Services

Beginning in 1965, the federal government has legislated policy that governs funding for public education under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The bill has been revised and reestablished every 5 years since then and is today known as No Child Left Behind. ESEA policy regarding services for ELLs picked up steam in 1968 with the passage of the ESEA Title VII Bilingual Education Act. This act funded bilingual education programs—the teaching of students in their native language as well as English. Bilingual programs sprouted up across the United States, with programs in place for many foreign languages. In 1974 the results of a Supreme Court case, *Lau v. Nichols*, provided further clarification for the federal government’s ELL policy. This case was argued on behalf of students of Chinese ancestry against the San Francisco Unified School District. The court established a connection between language and national origin, therefore establishing a basis for discrimination. As summarized in the case syllabus, the court decided as follows:

The failure of the San Francisco school system to provide English language instruction to approximately 1,800 students of Chinese ancestry who do not speak English, or to provide them with other adequate instructional procedures, denies them a meaningful opportunity to participate in the public educational program, and thus violates § 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bans discrimination based “on the ground of race, color, or national origin,” in “any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance,” and the implementing regulations of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974)

This Supreme Court decision established the legal foundation for ELL policies to follow. Monies were appropriated by the federal government to help states service their ELL students. In 2001, when NCLB took effect, the distribution of resources targeted for ELL instruction was simplified and expanded. Prior to NCLB, grants for bilingual and immigrant education were unequally awarded to school districts and did not reach all ELL students. Since NCLB, under the auspices of Title III, monies are distributed comprehensively throughout states by a state formula. There is a parallel between the state’s commitment to ELL programs and the state’s administration of federally funded Title III Special Education programs. Both programs receive federal funding based on compliance with federal regulation. Special Education programs, however, receive greater funding and attention. This is due in large part to the effects of the Felix Decree, a judge’s answer to a lawsuit brought against the State of Hawaii for inadequate support for special education students. The lawsuit was a class-action lawsuit by parents of students with special needs. When the state lost the lawsuit, the Felix Decree specified benchmarks for improvement in special education services (Hawaii State Legislature Archives). While one might expect ELL services to be administered with the same care, in practice “the

state has left ELL on the back burner,” former Hawaii Windward District ELL resource teacher Deborah Roberts explains. “It is unlikely that newly arrived immigrants with little English will file a lawsuit against the state, so there is not the same pressure on the state to perform” (personal communication, September 8, 2009). Researcher Steven Talmy (2008) lends weight to these assertions about lack of attention to the needs of ELL students in Hawaii schools. Talmy studied the ELL program at “Tradewinds High” (a pseudonym for a Hawaii high school). He writes:

ESL at Tradewinds was structurally elaborated as an afterthought to pre-existing institutional arrangements. This was indicated by the status of ESL classes as “required electives”; by an absence of communication between ESL and subject-area departments; and a lack of administrative, curricular, and physical integration with the rest of the school. These arrangements were amplified by the assignment of ESL courses to new or junior faculty, most of whom had little background in ESL, and who were provided minimal institutional support despite frequently overwhelming instructional circumstances. (p. 633)

There are several reasons that school policies meant to be implemented in not only the letter of the law, but the spirit of NCLB, such as those described in Talmy’s study and conditions at Aloha School, fall short of their intended result. First—and this is a problem often mentioned by teachers and administrators across the country—is funding. “It’s one thing to enact laws, but it’s another thing to find the money to carry them out,” Roberts comments (personal communication, November 3, 2009). Another challenge for school districts is finding and/or developing qualified teachers. These issues are even more at the forefront because of the effects of the 2008 recession on funds available for public education.

Bilingual education is a casualty of economic policies and political maneuvering. In 2001, as part of the provisions of NCLB, the requirement for bilingual education, as well as funding for it, stopped. While school districts have the freedom to offer bilingual education, the lack of federal funding for it has effectively eliminated widespread bilingual education today as a means of providing education to ELLs (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Many educators argue that the decision to not fund bilingual education was a decision made by politicians reacting to voter sentiment rather than a decision by educators based on educational research. “Attitudes toward second-language teaching and usage in schools overlap with other kinds of attitudes, such as support for immigration and racial prejudice against speakers of other languages; these attitudes in turn affect language policies” (Diaz-Rico, 2004, p. 29). The decision to stop funding for bilingual education is not supported by the research on ELL learning. Research shows that ELLs who remain proficient in their native language and learn in both languages make greater academic gains than those who do not use their native language for academic work (Banks, 2001; Diaz, 2001; Garcia, 2001). The choice between bilingual and English-only instruction is not as simple a choice as it might first appear, however. Besides the funding issues already discussed, factors such as the wide variety of languages spoken in a school and the number of students speaking a particular language can make it difficult or impossible to provide a match between native language teachers and students. The problem is the availability of qualified teachers and the funding for them (Vacca & Vacca, 2008).

Federal Policies Today

Although bilingual programs have been essentially eliminated, in accordance with its namesake philosophy, the No Child Left Behind Act calls for ELL students to meet the same standards as their native-born peers. NCLB places heavy emphasis on English language

proficiency for all students and calls for assessments to measure proficiency, providing that “Assessment results and State progress objectives must be broken out by poverty, race, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency to ensure that no group is left behind” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Today in the United States every state must establish standards and benchmarks for proficiency in English for all students. NCLB calls for schools to educate *all* students to meet those standards, as evidenced by test performance—including students who recently arrived from a foreign country, regardless of their background in English. Proficiency is measured by performance on an annual standardized test, to be administered by the states. In Hawaii the test is called the Hawaii Scholastic Achievement (HSA) test. Schools strive to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward meeting academic proficiency standards and are given a rating or “report card” based on test results. The philosophy behind NCLB, and its annual assessment, is a lofty one: that every child can learn and every school must provide every child an opportunity to succeed in meeting proficiency standards in core academic content. Core academic content tested up until 2010 has been English and Math. A science test is being introduced to selected grade levels in the 2010-2011 school year and will continue to expand in coming years. Social studies content tests are still in the planning stages but are expected to be introduced in the coming years. Schools that cannot raise student achievement in these core subject areas to desired goals must take in outside collaborators to assist them in restructuring the school. The ultimate goal is for 100% of students to test proficient; however, schools have been given 9 years to reach this goal. In the interim, for a school to be considered to be making adequate yearly progress, the school must raise student test scores by an increasing set percentage every few years. The goal for the current school year, 2010-2011, is to have 76% of students test proficient in English and 64% of students test proficient in math.

The goal for all students to succeed is well-intentioned; however, the devil is in the details. As Donald Freeman and Kathryn Riley (2005) explain:

If the English proficiency assessments developed and administered as required by the NCLB Title III legislation are solid predictors of academic success in general classrooms, then the law will have had positive consequences. If, however, struggling schools serving ELLs are punished for their AYP performance and are not given resources to allow improvement, and if assessments are “blind” to the effect that English proficiency has on the measurement of content knowledge, then the consequences of the law are likely to be ineffectual, if not detrimental, in improving the education given to ELLs in school districts. (p. 267)

Rules designed to ensure that no child is left behind result in a complex formula for administrators to manage in order to have their school “make AYP.” Students are identified and scores are broken out by nationality, language, and disabilities. Test results for all students who were enrolled in the school for one full year before the testing date are used to determine the school’s success rate. These students are referred to as “full academic year,” or FAY. The rules regarding ELL students that affect a school’s AYP status operate as follows. Test results for ELL FAY students, beginning after 1 year of education in their new U.S. school, are included with results from all other students in determining a school’s overall status. If the ELL FAY population in a school numbers more than 40, NCLB specifies that the state must, in addition to reporting whole school results, report results for an ELL subgroup. The ELL students are held to the same standard of proficiency, which is translated as percentage of test questions answered correctly. The standard for the ELL students is the same as for native-speaking students, even though research shows it typically takes 5 to 7 years for a non-English-speaking student to

develop academic English proficiency (Cummins, 2000). If a school's percentage of total students with a passing test score, or the percentage of ELL students with passing test scores in a subgroup, does not meet the NCLB target, the school will fall into the failing category, or deemed "not having made adequate yearly progress (AYP)." This attention to ELLs as a subgroup provides incentive for administrators with 40 ELL students or more to pay attention to their ELL program, even if other aspects of the school are doing well. If a school is not successful in meeting the AYP goal for 4 consecutive years, either as a whole school or within any subgroup, the school must begin a restructuring process that diverts funds away from the control of the principal and instead toward outside consultants.

The annual HSA test is often referred to as a "high stakes" test because of the ramifications for failing. What is at stake for schools is federal money and control over the school budget. The money at stake is federal, but collecting the data from the schools to report to the federal government is the responsibility of the states. Hawaii is unique among the 50 states in that all public schools in the state comprise one school district. Each year an independent contractor (currently American Institute for Research [AIR], based in Washington, DC) develops the statewide assessment. AIR employees have opened a Hawaii office to facilitate teacher input into the test question selection. AIR attempts to select a representative group of teachers from all islands and including teachers of subgroups, such as ELL and Special Education teachers. These teachers convene to review and discuss items that will appear on the annual state assessment. I have sat on these committees, chosen to represent teachers of ELL. While it is possible to influence the cultural references of test questions, it is not possible to make significant changes to the test that will account for the lower vocabulary knowledge that new ELL students have without "dumbing down" the test, something that would make the test

not relevant for native speakers. This expectation that ELL students, with no consideration of their years of American schooling, can perform on statewide academic assessments at the same level as their native speaker counterparts is unrealistic. Similar complaints from educators about expectations for special education students and the goal of 100% of students passing the annual test by 2014 are under review and may change in the Obama administration.

State Response to Federal Regulations

The HDOE's initial response to the federal ESEA and now NCLB policies in regard to ELLs was to develop statewide standards for English language learners. These standards guide ELL teachers by providing benchmarks to meet with ELL students. In addition to implementing standards, HDOE administrators enforce staffing policies to support ELLs, making use of federal monies.

Putting together an ELL program as a single state, however, is a costly and specialized project for a small state like Hawaii. In order to take advantage of a much larger body of knowledge, the HDOE joined with mainland states in a consortium dedicated to services for ELLs. In 2009, a contract was signed with WIDA (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment).

WIDA. The states of Wisconsin, Delaware, and Alabama saw the opportunity to harness the combined work of many leading researchers in the ELL field to benefit all three states in implementing ELL policies. They started the WIDA consortium, with the initials from each state forming the name. Today 23 states, including Hawaii, make up the consortium. The addition of new states prompted a change in the name, but not in the acronym: WIDA now stands for World-class Instructional Design and Assessment. The sole focus of WIDA is to assist member school districts to meet the needs of their ELL learners while complying with federal laws. In

accordance with the federal guidelines, services for ELL students begin with students taking a placement test. WIDA provides this test for its members. It is called W-APT for WIDA Access Placement Test. (The hyphen in the acronym serves a purpose: WIDA asks that you not refer to the test as “whapped”!) After being identified and assessed for placement, students are then tested once a year. This test is also provided by WIDA and is called the ACCESS test.

The WIDA consortium is able to provide a comprehensive set of services, including standards and assessments, for a reasonable price due to the economies of scale. WIDA is able to do far more in the area of research, standards, and assessment than Hawaii can afford to do on its own. By itself, Hawaii never developed its ELL standards past the draft stage. Only in 2009, when WIDA standards were adopted as Hawaii’s own, did the state have official standards. “WIDA standards are clearer and easier to understand,” says Deborah Roberts, “and they are not in draft form. For years the DOE tried to reinvent the wheel by developing our own material” (personal communication, September 8, 2009). WIDA standards are laid out with more use of color and images, the fonts are larger, and there are more categories for subjects and grade levels. There is also a helpful resource guide that provides an introduction to the standards in easy-to-understand language. In short, the WIDA standards and guides are very user-friendly.

The majority of ELL students begin services when they enter school in kindergarten. If their adult guardians indicate on the school entry application that a language other than English is used by the students or in the students’ homes, the students are given the W-APT placement test to determine their level of proficiency in the English language. The test is rigorous, and it is rare that a child eligible to take the test passes it. No kindergartener passed this test in the 2 years of this study.

Students entering elementary or middle schools in grades higher than kindergarten take one of three tests, the tests being organized by grade level groups 1-2, 3-5, and 6-8. Incoming students are placed in the grade level that corresponds with their age, so although 12-year-old students may be brand new to English, they will take an assessment test at the grades 6-8 level. Results from this assessment provide information to the school as well as required data for state and federal monitoring. Based on how students perform on the test, English language proficiency in the four domains of Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking are given a score between 1 and 6, then a combined score for literacy (Reading and Writing combined) and overall proficiency score (Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking). A broader indicator of LEP or NEP is finally derived.

After initial placement, students are tested yearly to monitor their progress. In February and March of each year the annual ACCESS for ELLs test is administered to all ELL students regardless of their length in the program. ACCESS for ELLs is an acronym that stands for Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners. The test is designed to give a current picture of the students' language proficiency. The test is completely separate from the school-wide HSA test and comes with its own measures and goals. Test scores are compared to the previous year and the success of the ELL program is judged on two numbers: the number of students who have reached a proficiency level high enough to exit the program and the number of students who have made gains from the previous year. The goal is for the ELL program to exit at least 10% of the ELL population in the school. For student progress, the goal is for at least two-thirds of ELL students to score higher than the year before.

HSA and ACCESS for ELLs test goals and strategies. Goals for the two tests (the statewide all-school HSA test and the annual ACCESS for ELLs test) converged in an unusual way at Aloha School in my first year. Making AYP is a more comprehensive and publicly visible achievement for the school than results limited to ELL students and therefore receives greater emphasis and attention from administrators and the public. The number of Aloha School ELL students who count for the test results was close to 40 throughout the school year. By the HSA testing date the number of eligible ELL students enrolled fell below 40. A subgroup was not declared and, based on the test results averaged across the entire student population, the school achieved AYP.

The number of ELL students who count toward making AYP in the current school year has increased. For the school as a whole to make adequate yearly progress under NCLB rules in the current year, one of two things will need to happen in regard to the ELL program: Either enough ELL students will need to perform well enough on the annual ELL test to exit the program, thereby lowering the subgroup student count below 40, or enough of the 40 or more ELL students in grades 3-8 will need to pass the annual HSA test. Seventy-six percent of ELL students will need to pass the reading test and 64% of ELL students will need to pass the math test in order for the school as a whole to make AYP.

The scenario described above suggests different strategies for helping the school as a whole make AYP:

1. Monitor the count of students enrolled for over one year in grades 3-8. Target the highest-achieving students (about a handful). Work on developing their skills so they can pass the annual ELL exam and exit the program. The number of ELL students testing

will thus fall below 40 and the ELL students will not be counted separately in the AYP passing criteria.

2. Identify approximately 72% of ELL students who did well on the previous year's state assessment. Target these students for skills development with the goal of passing the annual HSA test.

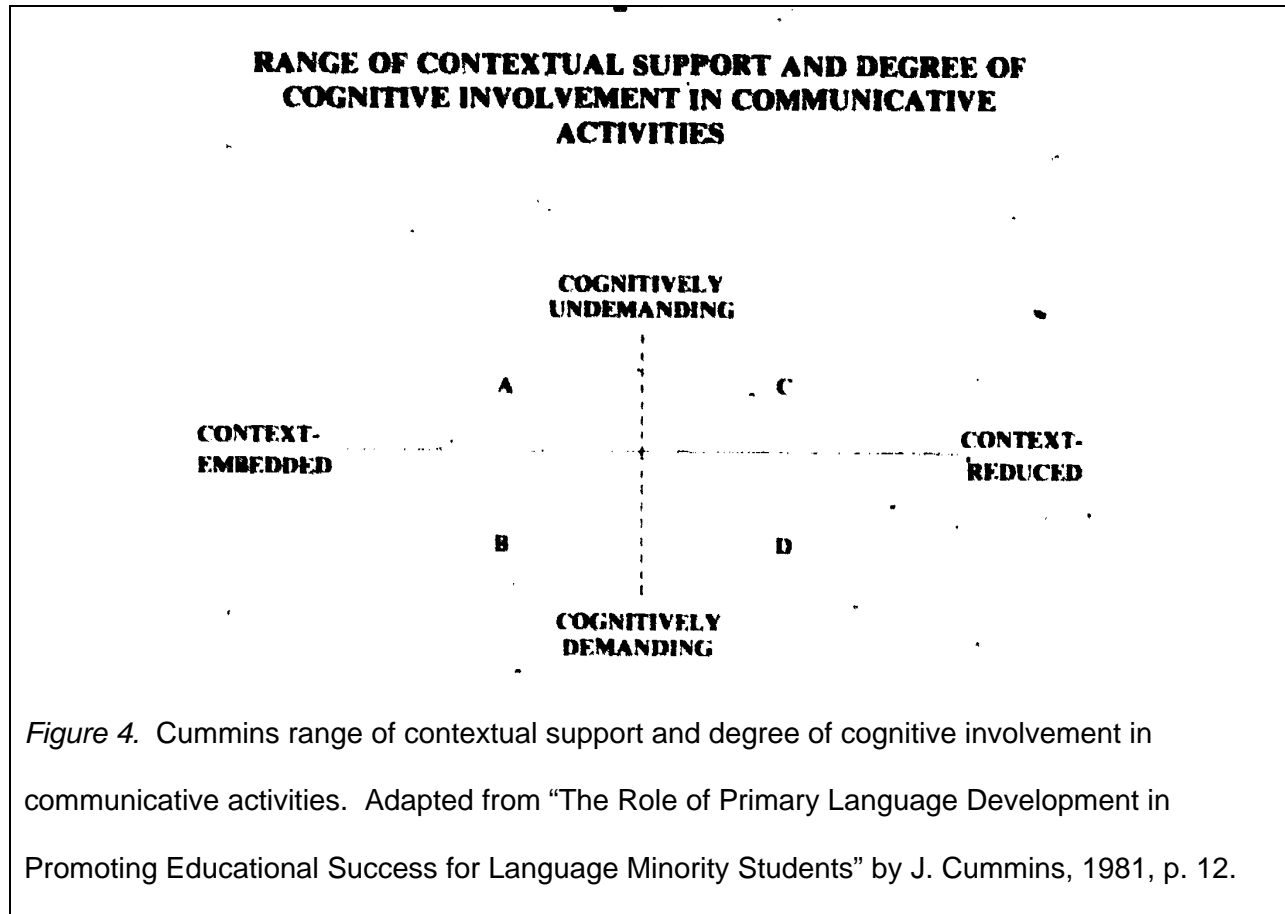
The federal, state, and school policies and goals described thus far make up a complex web, but one that is important to understand in order to communicate with administrators and teachers on the school team. Most important for the daily use of the ELL coordinator are the individual student test results, which will aid in planning what level of services to provide for each student.

Understanding How ELLs Learn

BICS and CALP. Research has provided general guidelines to aid in understanding ELL students' development. Cummins (1981) identified and labeled two types of language proficiency. Newcomers to English will first develop what has come to be called BICS, an acronym for Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills. This kind of language proficiency can be understood as survival language—basic vocabulary absorbed in day-to-day living. While this kind of language is taught both formally and informally through schools and various media such as picture dictionaries and audio and video recordings, it is more commonly picked up through interaction with peers in work and play. This kind of language proficiency is *context-embedded*; that is, the learner more easily picks up this new language because the subject matter is in the context of his/her daily living (Cummins, 1981). BICS can be associated with the NEP students, although many students nearing the LEP begin to make progress beyond BICS.

The second kind of language proficiency has come to be known as CALP, an acronym for Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. CALP, in contrast to BICS, is *context-reduced*. Meaning is negotiated from texts, and there may be little or no personal experience for the reader to relate to. An example from my experience illustrates how the difference between BICS and CALP plays out in the classroom. Middle school newcomers to Aloha School ask for help with their science homework. Using a science text, students have little difficulty learning to identify and label pictures of different kinds of rocks. They have seen and played with rocks for many years. Their social studies homework, however, is much more difficult. Students struggle to relate to United States history. Concepts like freedom, constitution, democracy, revolution, etc., are outside their daily experience and very difficult to comprehend.

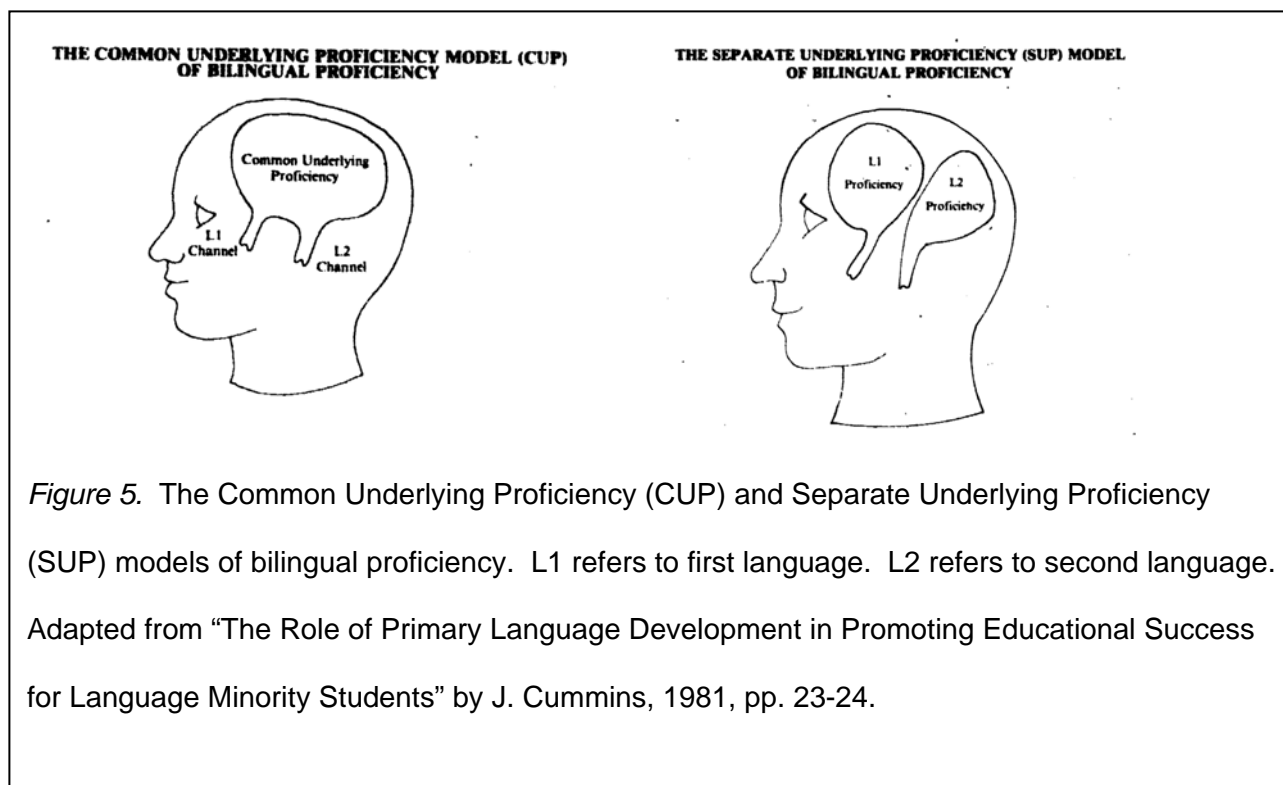
In addition to the vocabulary barrier inherent with BICS, a second factor to consider in relation to BICS and CALP is the cognitive difficulty of an academic task. Cummins represented cognitive difficulty and contextualization as two intersecting lines creating four quadrants. (See Figure 4.)



Drawing on the previous example, a student might be asked to identify two different kinds of rocks. Rocks are within the student’s experience and so the task is context-embedded. In terms of cognitive difficulty, identification is low on the scale. This kind of learning would be in the easiest quadrant, quadrant A. At the opposite extreme, a student may be asked to explain the reasons for the U.S. Revolutionary War. Explaining is more cognitively demanding than identifying, and most immigrant students have not experienced revolution, so the task is context-reduced. Using higher-order thinking skills with abstract context-reduced concepts combine to make this a very challenging, if not impossible, task for a newcomer who is only developing BICS. This would be a quadrant D exercise.

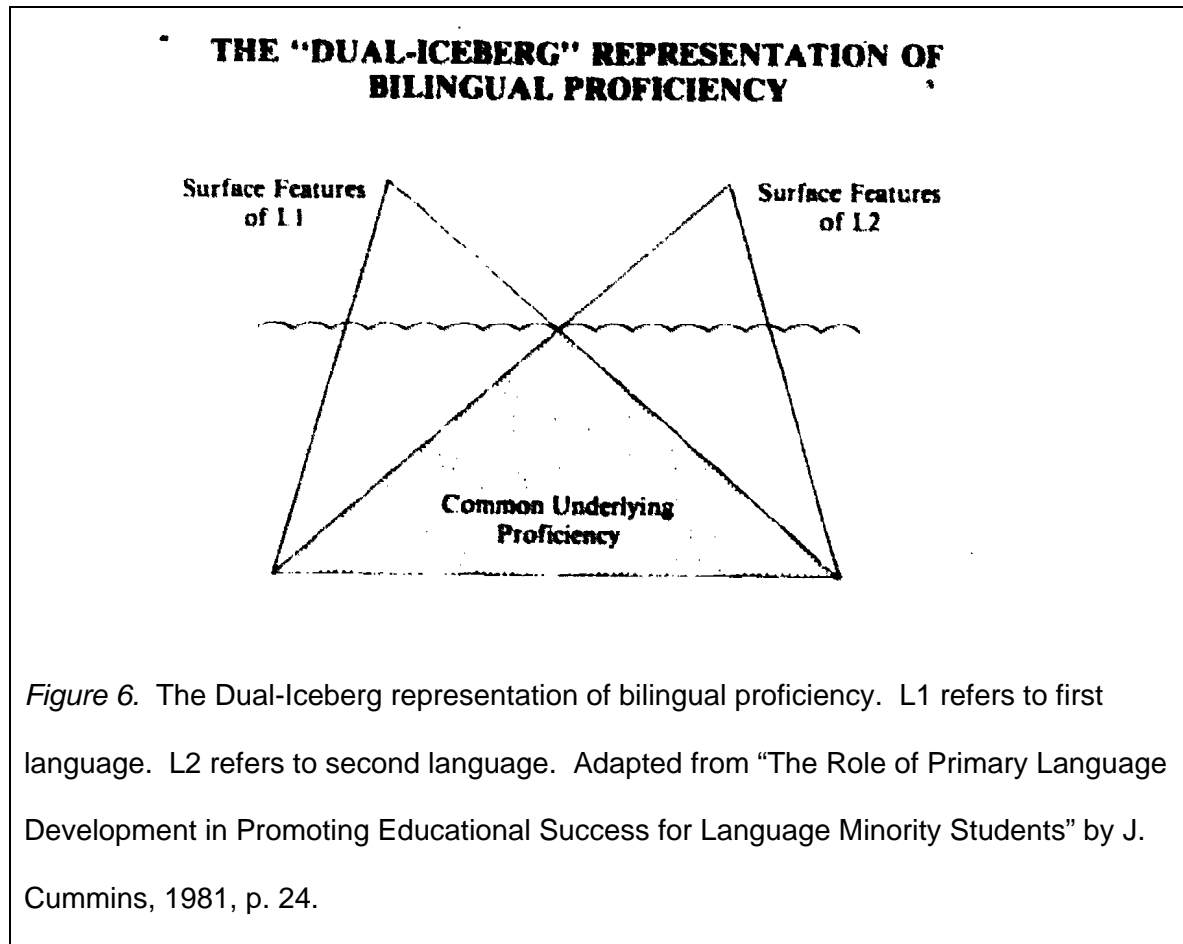
Research leading to the distinction between BICS and CALP resulted from observations that students who appeared to be fluent in a second language showed levels of academic performance well below grade level (Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukomaa, 1976; Cummins, 1981). First impressions of students' fluency can be misleading. A student proficient in BICS, after showing conversational competency to a teacher, might be expected to perform like a native English speaker on class assignments. However, while newcomers to English are able to develop BICS proficiency in 1 to 2 years, proficiency in CALP takes 5 to 7 years (Cummins, 1981).

CUP and SUP. How to best guide students on their path from BICS to CALP has been the subject of numerous studies. Bilingual education, discussed earlier, was the dominant pull-out model of education in the 1970s. In the bilingual pull-out model, students new to English are pulled out of the regular classroom and instructed in a separate class using both their native language and English. This approach is supported by the theory that language learning results from one brain function, or Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP). CUP refers to a single ability to work with language that transfers from one language to another. Students using the more highly developed language skills they developed in Language 1 can continue to grow in their knowledge in Language 1 and gradually transfer those same skills into English. Opposed to this idea is the idea that each new language requires its own separate ability. This is referred to as Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP) (Cummins, 1981). (See Figure 5.)



Cummins uses the metaphor of a balloon in his illustrations explaining CUP and SUP. In the CUP figure, the individual expands one language ability with input from more than one language, or channel. Since the SUP model is based on the idea that each language has its own reservoir of knowledge, input from one language will expand only knowledge of that language. A simple explanation from my own experience that supports Cummins’ view that CUP is the more accurate explanation is one that many speakers of more than one language will identify and agree with. As I progressed in my learning of Spanish as a second language, I began to conjugate verbs and learn the past, present, and future tenses. Because I already do this in English, I was quickly able to understand and apply these skills in Spanish. Similarly, speakers of three or more languages often describe how each new language is easier to learn. There is a transference of skills that comes from a common underlying proficiency, or CUP. Students with well-developed language skills in their first language can use these language skills to develop their second language.

Dual Iceberg is a visual representation that illustrates how one underlying language proficiency manifests itself in different languages. The underlying language proficiency is the base of the iceberg, below the surface. Each different language is represented as a separate visible portion of the iceberg above the surface. (See Figure 6.)



Bilingual education. Numerous sizeable studies have demonstrated that students who continue to advance their cognitive learning in their native language while learning their second language, both at home and in various types of school bilingual programs, score higher on standardized tests than their peers who do not receive bilingual instruction (Troike, 1978; Thomas & Collier, 2002). As mentioned earlier, the lack of support for bilingual education comes more from a political and economic viewpoint than an argument about efficacy. I do not

devote a lot of space to this issue here as the current political and economic environment does not bode well for a move toward bilingual instruction, particularly in Hawaii. Research on bilingual programs has been conducted primarily in very different and much larger population areas than Hawaii. Large numbers of Spanish and French bilingual programs in North America have been studied and shown to be effective (Thomas & Collier, 2002). However, unlike Hawaii, Canada and the mainland U.S. have well-established Spanish- and French-speaking communities. There are schools with large numbers of students speaking these languages, and native speakers of French and Spanish are more easily available to serve as teachers. In Hawaii, with the possible exception of Filipinos, student populations and the number of qualified teachers in the many Pacific Island dialects are small and spread out. Only about a dozen of the nearly 300 HDOE schools enroll enough students speaking the same language to justify the hiring of a qualified full-time bilingual teacher. Yet if all those schools found funds to support a position, it would not be easy to find enough qualified teachers. Just as daunting is the current financial situation for public education. Schools are still reeling from the effects of cutbacks in funding brought about by the 2008 recession. Taxpayers experiencing joblessness and/or reduced buying power are unlikely to support increased government spending for bilingual education. Higher-than-usual unemployment and poor economic conditions also lead to negative feelings toward immigrants, who are seen as competitors for a share of the collective pie. The obstacles in the way of bilingual education are unfortunate in light of the research that supports its effectiveness. However, these obstacles are as prominent today as at any time in the past.

Further research on ELL. The stages of language development for students new to English have been further broken down beyond the two categories of BICS and CALP. In 1983 Krashen and Terrell proposed five predictable stages for the beginning English language learner:

Preproduction, Early Production, Speech Emergence, Intermediate Fluency, and Advanced. (See Figure 7.) When working in the Hawaii Department of Education, it is important to learn the language of the contracted consultant, WIDA, although their level names are not as descriptive. WIDA defines six levels of English language proficiency: Entering, Beginning, Developing, Expanding, Bridging, and Reaching. WIDA gives a performance definition for each level. (See Figure 8.) Referring to levels from WIDA or Krashen and Terrell, the lower two to three levels will correspond with students developing BICS. Students can enter the CALP stage in the higher levels as they develop the ability to comprehend what they read. This will vary, however, by grade level. I noticed in my K-8 grade level range that children in the low grades will develop CALP earlier because their reading level is close to that of their peers, who are just learning to read. The gap is not as great, so these younger children can close the gap more quickly. Students who enter at the highest level, grade 8, have a very difficult time developing CALP because of the large gap between their reading level and the reading level of their grade 8 peers. Learning to recognize the different stages of language learning can enable teachers to find an ELL student's zone of proximal development—the range between what a student can do on their own and what they can do with help (Vygotsky, 1978). Now that the pull-out bilingual model is mostly eliminated, it is important for mainstream teachers to adjust lessons to accommodate ELLs in the regular classroom so they can access the lesson content.

Stage	Characteristics	Approximate Time Frame	Teacher Prompts
Preproduction	The student Has minimal comprehension Does not verbalize Nods "Yes" and "No" Draws and points	0–6 months	Show me ... Circle the ... Where is ...? Who has ...?
Early Production	The student Has limited comprehension Produces one- or two-word responses Participates using key words and familiar phrases Uses present-tense verbs	6 months–1 year	Yes/no questions Either/or questions One- or two-word answers Lists Labels
Speech Emergence	The student Has good comprehension Can produce simple sentences Makes grammar and pronunciation errors	1–3 years	Why ...? How ...? Explain ... Phrase or short-sentence answers
Intermediate Fluency	The student Has excellent comprehension Makes few grammatical errors	3–5 years	What would happen if ...? Why do you think ...?
Advanced Fluency	The student has a near-native level of speech.	5–7 years	Decide if ... Retell ...

Figure 7. Krashen and Terrell's five stages of language acquisition. Adapted from "The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom" by S. D. Krashen and T. D. Terrell, 1983.

WIDA Performance Definitions

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce or use:

6- Reaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level oral or written communication in English comparable to English-proficient peers
5- Bridging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specialized or technical language of the content areas a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays or reports oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English-proficient peers when presented with grade level material
4- Expanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific and some technical language of the content areas a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic or interactive support
3- Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general and some specific language of the content areas expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs oral or written language with phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic or interactive support
2- Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general language related to the content areas phrases or short sentences oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one- to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support
1- Entering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas words, phrases or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support oral language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support

Figure 8. WIDA’s performance definitions. Available at

<http://www.wida.us/standards/PerfDefs.pdf>.

The inclusion model in education. The inclusion model, where students learn alongside their peers in the mainstream classroom, is supported for several reasons. First, students learn from their peers, so when disadvantaged students mix in the mainstream classroom, they see what successful students look and act like. A second reason is a practical one: The expense of maintaining a separate classroom and teacher is eliminated. Inclusion was the primary model of instruction for SPED students in my 3 years as a mainstream classroom teacher. However, when the SPED students came to my room, a teacher or educational assistant (EA) accompanied them to provide extra support. This does not happen to the same extent with ELL students. The funding for ELL teachers or EAs to assist the mainstream teacher in the classroom, as described earlier, is the problem. Cary (2007) describes in a general way what sounds very much like the situation at Aloha School:

Schools where few teachers have a background in second language theory and practice must typically funnel ELL kids to a specially trained resource teacher. The ELD (English Language Development) pull-out teacher may work with several groups, each composed of students from different classrooms and sometimes different grades. Aligning ELD and grade-level activities across the various rooms and grades is a daunting and near impossible task, except on school-wide themes. (pp. 102-103)

The choice between pull-out and inclusion need not be an either/or question, however, but rather a kind of combination of the two. Interviews with 29 school principals in Florida, conducted in 2006, revealed that “the inclusion setting was not favorable for students with limited previous schooling and low English proficiency level, or students on migrant status” (Yin, 2007,p.29). The how-to book provided to me before beginning the first year of instruction

suggests a similar distinction between servicing newcomers with a low level of English proficiency:

Outside of the initial small groups that introduce basic English vocabulary and sentence structure, ELLs should be working side by side with their English-speaking classmates. What they need most is the practice, support and challenge that come easily and purposefully through interactions with their peers. ELLs should be included as active participants in any classwork in the content areas (Yatvin, 2007, p. 83).

Programs providing support for low-proficiency students as described above are often referred to as Newcomer Programs and are a common pull-out model. Newcomer programs are designed to be short-term and serve the purpose of acclimating students from foreign countries to their new school (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

Professional Development

HDOE hires McREL. To guide Hawaii's ELL teachers in developing their students' language development, in 2010 the HDOE turned to the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL), a nonprofit organization created to help educators. McREL discovered that strategies for improving the use of the English language for native-born speakers are also effective for newcomers to English. McREL did a meta-analysis of over 100 research studies on instructional strategies conducted over the past 30 years. In the comparison, the instructional strategies were compared based on the increase or decrease in the achievement of the experimental group using the strategy. The results were narrowed to an effect size—a numerical representation of how effective the study was (Hill & Bjork, 2008). The results were organized for practical purposes into nine specific categories (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).

Teachers can use the generalized results as an aid in lesson planning, although “it is important to remember that no one category of strategies works in all situations, and that the effectiveness of any strategy depends on the teachers’ thoughtfulness and skill” (Hill & Bjork, 2008, p. 13).

WIDA professional development. Besides the assessment support discussed earlier, the HDOE also turns to its partner WIDA for professional development. Extensive resources are available from WIDA on their website and in hard-copy format. Probably their most practical and oft-used resource is the “CAN DO descriptors.” This tool provides teachers with a guide for what they can expect from a student at varying degrees of English proficiency, as well as with prompts the teacher can use to gauge learning from the non-English-proficient students in their classroom. (See Figure 9.) WIDA also conducts webinars and sends live presenters to Hawaii for meetings with ELL teachers.

Figure 5M: CAN DO Descriptors for the Levels of English Language Proficiency, PreK-12

For the given level of English language proficiency, with support, English language learners can:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 Reaching
LISTENING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point to stated pictures, words, phrases Follow one-step oral directions Match oral statements to objects, figures or illustrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sort pictures, objects according to oral instructions Follow two-step oral directions Match information from oral descriptions to objects, illustrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate, select, order information from oral descriptions Follow multi-step oral directions Categorize or sequence oral information using pictures, objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare/contrast functions, relationships from oral information Analyze and apply oral information Identify cause and effect from oral discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw conclusions from oral information Construct models based on oral discourse Make connections from oral discourse 	
SPEAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name objects, people, pictures Answer WH- (who, what, when, where, which) questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask WH- questions Describe pictures, events, objects, people Restate facts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate hypotheses, make predictions Describe processes, procedures Retell stories or events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss stories, issues, concepts Give speeches, oral reports Offer creative solutions to issues, problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in debates Explain phenomena, give examples and justify responses Express and defend points of view 	
READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match icons and symbols to words, phrases or environmental print Identify concepts about print and text features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate and classify information Identify facts and explicit messages Select language patterns associated with facts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequence pictures, events, processes Identify main ideas Use context clues to determine meaning of words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret information or data Find details that support main ideas Identify word families, figures of speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct research to glean information from multiple sources Draw conclusions from explicit and implicit text 	
WRITING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Label objects, pictures, diagrams Draw in response to a prompt Produce icons, symbols, words, phrases to convey messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make lists Produce drawings, phrases, short sentences, notes Give information requested from oral or written directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce bare-bones expository or narrative texts Compare/contrast information Describe events, people, processes, procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize information from graphics or notes Edit and revise writing Create original ideas or detailed responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply information to new contexts React to multiple genres and discourses Author multiple forms/ genres of writing 	

Variability of students' cognitive development due to age, grade level spans, their diversity of educational experiences and diagnosed learning disabilities (if applicable), are to be considered in using this information.

RG-58

Figure 9. WIDA's CAN DO descriptors. Available at http://www.wida.us/standards/CAN_DOs.pdf.

Summary

How U.S. federal legislation to assist ELLs in the U.S. has evolved over the last 45 years is explained here. To not provide language assistance for new American citizens speaking a foreign language has been established as a form of discrimination based on national origin. Despite the actions of the courts, there are political and economic challenges that affect the carrying out of the well-intentioned legislation to provide additional services for ELLs. Negative attitudes toward immigrants, who are often seen as competing for a limited job pool, influence education policy. This is especially so in times of economic difficulty and high unemployment.

Despite the success of bilingual education, school policies have moved toward rapid development of English as the only mode of instruction without first-language support. Practical and economic factors have influenced this movement.

Joining other states in the WIDA consortium has allowed Hawaii schools to economically access current standards for assessment as well as professional development resources for teachers.

Chapter 3 will explain how I, as a new ELL teacher, analyze my work within the framework of knowledge, rules, and regulations described in Chapters 1 and 2.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This qualitative self-study is pragmatic and constructivist in nature and strived to answer the questions “What factors do new incoming ELL coordinators believe affect student learning?” and “What factors do mainstream teachers of ELLs say affect student learning?” The researcher is a teacher in the project and will, along with other teachers and students, co-construct understanding of ELL student learning from the viewpoints of mainstream teachers and the coordinator of ELL services for Aloha School students.

Qualitative Research

Historically, qualitative research is a much newer methodology than quantitative research. Quantitative methodology has its origins in the physical sciences, where predictable laws and axioms prevail. Over the last 30 years qualitative research has matured into a respected methodology, particularly for its benefits in the study of the social sciences and education. People, rather than inert matter, are the focus of the qualitative study, and people do not so easily conform to laws the way inert matter does. Within the broad context of qualitative research, many subcategories have emerged, although lines of separation are not clearly drawn and a qualitative study is likely to employ a variety of methods. Two prominent types of qualitative research in the educational field are action research (the testing and retesting of new practices) and narrative research (the telling of one’s story). While there are elements of these methodologies used in this study, the methodology of this study most closely aligns to self-study methodology because it is “self-initiated and focused; it is improvement-aimed; it is interactive; it includes multiple, mainly qualitative, methods” (LaBoskey, 2004, p. 842); and it defines validity as a validation process based in trustworthiness (Mishler, 1990). The researcher is new to the field. The participants represent only one site, and therefore the results do not necessarily

allow for wide generalization. The researcher works within a loosely structured program, although directives from administration have resulted in sudden changes to the program. The 2-year experience of providing ELL services at Aloha School have been a continual process of discovery and change. The short time period and newness to the position do not easily facilitate the kind of recursive practices that are central to pure action research methodology. The study does not claim to have discovered one right answer. Rather, by means of a self-study, the researcher in this study can strive to “provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than confirm and settle” (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 20).

This study qualifies as a self-study because it meets the following characteristics of self-study (Samaras & Freese, 2006):

1. It is driven by the researcher’s own inquiry in a particular context.
2. It is a process that allows change of one’s philosophy, in a spiral of “hermeneutic spiral of questioning, discovery, challenge, hope, and change” (p. 43).
3. It builds self-knowledge based on personal experience.
4. It is individual and collective, relying on multiple perspectives to clarify, validate, or offer alternatives to better understand oneself.
5. It is personal and interpersonal, deriving from one’s personal everyday practices but having implications on others and involving connecting with a collective group.
6. It is private and public, beginning with private dilemmas that are written down and made public.

The Role of the Researcher

As a participant in the research project, I take an emic (or insider) role. As the primary teacher in the project, I am a researcher-participant. Interviews with mainstream teachers will

allow for cross-checking of data and triangulation to enhance credibility of the study (Creswell, 2008). This will be important since this project is “backyard” research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The researcher’s immersion in the environment of the setting has the potential to create biased or compromised data. Qualitative or narrative research methods are used primarily.

There are two reasons for this. First are the unique circumstances of this educational setting—the K-8 setting, small school size, and Hawaiian location. The delivery of ELL services at Aloha School does not lend itself to an easy quantitative comparison with other schools. To make such a comparison in a quantitative-only study would not offer a rich understanding of the setting.

Second is that the student participants are primarily of minority races and of lower socioeconomic status and so this study also takes an advocacy and participatory role. “Advocacy researchers are not objective, authoritative or politically neutral. Advocacy researchers see qualitative research as a civic responsibility, a ‘moral dialogue’” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 1049) and “as a means for bringing needed change to our society” (Creswell, 2007, p. 43).

Site and Participant Selection

This project is bound by the time period of 2 years of providing ELL services, the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. The study is conducted most immediately at Aloha School. However, the larger Hawaii Department of Education system, with its systems and structures, including the Aloha School administration, is part of a larger site context. The researcher, six Aloha School mainstream teachers, a state Department of Health mentor, and 80 ELL students are participants in reference to the overall effectiveness of the program. Of these 80 students, the study takes a close look at four new NEP students who are among the highest-need students. The narration of these students’ stories allows for “multiple perspectives, particularly those of typically marginalized voices” (LaBoskey, 2004).

The Four ELL Students. The four students examined closely are described below.

Chen. Chen arrived early in Year One and, as a result, took the old placement test that preceded the W-APT. She scored NEP, without a number reference like the W-APT gives. She scored high on her native language proficiency test. When ACCESS for ELLs test results came out in May, she scored at 2.3 on the 6-point scale, still NEP.

In China Chen was a good student. Disappointed in her first report card, she related to me that she earned A grades in China. She was a serious student and carried a handheld interpreter gadget with her in Year One. I would type instructions into her interpreter; she would press a button and see the message in Chinese. She would respond in the reverse, drawing Chinese characters on the interpreter screen. The device would then display a choice of similar-looking characters, and Chen would confirm which one she was drawing. We discovered similar programs available free on the Internet and would sometimes use the Internet programs to communicate. I also used Google images to share pictures with her to aid in her understanding. Chen worked hard, succeeding in math but struggling with the language demands of her social studies, science, and English classes. During the three periods she was not required to be in a core class, Chen came to my room for classes or for help with her other classes.

Xian. Xian arrived with his sister, Chen, and had an even harder time with English than she did. He also took the old placement test and was determined to be NEP. Like his sister, he also scored a 3 on his native language proficiency test, the highest score possible. When the May ACCESS for ELLs test results came in, he placed at 2.1 on the 6-point scale.

Xian had a more difficult time than his sister in adjusting to his new American school. Being 8 years old, he was much more active and playful than his older sister. Xian was frustrated by his inability to fully participate in lessons or socialize with his peers. His teacher

informed me that he would sometimes crawl on the floor and even bit another student in his first few weeks at school. She persevered in helping Xian to adjust and reported that Xian's classmates were cooperative and even excited to work with a non-English-speaker. Xian spent about 2 hours of his 6-hour day with me developing his English and about 4 hours with his third-grade peers. By the end of Year Two he is easily forming questions to indicate his wants and needs.

Jeannie. Jeannie arrived shortly after the school year began, 4 weeks before Chen. Her initial placement on the old test was NEP. Her native language proficiency, however, was only a 2. By May she moved to 2.3 on the ACCESS for ELLs 6-point scale, the same as Chen.

Jeannie is only 8 months younger than Chen and was placed in the sixth grade. The two girls became a natural match for tutoring in English, although they were very different in background and temperament. Jeannie arrived from the small Micronesian island of Chuuk. The island is about one-fourth the size of Oahu and is home to a little more than 50,000 people. Micronesians have a close relationship with the United States. After World War II, the U.S. tested atomic bombs in the area. The U.S. defeated Japan at Chuuk (then known as Truk) in an important battle of World War II. After the war, as part of peace agreements with Japan, the U.S. controlled Chuuk until independence in 1990. As a result of these events, to this day Micronesians may freely settle in the United States. Families in need of medical care especially migrate for free and better medical care. This was the situation with Jeannie, whose mother had suffered a debilitating stroke. Jeannie's family settled in interim housing near the school that was provided by a private charity for up to a 2-year period.

Jeannie and Chen could not be more different. For want of a better word, Jeannie is wild. I view this as not simply a cultural difference, but also a personality and temperament difference.

Jeannie likes to dance and watch music videos in her free time and has little concern for schoolwork. Chen, on the other hand, when not studying, quietly turns to Chinese-language websites and games. Little is written about the little island of Chuuk where Jeannie spent her beginning years; however, a Google search turns up a description of Chuuk as “colorful, lively, and rough around the edges” (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/federated-states-of-micronesia/chuuk>). This is an apt description of Jeannie.

Dayton. Dayton is Jeannie’s brother, but he did not arrive in Hawaii until the fourth quarter of Year One. By this time the W-APT test was in use, and he placed at a 1 on the 6-point scale. Like his sister, he received a 2 (out of 3) on his native language proficiency test. He arrived after the ACCESS for ELLs, so there is no score for him on that test.

At 13, Dayton was 1 year older than Jeannie when he arrived and was placed in grade 7 when he arrived. Dayton is somewhat more restrained than his younger sister, although not so in comparison to other students. Despite being older, Dayton is junior to his sister in English proficiency. With reference to Krashen and Terrell’s levels of language acquisition discussed earlier, Jeannie, as a result of her 6-month head start on her brother, was in Early Production, while Dayton in the beginning was in Preproduction, unable to easily communicate his wants and needs. Dayton also arrived as the grant that supported Annette, the PPT assisting me, ran out. I did not have the same level of support to organize more individual attention for him. Circumstances made it difficult to create the same sense of community for Dayton. There are a handful of NEP Chuukese girls in the middle school, but Dayton is the only NEP Chuukese boy. On arrival, his situation was not as advantageous as his sister’s. Now and from the beginning, Dayton shows even less interest than his sister in academics, but he is an enthusiastic athlete, enjoying basketball games with his classmates.

The Mainstream Teachers and Mentor of the Four ELL Students. The mainstream teachers and the state Department of Health mentor who worked with the four students and who were interviewed are described next.¹

1. Mrs. Yamada is the Year Two mainstream fourth-grade teacher of Xian. Mrs. Yamada is in her fifth year of teaching. She worked at Aloha School for the previous 4 years as a special education teacher, beginning in her first year with grade 8 students. In her fourth year, the year before teaching Xian, she taught first- and second-grade special education students. I rarely worked in the mainstream classroom, but I did spend at least a dozen mornings in Mrs. Yamada's classroom helping Xian and another newcomer, Mark. Mrs. Yamada impressed me with her classroom management skills. Students were orderly and respectful. This was reflected in an essay written by one of her students for an afternoon pull-out class. The student described Mrs. Yamada as fun and the best teacher she ever had.

2. Mrs. Komoda was the Year One mainstream third-grade teacher of Xian. Mrs. Komoda has worked for Aloha School for all the 5 years I have, and before that. Like Mrs. Yamada, she maintains good control of her class and has a sweet nature that her students respond to. I remember the school principal recognizing her for her teaching skills, awarding her a pin at the end of the previous school year. He specifically recognized her for her understanding and application of lesson planning based on standards. She does not have any previous background or special training in working with ELL or SPED students.

3. Ms. Stanford has taught in the HDOE for 12 years. Prior to that she worked in Texas schools. She started as a middle school language arts teacher but moved to the SPED

¹The mentor should be understood to be included in references to "teacher interviews."

department, where she has taught for the past 9 years. She is a few years away from retirement and is the most experienced of the teachers interviewed. In my first year of teaching, Ms. Stanford worked as SPED teacher for my grade level. She put out extra effort to assist me as a first-year teacher with lesson planning and classroom management. She works with the confidence and automaticity that come with decades of experience.

4. Ms. Ruiz grew up in the Aloha School community and received her college degree in Hawaii. She has taught for 8 years, first in Waikiki and for the last 4 years at Aloha School. The year prior to Year One, we were both seventh-grade teachers and met regularly as part of the seventh-grade team. She teaches seventh-grade social studies. Her room is filled with colorful displays of student work related to the study of Pacific Islands. In a survey of students conducted by the Health Department mentors, Ms. Ruiz placed second as the teacher who most made a difference in their lives. She is a large woman with a large voice and a strong command. She has no special training in ELL or SPED. However, she refers in her comments to her experience working with ELL students in her previous position at a Waikiki school. She is on the younger end of the teachers interviewed.

5. Mrs. Inouye, like Ms. Stanford, is just a few years short of retirement after over 2 decades of working for the HDOE. She teaches seventh-grade math. She also moves in an almost automatic way, having taught the same subject to the same grade level all the 5 years I have been with the school. We worked together as part of the seventh-grade team, along with Ms. Ruiz, the year before my ELL Coordinator appointment. She also has a strong voice and uses it to demand attention in her classroom. She does not have experience as a SPED or ELL teacher, but, like all the middle school core content teachers in the school, she teaches all the

students at her grade level. So while she does not have experience working as a dedicated ELL or SPED teacher, she sees all these students in her inclusion classes.

6. Mrs. Lynwood, the seventh-grade language arts teacher. Her years of experience match mine. We were members of the same university cohort and attended the same classes as we worked through our student teaching assignments in the final year of our teacher preparation program. She is new to Aloha School but worked for the previous 3 years at a school on the west side of the island with a demographic makeup similar to that of Aloha School—a school with a large Hawaiian population and low socioeconomic status. Visiting her room in her first year, I was impressed with her organizational skills. Her room was neat and orderly. She was born and raised near Aloha School by Caucasian parents and attended local schools. Her parents arrived in Hawaii not long before her birth.

7. Bea is the Department of Health mentor referred to previously in this study. Bea has a unique perspective in that, as a mentor, she moves from classroom to classroom and observes the students in several classes. Mentors also staff a large room where students can relax and play games before and after school and during school breaks. Her eldest daughter was my eighth-grade student in my first year of teaching, and two more of her children have followed the eldest through the school. One eighth-grade student remains at Aloha School in Year Two. Bea has many years of experience as a mother and 4 years of experience as a mentor at Aloha School.

Purposeful Selection

The site and participants have been purposefully selected due to their easy access to the researcher. The four students newly arrived to the United States have been chosen because their need is the greatest. There is a greater potential for more noticeable and significant change.

These students are most in need of an advocate. Mainstream teachers were chosen based on their work with the four newly arrived students.

Data Collection, Procedures, and Analysis

I organize personal observations and teacher comments. The data is coded for themes and then analyzed and discussed. Data is reported in the form of narratives, figures, and tables.

Data collected is mostly qualitative and primarily in the form of narrative research. The circumstances of ELL students, however, are very individual. A deeper understanding of the ELL experience can be had through individual stories. “The larger lessons and implications of the human story are infused with life and meaning, are illuminated, made relevant and understood best, through the tangible immediacy of stories of individuals” (Cooper & McNab, 2002, p. 850). Qualitative data is collected in the form of author observations, both recalled and in the form of journal entries. Journal entries are included in Appendix A. Journal entries were irregular, on approximately a monthly basis, and consist of my thoughts at that point in time. I sat at my computer and typed recollections of the days or week’s events for 15 to 30 minutes at a time. One-on-one mainstream teacher interviews were conducted and all but one participant allowed their interviews to be digitally recorded. All participants signed a consent form before interview. This consent form is presented in Appendix B. The list of interview questions is presented in Appendix C and a transcript of the interviews in Appendix D.

The author’s journals were reviewed in search of themes. Six teachers and a paraprofessional were interviewed about their work with the four students. The teacher interviews were also reviewed for themes. Both types of data were assigned codes for themes (Creswell, 2007). The journals and interviews were initially coded as separate documents. Toward the end of the process, after reviewing the codes, I replaced some journal codes with a

new code beginning with the letter T. These are codes that are the same as the teacher interview codes. There are codes unique to the teacher interviews, codes unique to the journals, and shared codes. All codes are presented here and are also listed at the beginning of the journal and interview transcripts appendices at the end of this paper.

Journal Codes:

[1] Curriculum

[2] Scheduling

[T-1] Growth (Progress)

[T-2] Social Skills (Self-Confidence, Asserting Oneself)

[T-3] Teacher Strategies

[T-4] Student Motivation

[T-5] Funding, Support

[T-6] Developing Nations vs. More Developed Nations

Interview Codes:

[1] Growth (Progress)

[2] Social Skills (Self-Confidence, Asserting Oneself)

[3] Teacher Strategies

[4] Student Motivation

[5] Funding, Support

[6] Developing Nations vs. More Developed Nations

[7] Reading/Writing Skills

More regular and more thoughtful journals would provide clearer and more complete data, but this would have been difficult to do in the context of the teaching assignment. I felt an

obligation to service my students, and the students had little to gain (at least in the short term) from my time spent journaling. Journals were reviewed and recoded, especially after teacher interviews were done. After teacher interviews, codes for the journals were analyzed and codes from teacher interviews were duplicated in the journals for ease of comparison.

Teacher interviews were painstakingly (for an inexperienced transcriber) transcribed word for word. While the job was slow and laborious, it did allow for repeated hearings of the interviews, resulting in a thorough understanding. Codes were assigned and then compared to journal codes. For ease of comparison, teacher interview codes were prefaced with a T for the journals. As with the journals, teacher interviews could have yielded more complete and more pointed data if more time were available. More would have been better, but I felt fortunate to receive the level of cooperation and participation that I did, considering the teachers' busy schedules and the fact that there was no obligation for any of them to participate. I also felt limited in my own time for review and analysis because of my obligations to my students. There were a few surprises in the interview transcripts, but for the most part the teacher viewpoints were closely aligned with my own observations and journals. Findings from the data will be presented in Chapter 4 and compared and contrasted in Chapter 5.

Credibility/Validity

The concept of validity in the self-study is redefined as “trustworthiness” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002).

Data will be presented to all teachers participating in the study for the purpose of cross-checking and triangulation (Creswell, 2008). This collaboration is central to self-study methodology. Self-study “requires a commitment to checking data and interpretations with others” (Loughran & Northfield, 1998, p. 9).

Lessons learned from this study can be generalized to some degree across the United States to assist first-year ELL coordinators in understanding what to expect. This is especially true for those who are working by appointment with no previous experience. While schools throughout the U.S. can benefit, the study is even more relevant to Hawaii teachers. Hawaii has a unique racial and ethnic mix when compared to the mainland United States. Hawaii attracts students speaking languages from many different Pacific islands and Pacific Rim countries. This self-study serves a need for professional development and job training for new ELL coordinators beginning service to ELLs in Hawaii public schools.

Human Subjects

The researcher's interaction with Aloha School ELL students will be entirely within the scope of normal duties. In addition, providing aliases in interview transcripts and all other documentation will ensure participants' anonymity and privacy. Official clearance to conduct the study has been obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Hawaii. The audio files and all other research records not used in the written portion of the thesis will be destroyed upon completion of the project. All all data will be treated with absolute confidentiality. As noted previously, all participants will be well informed of the purpose of the research and their rights as participants via a consent form (Appendix B).

Chapter 4: Findings

After reading Chapters 1 through 3 of this self-study, a teacher new to administering an ELL program should have a comprehensive background of the history of ELL services and where we are today in Hawaii in terms of structure for meeting the needs of ELL learners. Chapter 4 will continue to inform the new ELL teacher with insights from my experience working in the HDOE with the knowledge explained in earlier chapters. This is a case study that looks at one teacher's experience in one school, answering the questions "What factors do new incoming ELL coordinators believe affect student learning?" and "What factors do mainstream teachers of ELLs say affect student learning?"

The information is presented in a narrative format, organized chronologically, for easy reading and understanding (Creswell, 2008). Woven within the story, besides the overall experience, are the experiences of four NEP students who arrived in the U.S. at the beginning of Year One. Chapter 4 begins with my experiences implementing the variety of curricula planned. Finally, the observations of other faculty members, obtained through personal interviews, are reviewed and those themes are explained.

Themes that arose from my journaling, and how these themes were revealed, are:

1. Curriculum (my journals only).
2. Program structure (my journals only).
3. Funding (my journals and teacher interviews).
4. Student motivation (my journals and teacher interviews).
5. Student background (my journals and teacher interviews).
6. Student growth (my journals and teacher interviews).

Teacher interviews revealed mostly the same themes. Exceptions were that teachers were not concerned with program structure since the students were included in their regularly scheduled classes. Teachers did not discuss curriculum since they did not teach the students a different curriculum from what the rest of the class was learning. The theme of student background is explained first in a discussion of the four focus students of this study.

The Four ELL Students

Discovering and verifying detailed information about my ELL students was problematic for several reasons. First, the newcomers have limited language skills, so it is difficult to have an extended conversation. Second, students have a right to privacy and it would be inappropriate for me to ask direct questions about their family situation, etc. Third, students, particularly at the middle school level, are often not comfortable sharing information about themselves, especially if it is information that focuses on how they are different from others. Information that was shared voluntarily in the course of normal interactions, or that is a matter of record, is used in describing the students.

Jeannie, the first of the four new ELL students who are the focus of this study, arrived just a week after the beginning of Year One. Jeannie arrived from the Micronesian island of Chuuk. The situation for Chuukese speakers is different from that for most other immigrants. There is little Chuukese language support available for Jeannie, Dayton, and my other Chuukese students. I discovered that this is because the language has no formal agreed-upon format. There is no official Chuukese dictionary or grammar. Very few books are written in Chuukese. Attitudes toward schooling are also different in Chuuk than in, for example, the Philippines or China. School attendance is not mandatory. The school day is often short and sometimes

cancelled. Jeannie, and later her brother Dayton, scored only middle level when tested for their native language proficiency.

My next two of the four ELL focus students arrived about 2 weeks after Jeannie. The siblings, a girl named Chen and a boy named Xian, came to Hawaii from China and had never been to the U.S. before. Chen was placed in seventh grade, determined by her age (12), and Xian was placed in third grade, being 8 years old. Mom and Dad took over their uncle's Chinese restaurant, a simple take-out a few miles down the road from the school. They appeared to be of simple means, although, unlike most of the Micronesian immigrants, they did not depend on government or private charity support.

This difference between the Micronesian immigrants versus the Filipino and Chinese immigrants is a theme that comes up repeatedly in the student experiences working through the curricula described next. One of my responsibilities when a student new to English arrives is to order a native language proficiency (NLP) test, which assesses students' language abilities in their first language and must be administered by a speaker of a student's native language. Aloha School works from a list of interpreters approved to work in the state courts to find administrators for the NLP test. I learned from the interpreter that in terms of schedule and facilities, Chen's and Xian's school in China was not that different from the schools in Hawaii. The interpreter rated both students high in their Chinese language skills. In China they had received some instruction in English as a second language, but their ability to communicate when immersed in their new dominant English-speaking community was almost nil. Their uncle accompanied the family to school to act as an interpreter when enrolling the students. The parents of Chen and Xian also spoke little to no English, and even the uncle, although more capable than they, was not close to being a proficient English speaker.

Curricula

After absorbing the ELL background information presented to me and working through the logistics of organizing a schedule for pull-out services, I needed curricula for my broad range of students. The first choice was helped along by the school structure. The entire school devotes the first 60-90 minutes of the day to reading instruction. In Year One, a reading coordinator tested students and placed them in a reading class based on their test results. My newcomers tested too low in reading to join classes with students near their grade level, so the reading coordinator and I agreed that I would teach an early morning class for newcomers.

My Turn, Your Turn. In Year One the Success for All (SFA) Foundation reading program was in place school-wide. The reading coordinator provided an SFA resource, My Turn, Your Turn (MTYT), a beginning-level curriculum designed for ELLs for the purpose of developing basic conversational English. The SFA reading curriculum is based on a cooperative learning model, so MTYT teaches not only English language acquisition but also cooperative learning skills. The program is comprised of student and accompanying teacher workbooks, CDs, and oversized flash cards. The teacher supplies colored pencils. The program is pre-reading. Students develop vocabulary and grammar skills as they identify flashcards, draw pictures and talk about them, and sing songs. The teacher guides students from a script organized into lessons and units. Being new to ELL and new to elementary students, I found the program very useful. Although it was scripted, there was room for teacher interpretation. I adjusted the pacing of the lessons to the group I was teaching, moving rapidly when students seemed to be already familiar with the vocabulary in the lesson, slowing down when they did not. Students learned vocabulary from numbers to colors to food, clothes, seasons, and the

rooms in a home over a span of about half a year. The program focuses on the domains of Listening and Speaking only, no Reading or Writing. The opportunity to color with crayons as part of the lesson appeals to students' kinesthetic learning style. There are also opportunities to stand, point, and gesture throughout the lessons. Listening to and singing songs appeals to auditory learners, and the student workbook and flashcards appeal to the visual learning style. Middle school students did not object to the cartoon-style format and in fact were more engaged than when working with picture dictionaries designed for adults. This curriculum was especially helpful to me because I had no experience working with students in the lower grades. Using the MTYT plan quickly helped me with pacing and the kinds of activities effective in teaching students in the lower grades. Working from a script and using the provided workbooks saved me time—time I needed to plan for afternoon classes for the higher-level ELL students.

The following description of the working environment in Year One begins to explain the theme of funding that came from my journals and from teacher interviews. Year One was different from Year Two in that I had two assistants in the morning. The first was a PPT, Annette, who lived near the school and was familiar with the school culture. It was not clear to me in Year One that the PPT, funded for students in grades K and 1, was to work only in the mainstream classroom. So although we were not in compliance with the grant, Annette assisted me for the first hour and a half, 4 days a week, in working with a newcomer population of about 10 students, which included Xian, in pull-out sessions. We were careful to include at least one kindergartener or first grader in the room when she was working to adhere to the provisions of the grant that called for her working with those grade levels. The exact number and makeup of the morning sessions would fluctuate as students moved into and out of the school.

More help came from another unexpected and unofficial source. The state Department of Health, funded by a federal grant, employed about five mentors to support middle school students. The mentors' base was a large room on the school campus where students could congregate before school, during lunch, and after school. During the day the mentors attended classes, not as teaching assistants, but to observe and monitor student behaviors. One mentor, Bea, assisted me in working with middle school ELL students about 5 hours a week. Four mornings a week she stretched the boundaries of her job description to work as a tutor with my middle school ELL students, especially with the reading program. The availability of Annette and Bea in Year One, along with my full-time position, was the high point of funding devoted to ELL students, both for years prior and years to follow.

Besides Bea, another fortuitous situation for the ELL program was our physical facilities. We were in one of only a few air-conditioned buildings at the school. Within the building I had a large office that was suitable for a teacher and two students to work in. Next door was a larger classroom suitable for about 10 students. Both rooms opened into the very large teacher workroom, which was unused by teachers most of the class time. So at times Bea would work with Chen and Jeannie in the office while I worked with a few students in the teacher workroom and Annette conducted class for the youngest students in the small classroom. Bea took full responsibility for reading lessons for Chen and Jeannie. Bea is a mother of two teenage daughters and a teenage son, two of whom were students at the school. In addition to helping the girls with their reading, Bea served as a valuable counselor and confidant for the two girls, being well versed in the needs of the students based on her experiences with her own children. Working as a crew of three, Bea, Annette, and I were able to differentiate lessons and meet the individual needs of our students.

When newcomers arrived halfway through the first semester, we formed two classes of MTYT, with Annette leading one class while I led the other. The value of low class size where students can receive individual attention was clear from this experience, yet it turned out to be “out of compliance” due to the conditions of grants funded for the school. Bea began to experience difficulties with her supervisor for not attending to other clerical and administrative duties. In Year Two, it was made clear that the PPT position was not for a pull-out setting, but only for the mainstream classroom. This introduces the second theme identified from my journals: limitations, or lack of flexibility, in the different program structures in place at Aloha School.

Despite our ignorance of all the rules and regulations, however, Year One was off to a very good start. There is an excitement that comes with a new experience. The newcomers were new to America and new to English, and Bea, Annette, and I were new to working with ELLs. Our newcomers arrived in the Preproduction stage, frequently gesturing and pointing to get us to understand their needs. By the time the first semester was over, students were in the Early Production and even Speech Emergence stages, responding to us with phrases and even simple sentences. By the end of the first quarter we had laid a good basic vocabulary foundation for our students and built community. With so much help and so much progress, I planned reading instruction, especially for the middle school students. The theme of program structure that I mentioned frequently in my journal came up as I worked on figuring out how to get the right combination of students together at the right time.

Read Naturally. Arranging a schedule for reading classes meant working with two different bell schedules: one for grades K-5 and one for grades 6-8. Annette and I worked together to teach students of all ages MTYT for the first hour each day. Bea arrived for the

second hour. I left the lower grade students with Annette for their last half hour, while Bea and I worked with middle school students in a 53-minute reading class. We started with level 1 of the reading program Read Naturally, a program I discovered on a shelf in my classroom. The program has eight levels, corresponding to grades 1-8. For each grade level there are 24 short expository texts. Accompanying each text is a worksheet with multiple choice and short answer questions as well as space to write a summary, or “re-tell,” of the story. There is an audio file of every story on a CD. The Read Naturally instructions are for the student to start out by reading for 1 minute from a reading selection as the teacher times the reading and counts any errors in decoding. The student then reads along, out loud, with a professional reader, played from the CD, for three readings. Finally, the student reads aloud a last time for a minute, unaccompanied by the CD, as the teacher again times the student and records errors. In almost every instance, there are significant gains in the before and after readings.

Read Naturally turned out to be a powerful system for new readers and was especially so in Year One since we had the manpower to closely monitor students. Bea worked closely with Chen and Jeannie, keeping them on track and asking additional questions beyond those in the book to monitor comprehension. The brevity of the reading selections easily allows for a complete story cycle each day. The quick daily feedback on the students’ work is motivating to them. Students keep a notebook with their work. They can see their progress as they add to their folder each day. They can also see their number of words read per minute increasing. The program is comprehensive in that it reaches the students in all four language learning domains: speaking as they read the story, listening as they listen to the CD, reading as they read the selection, and writing as they write a summary.

In Year Two, I especially like reviewing students' written summaries with them. I have practiced waiting for the student I am working with to find their own grammar and spelling mistakes. First, when I see an error, I prompt the student to re-read their writing and identify mistakes. If that does not work, I read their writing aloud to them and ask them if what they are hearing is the way that I or another native speaker speaks. If students still cannot identify mistakes, I point the errors out and the student makes the correction. The most common errors I see are errors in verb conjugation in terms of subject-verb agreement ("he go" instead of "he goes") and misuse of tenses ("I go to the beach yesterday"). I continue to use this simple program in Year Two. I like the individual practice and responsibility. I like that students can work at their particular level. There are times when students must wait for me to be available to check their work, but it is not for long. Generally the students are in different phases of the process. Most of them are able to work independently while I move from student to student. Chen, Jeannie, Xian, and Dayton all started this program at level 1. At the beginning of the fourth quarter of Year Two, Chen has progressed to level 4.5, Jeannie is at level 3.5, Dayton is at level 2 (having started 6 months later), and Xian is at level 2.

I find the Read Naturally program to be most helpful to me in assessment. Students are able to complete a complete cycle of literacy practice in one class period. By timing the student for two 1-minute sessions, I get a good indication of their decoding skills and pronunciation ability. Answers on multiple-choice questions help me to understand their comprehension. Writing skills are the last to develop, and I get a daily reminder of each student's writing ability. It is a good measure of students' ability to work independently and with a cold text. Unlike textbook exercises, where one reading selection is usually studied for days and where students

work with the same vocabulary and grammar exercises for days, the Read Naturally program offers the student a brand-new experience each day.

Imagine Learning and Starfall.com. Sandwiched in between direct instruction in the lessons in my ELL program are student sessions on the computer program Imagine Learning. The computer takes over as teacher. Over the summer the school principal purchased 70 licenses of the program. The interactive content is linked via the Internet to a server installed in one of the school computer labs. All the school computers can then access the program from the server. The program is adaptive. Students begin with a pre-test. Then they are fed a stream of activities based on the results of their pre-test. Students log on and are presented a varied menu of stories, games, animation, and music designed to help them with English language acquisition. The program is comprehensive, covering WIDA's four tested domains of Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. I organized time in the school computer labs for group sessions of Imagine Learning throughout the day in Year One. The primary advantages of the program are the wide reach and engaging format. Creating lessons for 70 students spread across nine grade levels and then having the time and energy to present those lessons on a daily basis would exhaust the most enthusiastic teacher. With Imagine Learning, monitoring students on the computer program makes frequent service for all students possible. Elementary students especially find the program to be a fun break from their classroom routine. Besides the engaging computer format, the younger students see going to their own computer table in the air-conditioned computer lab as an adventure. The recommended session time for Imagine Learning is at least 20 minutes daily. I moved nearly all students to 30 minutes. Older students used the program for longer sessions, sometimes for 50 minutes or more. There are some computer distraction issues that all schools experience, mostly at the middle school level—the problem of

students accessing the Internet or other programs on the computer without permission. There are also hardware and network problems at times.

Midway through the year, at an ELL training session put on by Edison Learning, a consulting company that serves our school, I learned about Starfall.com, a free literacy program available on the worldwide web and well suited to ELL students. Similar to Imagine Learning, this free website is a valuable tool when technical problems make accessing the Imagine Learning program from our school server impossible. There are two primary differences between Imagine Learning and Starfall.com. First, with Imagine Learning, students do not have a choice of programs—the content is delivered like a TV program, albeit interactive. Students occasionally are offered a choice of activities, but for the most part, they must work on a pre-determined program delivered for their level of learning. With Starfall.com, without close supervision, students can click on any level or type of activity they like. A second difference between the two is that Imagine Learning collects and reports data—student scores on a variety of activities, including even audio files of student oral readings and oral responses to activities. Starfall.com does not collect any information from users and has no recording features. Both programs have worksheets and writing prompts that can be printed out and then filled out manually by students. This makes possible a writing component that is connected to the stories and other literacy activities students read and hear online.

Individual student results from Imagine Learning varied and illustrate a recurring theme noted by me in my journals and by other teachers in the teacher interviews. That theme is student motivation, and it made a difference for my English learners. In Year One, standing in the back of the classroom observing students on the program, I noticed some LEP students fully absorbed. In fact, the two students whose language developed enough to be exited from the ELL

program at the end of the year were two of the most engaged students in the program. They quickly progressed to reading full stories, presented in an online book-like format, complete with pictures. The program prompts students to read the story aloud, recording their voice, and then plays the reading back to them. Students also have the option to hear the story read to them. As students reach the level of reading full stories, they also can print imaginative story response sheets, many with graphic organizers and others with simple re-tell prompts. I collected these printouts from the printer and had students sit at tables and fill them out for a written component to the program.

At the other end of the spectrum were a few students who would look for ways to circumvent the program, figuring out how to play music from other programs on their headphones while looking at the Imagine Learning screen, hoping to go unnoticed. This was a short-lived fad, however, as once the teachers were aware of it, it was easy to stop. A few students would have days when they were inattentive, looking at each other and around the room instead of focusing on their program. I found this to be no different than lessons in the regular classroom, and it happened less frequently with the computer-based programs.

At lower levels of English proficiency, students engaged in activities beginning with letter recognition. Students' length of time on one skill varies depending on their responses to activities. When student responses show mastery, they receive new content, such as phonics, word sounds, and simple stories. Much of the format is in the form of animated games.

Imagine Learning is not marketed as a teacher replacement, which is supported by their suggestion for 20-minute daily sessions. The program is proposed as a supplement to classroom learning. I find the program to be an effective tool to expand my reach to my large and varied ELL population. I am able to devote more time to preparing direct instruction lessons for my

most needy NEP students. The program helps fill in gaps that occur when a student completes a lesson early or when one of the adults is absent and the remaining teacher cannot teach all students in one group. There was some questioning of my use of the program based on the idea that students need my expertise as a teacher and use of the program reduced my role to that of a computer monitor. It is true that much of my time with the program is spent on computer access and technical issues and not directly interacting with students about English. Feelings of guilt cause me to consider using computer programs less, and I have reduced the use of Imagine Learning in Year Two. However, the primary concern is the students. I attempt to be objective about the use of the program, disregarding concerns about how I am perceived as a teacher and instead concern myself with what is best for my students. In Year One, Imagine Learning and Starfall.com were the only support that I provided for my LEP students in grades 3-5.

There were times of impatience and frustration for my LEP students. Imagine Learning was a useful activity at these times. Jeannie, especially, would at times be defiant, refusing to cooperate with Bea or me. Giving her an option to work independently on the computer provided a needed break for her and us, yet she could still improve her language skills. Chen was not one to complain, but I would sometimes see a tired expression on her face and would adjust her plan to include more computer time. These were times when the themes of student motivation and curriculum would intersect. It was necessary to adjust the curriculum to increase the motivation.

Imagine Learning provides encouraging color printouts for students that congratulate them for reading a certain number of books or mastering a certain number of vocabulary words. There is little reaction from students, however, and I find I pay little attention to the monthly reports I receive from Imagine Learning. Without being involved in the planning and delivering

of their lessons, somehow the assessment results were not meaningful to me. Also, the reports seem to show all “good news” that doesn’t always correspond with my observations of students’ performance on other classroom activities.

Spectrum Writing. In the third quarter of Year One I introduced a writing workbook to my middle school students. I discovered Spectrum Writing, a full-color consumable writing workbook, available in levels 1-8. After 5 months of exposure to the English language and 2 to 3 months of writing responses to Read Naturally, Chen, Jeannie, and Xian were easily able to follow the prompts in a level 1 writing book. Before the end of the year all the newcomer students were working in level 2. One advantage of the workbook (which would apply to many different books) was just the novelty of introducing something new. Like Imagine Learning and MTYT had been earlier, here was a new experience with language. There was an enthusiastic response in the beginning. This curriculum was also a practical choice. Over the 2 years I was able to give every student a book. Students in all grades have a writing lesson at their level that can be accessed quickly and easily, without waiting for the teacher to produce something for them. In the fourth quarter Chen, Jeannie, and Xian were entering level 3 of Krashen and Terrell’s levels of language acquisition—Speech Emergence. With the addition of the writing workbooks we now had three resources to rotate among the students when not teaching group sessions of MTYT. The need for change and introduction of new materials is a finding in connection with the theme of curriculum.

The Spectrum Writing workbooks were not my only writing resource, however. For larger group classes, where all students could work at about the same level, I used writing prompts from Step Up to Writing, a writing program used in our school’s mainstream classes. I also made use of textbooks and Internet sources for writing prompts. In the third quarter I used

writing prompts daily as the curriculum for my midday grades 4 and 5 class instead of having them work on Imagine Learning. The intent was to raise the students' scores on the yearly ACCESS for ELLs assessment. Writing scores on the annual test lagged behind the domains of Reading, Listening, and Speaking. I provided limited guidance for the students. I advised them that they would have limited time on test day to complete a writing exercise and no help from me. The time allowed for the test, about 30 minutes, would be about the same as the approximately 30 minutes we met together each day. I researched age-appropriate writing prompts on the Internet and used the Step Up to Writing resources provided by the school to provide daily prompts for the students. I started each lesson with 5 to 10 minutes of discussion and made notes on the board, sometimes using graphic organizers, to aid and inspire the writers. I circled the room as students were writing, correcting technical issues and giving advice. Toward the end of the period I was swamped with students wanting me to read their writing.

Xian was in grade 4 in Year Two and came to the computer lab every day with his ELL classmates. I tried working with him on writing a couple of days, but his skills were too low to keep up with his classmates. He continued to work on Imagine Learning. I also spent time with Xian and the only other NEP student in the fourth grade, Stan, in their mainstream class several mornings a week. I found, however, that Xian was capable of doing most of the exercises in the class. He didn't need my technical assistance, but he did need a behavior monitor to keep him on task. When the testing began, I gave up the morning visits. Xian benefits from the fact that his teacher is a former SPED teacher, and a SPED teacher or EA were in the classroom most of the time. Xian was able to keep up with his math classes and complete language arts exercises, although when it came to tests, he had trouble responding to oral vocabulary prompts from the teacher. Xian's teacher had a good command of the class and a good rapport with her students. I

did not feel very needed. I think the decision to take on additional reading classes in the morning for the middle school NEP students rather than service Xian and Stan in the fourth grade class was the correct one. Overall, in connection with the theme of program structure, I found that working with students in a pull-out environment was the more practical choice than working in the mainstream classroom.

Reflecting on the achievements of Chen, Jeannie, and Xian in Year One amplifies my concerns about Dayton. He arrived near the beginning of the fourth quarter. I was losing my PPT, and Bea was devoting most of her time to teaching Chen and Jeannie. Dayton was not ready to work with them, and I was not able to give him my undivided attention. I guided him to the different resources available and was able to enforce some compliance from him, but he did not receive the same level of service that his predecessors did at the beginning of the year. His sister Jeannie benefitted from structure and supervision from Bea and the association of Chen, whose background in Chinese education made her an example of good student behaviors.

Classes in Year Two

I started Year Two with an approach similar to Year One. My approach was to service as broad a community as possible. The school schedule worked out to be more suitable for pulling students out in Year Two. I was able to pull out almost all of my approximately 28 middle school students and assign them to one of three class periods. I found that working with individualized resources, such as the writing books and Read Naturally, was difficult to monitor with a larger class. I decided to teach one lesson to all the students, much like their mainstream English classes. In the first quarter I was inspired to use a novel as the basis for my classes. I observed my 13-year-old son reading *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan over the summer break. He was entranced, reading not only the original novel but also several sequels, and all

within a few days. I purchased the book and the audio CD. I also discovered very complete teaching resources online. This was fine for most of the students. However, the novel was too advanced for my NEP students.

Unfortunately, there was no Annette and no Bea in Year Two. The program suffered, particularly Jeannie and Dayton. Because of the scheduling of his core classes, Dayton was only available to me during the same period as many other students, all of whom were well ahead of him in their English language proficiency. I had to place Dayton on the Imagine Learning program, mostly unsupervised, and sometimes had him work in his writing book, again mostly unsupervised, while I guided the rest of the students in reading, discussing, and writing about *The Lightning Thief*. There were other NEP students who needed more individualized attention as well. They sometimes sat through the classes on *The Lightning Thief*, understanding what they could. At other times they would work with the Read Naturally program, write in the Spectrum Writing workbooks, or log on to Imagine Learning. Because of her discipline, Chen was successful in using her time well on three programs while her LEP peers were reading the novel. She used Imagine Learning, Read Naturally, and Spectrum Writing to her advantage. Jeannie and Dayton were less successful, although both did make some progress. This was another example of the effect the students' backgrounds had on their achievements. Chen was able to practice study habits learned in her Chinese city school, skills the Micronesian students lacked.

The Lightning Thief was an engaging book for my middle school students. By the end of the first quarter, however, interest was waning. I still wanted to keep my classes focused on one resource to keep all students on task. So in the second quarter I began teaching from a textbook written for ELL students. A new and very high-quality sample edition of a textbook titled

Milestones Level C was given to me at a state training. Level C indicated that the book was appropriate for LEP students. I photocopied the book for my students. I noticed very quickly that many of the grammar issues my ELL students struggle with were addressed in one textbook. Teacher resources that came with the book helped me to quickly plan lessons that appealed to different learning styles and were well paced. On average, the interest level was not higher, but the rapid movement from activity to activity and from reading selection to reading selection ensured that students dissatisfied with one aspect of the lesson would soon have a transition to something more interesting. The Milestones assessment program included four quizzes leading up to one unit test, with each quiz representing about 1 week of classes and the test covering about a month of classes. Quizzes and tests were formatted with sections that included items assessing vocabulary, reading strategy, comprehension, and writing. The writing rubrics in the textbooks were especially helpful, and the variety and styles of writing that resulted from the writing prompts provided a more complete picture of the student's writing ability compared to relying on the results from Read Naturally alone. The use of Milestones reinforced my observations in Year One about the theme of curriculum—namely, that students need change to maintain their interest. Also in connection with the theme of curriculum, I noticed that resources designed for ELL students have a better and greater mix of visual supports, such as graphic organizers and pictures.

There was a significant change in approach in the second semester of Year Two. For the previous year and a half the middle school teachers had repeatedly expressed concerns about sending students to me from their art, PE, or gardening classes but still having the students appear on their attendance reports and electronic gradebooks. When report cards were issued, the teachers sending students to me would have their class name and teacher name on the report

card with a grade I supplied them with. I was not happy with it either, but the principal refused to set up formal ELL classes. After 1-1/2 years, teacher complaints resulted in the principal agreeing to formal ELL classes, but only for the 10 ELL middle school students. For the last semester of Year Two, I would enter attendance and grades, and report cards would reflect that students were in the ELL class with me as the teacher. This was a victory for everyone in terms of the theme of program structure. The ELL program was being recognized as worthy of its own class.

I organized the 10 NEP students in two classes for the third quarter. All but the last 2 weeks of the third quarter made up the testing window for the annual ACCESS for ELLs test. I needed time to administer the test to 70 students, so I taught classes to only the 10 NEP middle school students about 4 hours a week, plus I continued about 2 hours a week of Imagine Learning sessions for students in grades 4 and 5. The rest of my schedule was devoted to testing. For curriculum in the third quarter, I decided that the textbook approach was the most effective. However, the Milestones C book was too advanced for my NEP students. I uncovered textbooks purchased several years earlier that were similar in format and complete with teacher resources—and, better yet, there were level A (beginning level) books available. It was not possible to teach all 10 students in one period due to the scheduling difficulties explained in Chapter 2, so two small classes, one with four students and one with six students, were set up. With the small classes and level A textbook, the NEP students were able to fully participate. I felt the quality we experienced in Year One was back, although to make it happen it was necessary to stop servicing the LEP students. It was exciting to see my NEP students, who sit quietly and struggle in their mainstream core content classes, lively and successful in the new ELL class. There were laughter and learning as students followed the activities from the

textbook. The level A textbook, from a different publisher than the A level book used in the second quarter, included more kinesthetic and oral language activities that all students could easily participate in. Chen became a class leader, earning a B in the class. There were a couple of more B's as well, and a few C's, Jeannie earning one of them. Even the D's were honestly earned, whereas my ELL students normally would get D's only as an accommodation in their mainstream core classes. Dayton remained at the D level, but he was able to fully participate and grow in the class. Student growth was not dramatically noticeable to me in my role as the students' teacher working with them every day. However, the movement forward in Read Naturally book levels and the ability of students to complete the textbook tests were evidence of growth, one of the themes noted in my journals.

I improved my grouping and expanded my services to my 10 NEP middle school students in the fourth quarter of Year Two. The principal, after several requests, agreed to set up two more classes, Reading Workshops, for my NEP students. In the fourth quarter I am teaching 8 of the 10 students for two periods a day. Although the principal approved all 10 students, the registrar was unable to group two of the students in my classes due to scheduling difficulties. This is more evidence of how program structure concerns impacted my time and the services the students received. The NEP students work on their reading skills, using Read Naturally and some Imagine Learning, for one period and work from a textbook in a second period. Whereas in the second quarter I taught the textbook classes to all NEP students from the same level A book, in the third quarter I grouped the students differently, moving six students up to the level B textbook while keeping four students in a separate class using the level A textbook. Students in the B class were able to perform at passing levels, more evidence related to the recurring theme of student progress and growth.

The greatest insight to my students' abilities comes from the annual ACCESS for ELLs test. Unfortunately, the results for Year Two are scored by the test provider in the mainland U.S. and results were not available in time for the publication of this study. The ACCESS for ELLs test is the most comprehensive and revealing summative assessment of ELL students and is important because it determines if a student has achieved English language proficiency. In Year One, a school counselor aided me by testing all students in grades 1 and 2. The Student Services Coordinator tested the kindergarteners. In Year Two the counselor was not available, so I had the responsibility to test 70 students in grades 1-8 on my own. The speaking test is the most time-consuming because it is a one-on-one test that can take 15 minutes or more. It is the most personal and informative test to me. There is little time in the regular class schedule throughout the year to interact with students in this way. More than any other assessment, the speaking test allows me as the teacher to see how my students struggle to find the words to express themselves.

Teacher Interviews

Midway through the second quarter in Year Two, on November 8, 2010, I interviewed four of six mainstream teachers who had worked with Chen, Jeannie, Xian, and Dayton since their arrival at Aloha School. Two weeks later, on November 22, 2010, I interviewed two more teachers and Bea, the Department of Health mentor. I went to each teacher's classroom after school and interviewed them individually, recording and then transcribing their responses by typing them into my computer. One teacher, Mrs. Yamada, refused to be recorded. Her comments were reconstructed from notes. I used a series of very general open-ended questions, starting with "Describe any changes you've seen in the school experience of [student name]" and ending with "Anything else about the ELL program in general?" (See Appendix C for a

complete list of the questions.) Teachers spoke for a total of about 60 minutes, or an average of about 8 minutes each. A dominant theme that emerged from the interviews was student growth. Teachers almost unanimously noted considerable growth in all four students selected for the study. The one exception was Xian's Year Two teacher, Mrs. Yamada. Her observations were at odds with Xian's Year One teacher, Mrs. Komoda. I consider two possible reasons for the difference in their views. Mrs. Yamada, the Year Two teacher, commented on many irritating habits Xian exhibits in class, such as putting non-edible things in his mouth and fidgeting with pencils and other objects. It is possible that being in the middle of the school year, working with Xian on a daily basis for 4 months, made it difficult for her to look back and take a longer view of his growth. It is also possible that Mrs. Yamada, who holds a degree in special education and therefore had all the special education students at her grade level in her class, was overwhelmed with the special needs of other children and was therefore not able to give Xian more personal attention. I noticed when I was in the classroom that Xian needed to be monitored to stay on task. When I sat next to him and insisted he stay on task, he would do so, but when given the opportunity, he was restless and distracted.

Student motivation was also a dominant theme, mentioned repeatedly by the interview group. Students with good attendance and a desire to learn outperformed their more reticent classmates. In general, students from Micronesia struggled more than students from larger, more developed countries, with the Philippines and China being the larger countries in this study.

In connection with students' motivation, a surprise was that two teachers interjected the name of a fifth student while discussing the four students who are the subject of the study. The fifth student is a seventh-grade girl, Angela, who arrived at Aloha School in the first quarter of Year Two as a transfer from another Hawaii school. She came to Hawaii in 2008 from

Micronesia and over a period of over 2 years had moved from NEP level to LEP. She attracted the attention of teachers because of her high motivation. Teachers noticed her asking questions and making a strong effort to keep up with her class work. I also observed in this student a congeniality, forthrightness, and confidence not usually associated with Micronesian ELL students at the middle school level. We did not know Angela for long. She moved away in the second quarter of Year Two.

There are, however, examples of Micronesians in the elementary grades who have assimilated and acculturated in the community. They have improved their English skills to a point that they would not be easily recognized as immigrants in an ELL program by an outside observer. There are two important findings in this connection. First, in connection with student background, students who enter an English-speaking school at a young age have an advantage in their language development over students who begin their American schooling at the middle school level. The younger students have more time to develop their language skills and begin at a level that is closer to their young classmates, who are also in the beginning stages of language development. Overlapping with the theme of background is the theme of structure. Schools are very focused on beginning literacy skills in the lower grades. There are more time, more programs, and more interventions in place for students with low English literacy in the lower grades.

Teachers commented at length on Chen's hard work and growth. I see two themes that explain this. First is motivation, her desire to succeed. The second is background. In China, Chen and Xian grew up in an urban setting surrounded by business and enterprise. In Hawaii, Chen and Xian live in a privately owned home next to the Chinese restaurant that Mom and Dad operate. Chen and Xian are the restaurant's only additional help. Xian hangs around the

restaurant, not helping much, possibly because he is only 8 years old, but also possibly because, in the view of one teacher (Ms. Stanford), “I think he’s probably a little spoiled boy at home.” Chen, however, is front and center, manning the counter of the fast-food style restaurant, taking and ringing up orders and then passing them on to Mom and Dad during the dinner period. She also acts as an interpreter, having exceeded her parents in English language proficiency. It was the view of the teachers that the constant exposure to English-speaking patrons and the strong family work ethic help to explain Chen’s success in school. A personal experience involving a Micronesian family supports this finding. The father of three of my Micronesian ELL students happens to be employed at a restaurant in the same shopping complex where I hold a part-time job. These students are those mentioned earlier who are in the lower grades and exhibit a confidence and comfort with English that is nearly on par with their classmates. By contrast, my struggling students are for the most part dependent on subsidized housing and their parents are unemployed.

Another dominant theme from all teachers and Bea was the social development of students. As their English proficiency, especially in speaking and listening, developed, so did their social life. Teachers noted the newcomers mixing more and more with native speakers in school activities and in the classroom as their ability to communicate increased. Mrs. Komoda, after describing the early biting and pinching from Xian, noted that as time progressed he was “a happy child.”

Teachers also noted significant language development in Jeannie. The teachers’ observations matched my own. Jeannie is writing longer sentences and paragraphs, speaking compound sentences, and sometimes asking questions in class. However, teachers also noted inappropriate behaviors from Jeannie. She is inconsistent in studying and turning in

assignments. She seeks attention at times by using profanity, acting tough and talking boldly about fighting, or using other inappropriate language. Dayton also continues to exhibit immature and inappropriate behavior in an effort to get attention, although to a lesser degree than his sister. These behaviors are supporting examples for the theme of how background affects ELLs. There are differences I noted between the Micronesians compared to the students from the Philippines and China. Most of the other Pacific Islanders find Jeannie's and Dayton's attention-getting behaviors amusing (therefore encouraging them), whereas Chen and the Filipino students are more taken aback. Growing up in a more developed country, with a more developed education infrastructure, makes transition to American schooling easier. China, with its population of over 1 billion, and the Philippines, with a population over 75 million, are much more developed than Micronesia. The benefits and opportunities that come with an education and more refined social graces are more on display in these countries than in Micronesia.

Five of the seven teachers interviewed talked about interventions and accommodations they used with Chen, Jeannie, Dayton, and Xian. However, in agreement with my findings on funding, they also bemoaned the lack of funds to more fully support the ELLs. Ms. Ruiz put it this way: "Our system for ELL kids doesn't work. We're kind of failing them, in my opinion. You can't just put them in and say 'here you go.' We need greater state support."

There were optimistic comments as well. "I think it's working better than it has [in the past]" was how Ms. Stanford expressed it. "I think we're doing what we can with the resources we have" was Ms. Ruiz's comment.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

The View of the ELL Coordinator

My work with Aloha School's ELL population started with a wide reach, an attempt to save every ELL student from failing. Nearing the end of Year Two, the program has evolved into pointed service directed at the most needy. The enthusiasm and energy exuded in the beginning has been tempered by the reality of a shrinking budget and bureaucratic malaise. I learned that there are human resources who want to help Aloha School ELLs, but due to lack of funds and conflicting regulations, the program will shrink to two half-time teachers in Year Three. On the day I wrote these concluding words, I learned that the PPT position that serviced my K-1 level students will be eliminated in Year Three. Two home school assistants at the district office who assisted with native language proficiency tests will also have their positions eliminated for Year Three. The contract for the services of the school reading specialist and two part-time tutors working under her direction is being terminated. What stands out in answer to the first research question ("What factors do new incoming ELL coordinators believe affect student learning?") is funding. As I noted in my journals, and as Ms. Ruiz reported in teacher interviews, the results of inadequate funding are a reduction in services for ELL students. The need to eliminate two positions boiled down to a necessity of eliminating art, music, library, or ELL. The compromise decided upon was for the librarian and art teacher to share ELL responsibilities. The art teacher taking responsibility for middle school ELL students in Year Three will have just one period in the school schedule taken away from her art-teaching duties. This equates to 208 minutes, or about 3.5 hours per week. The librarian will continue to work as librarian, with a similar amount of time set aside for ELL coordinator duties for the lower grades. The loss of hours from an ELL teacher, combined with the loss of grant money for the lower

grades and the elimination of the reading coordinator and her assistants, means there are no resources for struggling ELL students beyond their mainstream classroom teachers. This theme of underfunding works hand in hand with the theme of program structure. There are little or no programs to structure for ELLs without funding.

The many different supplemental programs implemented in my Year One and Year Two will mostly fall by the wayside in light of the budget cuts. I used a wide variety of curricula over the 2 years servicing Aloha School's ELLs. I used technology to extend my reach to all my ELL students, with the advantage that I still had time for one-on-one and small group interaction with my most needy NEP students. Textbooks provided a comprehensive curriculum that would be time-consuming to create from scratch. Spectrum Writing workbooks facilitated writing instruction for the wide range of abilities in my ELL population. The newcomer pull-out program in Year One was effective in quickly bringing newcomers to a point where they could participate in the mainstream classroom. The rich descriptions of curriculum, a major theme of my journals, indicate that a broad-based and varied curriculum helps maintain interest for students.

Yet despite the successes there are concerns. Xian started with Aloha School in grade 3, so although his language proficiency is low, he has had more time to catch up. He also has a sister who is making rapid progress and a hard-working family to support him. He is happy and confident, so I feel confident that as he matures he will take the steps needed to succeed in school.

Dayton is the student who causes me the most worries and regrets. Wasn't there a way that I could have found more time for him? He is athletic and likeable and shows more personality and language ability, but he is still well below par in his English proficiency. Journal

data suggests that funding and scheduling are not the only challenges. His background and motivation also affect his learning.

In a school ELL population of 80, like that of Aloha School, generalizations must be made to help in setting up programs. The greatest reward, however, is getting to know students individually and finding a way to support their learning.

Mainstream Teacher Comments

Teacher interviews were conducted prior to the planning of the schedule for the following year, so the severity of the funding cuts for the next school year did not come up in the interviews, although comments offered by two teachers, Ms. Ruiz and Mrs. Inouye, bemoaned a lack of support for ELLs. Teachers spent more time talking about student background and motivation. These topics lead the list of answers to the second research question, “What factors do mainstream teachers of ELLs say affect student learning?”

Teachers were near-unanimous in commenting on the four focus students making rapid progress toward English proficiency in Years One and Two. Based on teacher comments, Chen made the greatest strides, helped along by her strong academic background in her native language and her cultural orientation toward discipline and hard work. In the second quarter Chen passed the state HSA test in math, one of only two NEP middle school students to earn a passing grade on the high-stakes test.

Tied to the rapid progress was a recognition of student motivation. Again Chen was repeatedly mentioned for her hard work and desire for success. Angela, the new student who was not one of the four selected for the study, was noted for her desire to learn.

Teachers also recognized Jeannie for making great strides in her oral language and speaking skills. Her motivation, however, was spotty, sometimes off and sometimes on. She

earned praise from an independent local TV show cameramen when she danced in the school talent show. His unsolicited comment was that she should learn to sing along with her dancing since she has noticeable talent.

There is a strong correlation between social skills and language proficiency based on teacher comments. Teachers noted more interaction between the newcomer ELLs and their native-speaker classmates as the newcomers developed their communication skills. Teachers also noticed more self-confidence and general happiness as students improved their language skills.

Comparing the Data

Generally, the teachers interviewed and I have very similar views about the ELL program. We all see significant growth in the language abilities of the students studied. We all notice the faster growth and academic skills of our Chinese and Filipino students, which suggests that student background and/or student motivation are important factors in success at school. There is a difference in emphasis between the ELL coordinator and the mainstream teachers. Two mainstream teachers mentioned state funding and support. For the other four mainstream teachers, funding was not mentioned. This may be more of a reflection on their lack of involvement in funding issues. The ELL coordinator is more directly involved with ELL expenditures and, therefore, more likely to comment on shortages of funding.

In this study, as the ELL coordinator with pull-out classes, curriculum was a major concern for me. Mainstream teachers teaching ELL students in their inclusive classrooms did not have a separate curriculum, so curriculum was not a concern for them. The teachers interviewed showed knowledge of modifications and accommodations to their existing curricula.

One teacher commented on the need for additional support to make these modifications effectively, but the others did not express any concerns.

Recommendations

Having used two approaches in the 2 years, first a broad-based program that reached out to all ELL students and second a narrowed approach that focused on primarily NEP students, I recommend focusing on the most needy. This leads to a second recommendation, the need for professional development to educate teachers in best practices to reach those students who have advanced beyond the NEP stage but are still in need of additional support.

Professional Development. Professional development needs to be more coordinated to be more effective, especially now that school budgets are being cut. Mainstream teachers have their hands full as class sizes increase and support staff decreases due to the budget cuts. It is unrealistic to expect teachers to keep the ball rolling, or rather juggle several balls at once, and at the same time study and apply multiple teaching strategies offered to them from multiple sources—one system from WIDA for ELLs, one system from the HDOE for SPED students, another system from Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) for “kids in the middle,” and another system from the HDOE for everybody else. In a school with a large enrollment it may be possible to sort out these different programs and delegate them to different teachers, but in a school with as small an enrollment as Aloha School, where one teacher teaches an entire grade level, there is an overload of information.

Staffing and Budget. Of course, more personnel will help ELLs, but not only ELLs need help. It is easiest to call for more money, but there are organizational changes that can be made. The bureaucracy and duplication of programs at Aloha School, if streamlined, could

accomplish more than the current system, where mentors, PPTs, and EAs have limited roles that cannot overlap.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited by the small sampling of students. My experiences at Aloha School represent just one school, and one with a small enrollment. The school has a high percentage of low-income families, about 70%, as indicated by free and reduced-price school lunches. The school also has a high percentage of ELL students, over 15%. The school has also experienced a high turnover of ELL coordinators. The location of the study, a rural community in an island state, and the demographics of Pacific Rim students are very different from the mainland U.S., where the ELL population is overwhelmingly Hispanic. All of these factors need to be considered when considering this study as an example of an ELL program.

The relatively short time span, along with the brevity of teacher interviews and author journals, are also limitations of the study.

Future Research

This study raises new questions. Further research on the value of different curricula could answer questions about what curricula are most valuable. A quantitative study that examines students' progress on the battery of assessments taken in the mainstream and ELL classes can lead to conclusions about the effectiveness of the ELL program and what needs there are for professional development for mainstream teachers.

Personal Insights

I hold a collection of feelings as I near the end of 2 years of working with the Aloha School ELL population, feelings as diverse as the students. First is a recognition that history repeats itself. After decades of progress in funding and attention to programs for ELLs, the

situation has reversed. In response to the economic slowdown experienced since 2008, funding for ELL services has been cut. In Year One I spent more than \$1,000 on instructional materials for my ELL students as the full-time ELL teacher. In Year Two there is no budget for instructional materials. In Year One a district ELL resource teacher was in place. The position was eliminated in Year Two. Funding cuts have resulted in the elimination of my full-time ELL position for the 2011-2012 school year. I am assigned to the Special Education Department for the next school year. My feelings about the situation are mixed. I developed an attachment and affection for my ELL students over the last 2 years. I want them to succeed. However, I also have a business background and am a taxpayer. I lean to the right of the political spectrum and am very conservative with my personal income. I like to see a balanced budget, and I don't think public funds can be depended upon to fix all the inequities in the world. So I can accept the changes that are coming about, yet, should I not be successful in transferring to another ELL position, I will miss my experience working with English language learners.

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Appendix A: Journal

Journal Codes:

[1]—Curriculum

[2]—Scheduling

Interview Codes:

[T-1] Growth (Progress)

[T-2] Social Skills (Self-Confidence, Asserting Oneself)

[T-3] Teacher Strategies

[T-4] Student Motivation

[T-5] Funding, Support

[T-6] Developing Nations vs. More Developed Nations

[T-7] Reading/Writing Skills

4-23-10—I met with Bev (from Edison Learning—consultants) on 4-22 for a couple of hours. Best thing that came out of it was the plan to have a lesson with each grade level—not Imagine Learning—for each grade level once per week. At the same time the lesson is going on other students can be on Imagine Learning [1]. Goal is to have one lesson per week that is a priority with teachers that students regularly attend [2]. Can be review of content that mainstream teacher wants reviewed, or can be at my initiation, or a combination. Preview vocabulary was mentioned several times by Bev [2].

Showing video of Civil War was a good suggestion by Bev for Dayton and perhaps Michael [T-4].

Bev modeled empathy and compassion with Dayton [T-5]. Dayton showed up at my office at beginning of middle school lunch. I am usually at V-103 with grades 4-5 at that time, so I was not aware that he is not eating lunch. It turns out the problem is not that he doesn't like the food, it appears to be that he doesn't have ID and is not comfortable going there to take care of what's needed to get lunch, even though Ese and his sister Frida go. So Bev walked with me and him to the cafeteria and café manager got him an ID and he got a lunch and brought it back to S-1 and ate alone. Jeannie was in cafeteria and was very friendly to Bev. She came up to her and Dayton. I commented to Bev what a difference 6 months makes. Jeannie arrived about 6 months ago, Dayton a couple of weeks ago [T-1].

Elaine relayed strategies she used this week with Dayton. She taped notes on objects throughout her classroom with the name of the item. She played a game with him to send him around the room identifying the object [T-3]. She also took him in the garden this week. I did not hear about that yet, but he seemed happy there. I could possibly do more on my own, but I need to get him out with more people, including people his own age, not just in classroom with me [T-3]. He is doing a lot of Imagine Learning [1]. I asked Rosemary to take him in English class and have him work in picture dictionary and workbook [T-3].

5-8-10—Bev spent time with me Thursday and also brought the vice principal with her for a few minutes. Bev and I started in my office. I was working with Dayton. Dayton is reading level 1 from Read Naturally [1]. He doubles his reading time from first reading to final reading. He also answers the multiple choice questions well and even makes good attempts at written responses. I am slow and patient with him, and when guided, he chooses the correct multiple choice answer. His written responses are related to the material, although not exactly what is

asked, and not very clear and complete. I had less success the day before helping Dayton with the Oxford picture dictionary and workbook [1]. He required a lot of assistance in understanding what was being asked and how to answer it. I needed him to be self-sufficient as I had many other students at the same time, but it was not possible. He needed lots of support to answer the questions in the workbook. His father stopped by to drop off an ID for Jeannie in the morning. He asked that I send work home with Dayton. So I gave Dayton the two level 1 stories he had read and told him to take them home and read them to Dad. I also copied the homework sheets from the My Turn, Your Turn lessons we have been doing in the early morning [1] and gave them to him. Bev advised against sending home other workbooks unrelated to what we are doing in class [T-3]. I had hesitations anyway, as I figured he would have the same problem he had with the picture dictionary: unable to understand the directions. I felt this way even about kindergarten-level workbooks; it seems to me that even that low level is still above his language skills.

I asked Bev about math. I told her we were not just dealing with a language barrier; we are also dealing with a lack of schooling in Chuuk [T-6]. I asked her about the grade 3 (lowest level we have) workbooks for Math Force [1]. She said they were moved to Mrs. Sosa's room, so now I know where to go to get an assessment test for Dayton. It happened that Tina was absent today. I mentioned to Bev that Dayton and Tina were at about the same level and I need to work with them together more [T-3], but there are difficulties due to bell schedule [2]. I told her working with these two students is what I perceive to be my priority for the remaining few weeks of the year. She agreed to that. She also mentioned maybe there could be other supports for the math for these students [T-3].

Dayton, Ese, Alan, Rebecca, Tina and Jeannie all have come to UPLINKS once or twice this week. Both Michael and Ese are failing eighth-grade math, and although I have encouraged them to come to UPLINKS for help, Michael does not and Ese not every day, and he is difficult to focus when he does come [T-6]. I had conversations with Jackie and Alicia about Ese; basically that he is nowhere near eighth-grade standards, but he will be promoted to grade 9. I caught Ese drawing a nasty picture this week in my office where he was working with James during period 6. I was teaching the majority of the kids in the adjacent S-1 room. He did not want to give it to me and he crumpled it, but I insisted he surrender it and he did. The next day Jeff and Jordan reported to V-103 during their lunch time to finish writing not completed in period 6. Jeff stole two cans of Aloha Maid fruit juice that was donated for Hoike. Ms. Hayward noticed the missing cans when she came in to the room (after they left). I told her it must have been Jordan and Jeff. She immediately marched toward the sixth-grade classrooms and pulled Jordan out. She told me she asked him, "Do you have something to tell me?" and, when no response, "Do you want to tell me something about my room?" She got a confession from him, took him next door to Ms. Kenner's room, had him apologize to her for stealing, then took him to the VP for a referral. He will not be a kahili-bearer at Hoike, will not attend TARO activity or spring banquet. Ms. Hayward told me this the following morning and told me she learned at Macy's (where she worked as a buyer for many years before becoming a teacher) that consequences need to be swift and severe or behaviors will continue.

I digressed to connect the experience with Ms. Hayward with my experience with Ese. Ese showed up period 4 with a yahoo kind of attitude, shouting out some kind of greeting, not to me but to the students. Emboldened by my talk with Ms. Hayward, I took Ese into my office and wrote a referral, speaking to him in stern language. It turned out I could not leave the remaining

students alone to take Ese to the office, so, for that reason, and because I missed the swift part of the consequences, I did not turn in the referral. I do think I made an impression on Ese, however.

Bev next met with me in V-103 during the middle school lunch when 12 students in grades 4 and 5 were using Imagine Learning. She seemed to think that was a large group and they were focused enough so that I could review the self-study with Bev [T-3]. She left for a meeting with VP Miller for the after lunch period, then she and Miller came to the S-1 cave. Robert, Peter, David, Charles, Dayton, and Chen were all in the cave on the computers. Dayton was on Imagine Learning, Chen was on a typing tutor and the other boys were working on their South Pacific island papers. I offended David and he shut down. He is stuck on writing about the geography of his island, Tuvalu. Although it was not difficult, and I had good advice, pointing him very directly in the right direction, he was not responsive and wouldn't follow instructions [T-5]. He wasted time highlighting information on a website, not understanding it. Marty also has moods where he feels defeated and it is nearly impossible to make progress with him [T-4]. Robert and Peter, however, were productive and positive. Bev praised my advice to David to look at the picture of the island and describe it as a means of helping him to understand the geography [T-3]. I was stuck on the size of meter, thinking of it in relation to miles instead of feet, and had to figure that out to help explain that these islands are very low, unlike the Hawaiian Islands with tall mountains like the Koolaus.

Tina remains very shy and quiet. It takes constant reminders to get her to sing the chants or songs in My Turn, Your Turn in the morning. The kindergarteners are fidgety and also take regular reminding to stay on task. It is rare that all the students will sing along with the CD at the same time. As I focus on some students, the others clam up, or sing only parts. I have been

going over the songs slowly, without the support of the CD first, then playing the songs on the CD. I also write the song on chart paper and post it [T-3].

5-17-10—ACCESS for ELLs test results are in and we exited only two students. This is disappointing considering the goal is 10% or 7 students. Alice and Erica were each just one point short of exiting. We did make enough gains, though, to meet our overall gains goal. The weakest area for almost all students is the writing. That is where we score the lowest. I have been using the Spectrum Writing books regularly to try to bring the writing scores up [T-3]. Even Tina and Dayton are starting in level 1 books. Jeannie and Chen are up to level 2. The LEP students have their grade-level equivalent book. Like everything that is new, everyone likes the colorful new books at first [1]. For the LEP students working at middle school level, however, it soon becomes work and their enthusiasm wanes. It is a good system, though, to meet everyone's varied needs and to save me time from copying and shuffling lots of papers. Having the book keeps a good record of each student's work, including progress over time. I think it provides lots of scaffolding and structure. It's good to see what a student can do with a blank piece of paper, but with the ELLs, it would mean me needing to provide lots of support and I can't do it with so many different level kids. Ms. Harmon let me use money left over from the after school program to buy a set of Spectrum books for next year. I'll have enough so that each student will have their own.

8-11-10—The logistics of setting up classes is much better this year than last year [2]. It works out that I can get all the middle school students except one to come to me for one period. Not all the same period, but spread across periods 2, 4, and 6. The biggest class is 12 and the smallest

class is 6. I'm starting with reading *The Lightning Thief* because my son read it so feverishly over the summer. The kids seem to like it okay. Apparently it is popular across the country, for there are many very good teaching materials online to go with it [1]. The author's website has materials and he has a link to materials from another teacher. It is working that I can have the students read, then do an activity, and I don't have to kill myself reinventing the wheel for lesson plans. This feels so old-fashioned—reading a book. We have so many textbooks and online resources now.

Besides the middle school classes, I am continuing the 11:52-12:22 classes with grades 4 and 5. All the teachers were amenable to continuing the schedule. It's right after that grade level's lunch, and the teachers use that time for intervention [2]. Having me take the ELLs gives them more time for everybody else. Xian is in this group. He is playful, and I have to redirect him to stay on Imagine Learning [1], although once he is on it, he is fine. His speech is really improving. He can communicate his wants and needs. He has a lot of confidence, more than he warrants, but at 10 years old ignorance is bliss. Chen continues to come to me for all three of her elective periods. She has regular class with everyone else during one period. The other two periods she works on Imagine Learning [1], writing book [1], and Read Naturally [1]. She also likes to go on typing games, and I allow it sometimes, but I insist she do the other more academic activities most of the time. Jeannie, Tina, and most of the other kids love watching music videos on the computer during recess and lunch. It's their break time, so I allow it. They are hearing a lot of language from Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez, among others. I hear Dayton singing an inspirational reggae style song a lot and watching it on video when he can—something like “we will be stronger.” He is more comfortable and more playful than last year. He gets along well with his peers, especially on the basketball court [T-2].

8-20-10—We had good professional development last week. Kate Martin from McREL walked us through her book and engaged us in some activities to demonstrate techniques for working with ELLs [T-5]. She put a lot of emphasis on planning vocabulary for the lesson, and explained how it applies to mainstream teachers as well. She provided a lesson-planning template. She also explained research McREL has done on learning efficacy, not just for ELLs, but for all students. Their research shows that similarities and differences is first in instructional strategies to increase student achievement. This is for all students, not just ELLs [T-3]. She ran through nine strategies, with summarizing and note-taking the second most effective and reinforcing effort and providing recognition third. It was interesting how they measured the effectiveness. They found studies on each strategy over the years, more than a thousand in all, and compared the results.

10-12-10—I started lessons for quarter 2 this week using the textbook I got at the state training in August. It is called Milestones [1] and has some of the top names in ELL research behind it—like Marzano. *The Lightning Thief*, like everything else, has worn thin on the students. They completed about half in the first quarter. The Milestones book is the latest version and was a sample sent to the state office. It came as part of a complete kit, including audio, online addresses, assessment book and teacher resources.

10-18-10—The pacing and materials of the Milestones program [1] are working well. There are enough materials in different formats to break up the pace and maintain engagement. The stories we read are short, so students can read at least half a story in one period, along with worksheets

to go along with it. I like the way it assesses students in different areas—vocabulary, comprehension, and writing [T-3]. There is a test about every fifth day that assesses how the students are learning. Scores have been low to medium, but considering the book is level C and many students are sixth graders, I'm not disappointed. I would prefer I had a full set of books at different levels, but there is no money so far this year [T-5]. It is time-consuming to create 12 sets of books at the copy machine, which is what I have to do. I bind the copies in binders from the office and that becomes the textbook. There are lots of handouts as well, which my ELLs really seem to like. They are not much into being lectured to, but give them something to write on and they are happy [T-3]. The publishers know what they are doing for ELLs. There are lots of graphic organizers and visual aids to help the students.

In the morning, about three days a week, I have been going to grade 4, Mrs. Yamada's class, to work with Xian and Matt. I got a reading group today in Mrs. Yamada's class with Matt and Xian and another student, Marlana. Students struggled to read about extreme animals. I also helped them with writing in their journals first thing in the morning. Xian is easily distracted and requires lots of redirection. He is catching on, though, to Mrs. Yamada's daily grammar exercise. She puts a short paragraph, or a couple of sentences, on the board that have spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors. She tells the class to rewrite it correctly. Then she calls on students to come up to the board and use her red Expo pen to correct the errors [1]. The kids love to go up to the board, something I remember from teaching grade 7. Xian follows along on this activity and even can find some errors on his own. Spelling tests with Xian started out as a complete flop, but on the third one, today, he was able to get one of the twenty words correct. He doesn't try on most of the rest. It seems like it happens too fast for him. Mrs. Yamada calls

out a word and students have to spell it. Xian needs to learn strategies—like focus on every other word or something, not just give up and do nothing.

1-29-11—It's the third week of quarter 3, although it doesn't feel like it as I was in professional development classes for three days last week. Principal Roberts agreed to having the registrar set up two middle school classes for me, but only for NEP students. There are 10 NEP middle school students. I set up one class for the four boys and one class for the six girls. My ELL students are simple and innocent compared to their peers. The girls and boys don't really mix. They still stay very much with their own sex. I decided to use some old textbooks that have been on the shelves since before I became ELL coordinator [1]. There are two of them, so I still have to make copies, but for my class of four, at least two students get a full-color book to read. Although the book is older, the format is similar, with short reading passages and lots of accompanying worksheets. The worksheets are just as user-friendly for ELLs as the ones that came from Milestones, with graphic organizers. I also started doing what Mrs. Yamada does, using a writing passage with lots of errors for the students to correct, to start the day. I found a series of passages at superteacherworksheets.com [1]. I print out the incorrect passage and have students rewrite it correctly on a piece of paper. I write the passage incorrectly on the board. When they are done working on their own, I give each of them a sentence to fix on the board. Just like with the fourth graders, they are eager to write their corrections on the board. Next we do a vocabulary exercise. There are several to go with each writing passage studied, so we do a different one each day. Then there is some kind of grammar worksheet, like subject-verb agreement or pronouns. Finally they read the story and do different activities. Response has been good, but again, there is the novelty of something new, so we'll have to see how long it

lasts. The two classes is all the service I can give to students for the rest of this quarter [T-5]. The testing window for the ACCESS test is opened and I will be testing every morning for the reading, writing, and listening portions of the test and throughout the day for one-on-one speaking tests.

2-10-11—I started a great new but simple trick today: vocabulary cards [T-3]. I created an Excel sheet and put the chapter vocabulary words on it with definitions. Then I printed them on some of the sturdy colored construction paper that was left in my office from previous years. Then I cut them into squares. By using different colors of paper, I can make different sets of the same cards, one for each student, easily distinguishable by color. The kids like it and start matching up the words with the definitions as soon as they come into class. There is competition to see who can get it done first.

I've started writing prompts for my fourth and fifth graders in hopes that they will feel comfortable when they take the ACCESS test [T-3]. Every day I give them a new prompt. I have been explaining to them that the time period they have to write in class is similar to the time they will have on the test and that they need to practice writing more and without my help. Sharon came up to me today to show me how much more she is writing now. This age level is much more enthusiastic than the older students, at least at first. They all want my attention to check their writing. Peer edit is difficult at this age, and there isn't enough time anyway. I try to help as many as I can, pointing out their errors, but reminding them that at test time they are on their own. Unfortunately, I have had to let Xian work on Imagine Learning since his writing skills are too low and I can't give him enough attention [T-5]. Sometimes he will work in his writing book, but even that takes more attention from me than I have right now.

4-15-11—Richard scored very well on test today and finished 15 minutes early [T-4]. The rest of the class struggled with the essay questions. Chen finished; the rest did not. Jeannie was able to understand the questions and verbalize the main idea of the answer after I sat with her and talked about the question and the story. I needed to point to the paragraphs in the story that give the answer. Although she could come to the answer, she struggled to write it down. I had to prompt her to come up with the words to write that would express what she was able to say verbally.

Dayton was excitable and loud today, but he did manage to read and write a summary of one story in Read Naturally [1] at the 3.0 level. His decoding is not too bad, and he can comprehend, but with difficulty. He requires close supervision and prompting to complete his work. His personality and character are more playful and physical. Even without a language barrier, I don't think he would be very interested in academics [T-4]. Writing for him is the most difficult. He cannot write a grammatically correct sentence, but he is practicing and making the corrections I tell him to make. He only occasionally will recognize an error on his own. Chen is much more studious. Still, her summaries are full of grammatical errors. She is doing much better at finding her own mistakes as I reread her work. She shows her seriousness also by making a real attempt to write in her own voice. Period 1 has 5 to 7 students every day, and all are reading different stories, so it is difficult for me to supervise them closely. It would not be difficult for Chen to copy some or most of the sentences from the story as her summary. This is what nearly all students do with Read Naturally if I do not intervene. I print the story on a separate page from the summary and will take away the story if I see students are copying from the story for their summary [T-3]. This is to force them to write in their own voice. Chen and

others also are getting better at fixing subject-verb agreement errors throughout their paper after I point out one error.

Appendix B: Consent Form for Mainstream Teacher Interviews

University of Hawaii at Manoa
College of Education

Working with Non English Proficient Learners: A Self Study

By: Tim Anthony

Advisor: Doris Christopher

I am a student in the College of Education. I am conducting interviews for a self-study on my work with ELL students, with the intent of improving practice.

During this study, you will be asked to answer some questions about your work with one of four ELL students (or possibly more than one if you work with more than one of the four students). Questions will be asked at the beginning of the eight-week study and again at the end of the eight weeks. I will attempt to interview in small groups, but may need to interview individually in some circumstances. The interviews are planned to last about fifteen minutes, however feel free to expand on the questions as much as you like. If there are questions you would rather not answer, please say so and I will stop the interview or move to another question, whichever you prefer.

All data will be reported using pseudonyms. A pseudonym will also be used for the school name.

Participant's Agreement:

I am aware that my participation in this interview is voluntary. I understand the intent and purpose of this research. If, for any reason, at any time, I do not wish to participate in the interview, I may do so without having to give an explanation. I am aware that the data will be used in a Master's project that will be publicly available at the University of Hawaii.

If I have any questions about this study, I am free to contact the student researcher or the faculty adviser (contact information given above).

I have been offered a copy of this consent form that I may keep for my own reference.

I have read the above form and, with the understanding that I can withdraw at any time and for whatever reason, I consent to participate in interviews.

Participant's Signature

Date: _____

Interviewer's Signature

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Mainstream Teachers of the Four ELL Students

Six mainstream teachers and one paraprofessional answered the following questions about one or more of the four focus students for this study. Teachers answered questions only about the student(s) they worked with directly.

1. Describe any changes you've seen in the school experience of _____:
 - a. Academically
 - b. Socially
 - c. Physically
 - d. Use of language

2. Are there any memorable incidents you recall with _____ related to:
 - a. Acculturation
 - b. Academic success
 - c. Adjustment
 - d. Achievement
 - e. Participation

3. Are there any concerns you have?

4. Anything else about ELL students or the ELL program in general?

Appendix D: Transcript of Mainstream Teacher Interviews, November 8 and 22, 2010

Interview Codes

- [1] Growth (Progress)
- [2] Social Skills (Self-Confidence, Asserting Oneself)
- [3] Teacher Strategies
- [4] Student Motivation
- [5] Funding, Support
- [6] Developing Nations vs. More Developed Nations
- [7] Reading/Writing Skills

1. Mrs. Yamada

Xian—I don't see growth, no progress. Socially he stays with his sister in the morning, not interacting with his classmates [1]. Not much interaction at recess. He chooses not to participate. He stays away. They're picky—try to take the ball away from him. Physically he is small. He eats stuff even non-edible—plays with mechanical pencil, takes it apart, puts things in his mouth, puts his ruler close to his mouth. He puts a magnet on his ear as an earring. He could speak up more—a lot of times he just looks at you. He needs to express himself verbally—tell kids he doesn't like that, say "I don't like that." He uses nonverbal communication, like nudging. He got bit on his finger—Brianna bit his finger. He cried. I told him don't be like that. I wanted him to see that if it happened to you, you would react also. I don't know how he will progress.

2. Mrs. Komoda

Xian—When he first came, he had very little English background; he could speak maybe words like “hi.” But as the year progressed he was able to pick up a lot of vocabulary, I believe through speaking to the other children, coming to you for services, just exposure to the different vocabulary words helped him to pick up the English language [1]. Last year we were able to arrange for Xian to attend reading with the lower elementary teachers [3] and so he did get some background with letters and sounds [7], so if that could happen again this year, that might be a way to assist him with continued learning about the sounds. I noticed that he learned a lot quicker if I was able to translate it into his language, into Mandarin, and then he could see the connection between Mandarin and English. So it was handy to have some kind of translator [3]. He had a dictionary that helped, and one time he had a translator from his sister that helped. I don’t have an application on my phone for that translation [3]. I tried to. Mrs. Morimoto had one. She was able to get an application on her phone and translate into Mandarin. That helped. So I think knowing what his Mandarin language vocabulary is and then teaching him English helped him to learn.

At first he had a difficult time socially because he didn’t know how to communicate in English. So he would communicate by touching or biting. He didn’t know how to communicate that he was upset or angry. As he learned to do that, he did less of the touching and the biting. But he did get along. The other children were very excited to want to work with him and help him to learn our customs. Academically he was not able to perform at grade-level expectations because of the lack of English proficiency. He was able to pick up some math skills based on pictures [3], again translating into his language, like greatest to least, and that helped. He was a lot more proficient in math than he was in all the other subject areas.

He followed along fairly well with routines, I thought. It was when we had a lot of reading and writing [7] that he would be off track. He needed something to engage him while we were learning our regular program, so if there were a lot of gaps for him, he would fall into a behavior problem. He understood the routine—this is what we are doing now, this is what we do next. He was able to conform to the routine.

My biggest concern is making sure he does understand the English language to help him live here in Hawaii. I feel he's a very happy child [2]. He's able to say "hi" to me in the morning, and when he's able to do that, communicate, just learning, continuing to learn the English language will help him to be more successful in our schools [2].

3. Ms. Stanford

Saw a lot of Jeannie and Chen. From last year to this year she [Jeannie] appears to be more confident in where she's going [1]. I really haven't spoken with her much this year. I've just seen her around. So as far as what she knows, how that's grown, I'm not familiar. Socially I think she is more confident. She appears to have friends. When I see her, she's always with someone. I think that part's doing well. Physically the same. I notice nothing different. I don't have that much contact with her. Just like "hello, how are you." She can respond back. She knows who I am. Last year socially in the beginning she was very shy. Now with the new girl, she's directing her around, so she feels more confident, I think, about what to do, where to go, how to get there, more than last year, definitely. I've only seen her this quarter. Last quarter, actually, when I was in the S-1 building, she was misbehaving. Once when you were gone and I was watching, she was in the room on the computer, misbehaving, flirting sort of with the boys. I don't know [6].

What grade is she in? How is she doing in math? Is there a SPED teacher in math? There should be [3]. If not, see if you can change her. That would be really helpful. Inouye goes really fast, so I am sure she is lost. You might want to see if there is a SPED teacher in there. Make sure it is a class when Jennifer is in there. Just math, that she's not getting help.

Discipline. I don't know if she is understanding her role in what she should be doing in school. That is what I noticed at the beginning of quarter one. She was more mouthy. She tended more to mouth off than I had seen last year. Manners, good manners. I think it was because all the boys were in there too.

I saw a lot of Chen in the math class. And she did really well. And then, I go to their restaurant to get take-out and she has improved. She is behind that cash register. She welcomes people [2]. Her speech is much better [1], I think. She seriously tends. I watched as I was waiting for my food. More people came in; it got rather busy. She could understand what they were saying. She knew exactly what they wanted, I thought, and I told her that she was doing really well. Her English is coming very well. And little Xian was sitting down by the door eating, but he wasn't really doing much work [4]. Big difference between Chen and Xian. I think she's really gotten better. I haven't seen her socializing. Just at the restaurant. I was really impressed. It was like clockwork, and it was a busy night. When my order came up, she went over what was in it and looked at me in the eye and said, "Is this what you ordered?" "Yeah, it is." That's what I told her, that she's getting much better in her English. She just smiled. Xian sat there and did nothing. Yeah, I think she's improved a lot. I don't know if it's because her parents make her work behind the counter. But she understands what people say. One guy asked for something and she had to ask him to repeat it and then she was right on it.

Xian—he likes to play a lot. I think he’s probably a little spoiled boy at home. Is he the only male? [Yes.] I’m pretty sure that’s got a lot to do with it. Other than that he does work. Today’s little incident in the library. Luke took the book that he wanted, which was like a dinosaur book, because they were just doing a little activity. And he—I gave him a duplicate book [3], like it’s no big deal, you’re not going to read the book, you’re just doing this worksheet. He wouldn’t do it. He just sat there. He almost cried. He wouldn’t do it. Luke finished. I gave Xian the book. And he just took it and started filling out his paper and did fine. So he finished even. Other than that, I think he’s just a little spoiled, a little babyish. He stands up for himself. He gets there. Certain people pick on him, tease him. He gets over it.

I think it’s working better than it has.

4. Mrs. Ruiz

Jeannie—She’s more social. She’s gaining more friends. She’s more confident in class. She will speak [1]. She’ll ask for help. She won’t really ask questions in class, but she’ll ask for help. She does try to do her work more. Even if she doesn’t understand what she’s doing, she’ll try to figure out, “I can put a word here, I can put a word there.” Use of language—we brought her in actually for a meeting with teachers. She was able to speak to us; she also refused to do some things. So even though it’s seen as negative, she’s voicing her opinion, right? She’s not just like saying “yes,” which most people that come from ELL do. They’re always like “yes, yes, yes” because they don’t understand. Now she knows how to say no and she uses that too [2].

We were doing an “I am” poem. I knew that she couldn’t do the poem entirely, so I gave her the modified version, which was the poem was already typed out except each line was missing one word. So I’d read to her, then she would have to choose a word that would fit into

the blank, and she actually chose a better word than some of the English kids who had the modified version. So you can tell that she is listening. She'll recognize maybe key words and she'll match a word that she learned that went with a key word. For example, if I said "Kamehameha blanked when his parents were away" she would say "cried," and it made sense. It wasn't like she picked any word out of her vocabulary; she showed understanding that was good [3]. Angela is awesome. She's kind of high. If she doesn't understand she asks for help. She's very aggressive in a good way—like if I don't understand. Actually she got—I didn't grade her test yet, but she probably got a B or maybe an A. She goes, "Miss, I don't get this" when I'm reading. If she knows how to read, she reads with me [3]. She doesn't just let me say; she reads with me as I go along. She's very motivated [4].

My concern is state support. I was teaching at Mahalo School before. We have a high, high, high population of Micronesians. But because of that we can put them with the kids who have been here longer. And the same with Filipino. We had a high population of Filipino, so when we had a new kid come in from the Philippines we just say "Who speaks Tagalog?" and they'd be like, "Me!" We'd sit them next to that kid. And the kids kind of knew to help each other because they were at the same point. Here we don't have that support system from the students or the state. I remember we had a meeting with the Micronesian Chuukese translator and there was only one in the state. Being that we have so many Micronesians here that can speak English, why don't we have more translators? The state needs way more support. We cannot—my concern is we cannot take a kid and "throw them into a class." I understand if you're going to learn like other languages abroad it'll work, but not when you're going to grade them and they have to pass. It doesn't work. Our system for ELL kids doesn't work. We're kind of failing them, in my opinion. You can't just put them in and say "here you go." Same

thing with us. If you threw me in a class that speaks Samoan, I would be lost. And they're telling me that's what I need to learn to improve and move on. We need greater state support. Huge. I think we're doing what we can with the resources we have. We don't have enough help. State level.

5. Mrs. Inouye

Jeannie, I think, is playing games. She doesn't bring her planner to my classroom, saying it's in your classroom. And here goes about. She goes home. This Nina lady is supposed to be helping her. So when she looks at the planner, there's nothing posted there right, so then there's like no homework, right? So when I ask Jeannie, "Where's your planner?" she says, "I left it in Mr. Anthony's." Then when she goes to Nina, she says, "Where's your planner?" she says, "over here" and she opens it—nothing. So I don't know how—I guess now that you know, you can tell her, "Jeannie, don't forget you've got to take your planner to all the classes you go to so it's posted there" [3]. Nina called, concerned, to tell me, "Oh, there's no homework for a while now." I said, "No, every time we meet there's homework. What do you mean?" She says, "Oh, when she opens up the planner, it's totally blank" [6]. So I said, "You know, I have problems with her." Because she's playing this game about when I say, "Jeannie, it's ready to stamp, where's your planner?" "It's in Mr. Anthony's room." "What's it doing there?" "Oh, I forgot it." So this "I forgot" is getting to be a good game-playing thing, you know.

Jeannie, I think is in my period [4]—the inclusion classes overlooked by Jennifer or Ms. Fernandez. She and Fernandez flip. I would prefer that only Jennifer comes in. Academically she doesn't seem to be grasping the level she is supposed to be at, but then when I look at the background she is coming from, if she is Micronesian, Chuukese, those students from that area have never been very strong. Somehow in math—like versus somebody like Chen, who comes

from China and the Orient, they're stronger in math. Somehow the schooling down in that district, Palau, Truk, and all that other area, has not been very updated to American benchmarks or American standards.

Socially she's kind of quiet as compared to Angela. Angela is more assertive [2] and she's more like "I'm gonna get it" [4] versus Jeannie, who I find is playing a little game, you know. Angela is a go-getter—very assertive. If she doesn't know it—like even Kevin was surprised the first day she walked in, she didn't get something, she spoke up. So he looked at her because, you know, she is a newcomer. She didn't care if she was a newcomer or not. I guess it's her personality. Her personality made her say "I need to speak up" and she just spoke up and she could speak the language quite fluently. Her attitude is like "I come to school to learn, I gotta learn. If I don't learn it, I don't get it, I better say something." Whereas this Jeannie—I think that they both struggle academically, but one is more willing to get help than the other. The other [Jeannie] is "Oh, if I can hide behind this 'forget' stuff, then I'll just stay there" [6]. Whereas the other one [Angela] will just assertively come out and say "I don't have this" or "I need to have that." So that's the big difference.

Jeannie is getting to be a little bit more talkative, you know, coming out and being able to say simple sentences, you know, to say what she really wants to say, but not as advanced as the other girl [1]. She comes in late, and when asked, she says she was with Mr. Anthony. So your name is being used a lot. When she's tardy, she's with Mr. Anthony. No planner? It's at Mr. Anthony's. I think she is progressing as best as she can, knowing where she is in the mathematics area.

Chen has really blossomed, and she has done it very quickly [1]. Now, because she is already good at her math, right [6], so when they put her here, other students are recognizing her

abilities. And then they're approaching her and saying, "Oh, can I see? Can you help me with this?" And because of that interaction she's becoming a lot more open and a lot more talkative, trying to converse with them, either showing her paper or talking when they say "what is that," trying to talk about how the problem was solved or what you've got to do [3]. Now, what helps her also is the fact that she works down at her mother's Chinese shop, the food restaurant. So in that sense—last December, I guess it was, I went over there and she was over there and she was taking the order, trying to interpret for her parents, who are even less speaking than she. She takes the responsibility [4]. Another thing, prior to my going there I wanted to know some things about the food, so I conversed with her, and talking about the food, I guess because she's so comfortable working at that restaurant, she becomes a lot more talking, comfortable talking the English part. So I've noticed Chen has made remarkable progress, not just in the language, but in the academically comfort level, making friends. So I think what helped her is her strong academic and math background and then working in the restaurant and then the rest of the things just coming through for her because now kids recognize her mathematical abilities. Considering she don't speak the English when she first came. So for her, I think you can tell she is going to be very successful, and she is also one who sticks to doing the assignments. Looking up in that, what do you call that, that little dictionary, that handheld Chinese computer-type translator [3]. Knowing how to handle that, having that on hand to help her, really helps her versus the Micronesians who don't have that tool to get ahead [6]. Just I see her smile now more frequently than she did when she first came, and I think that's being comfortable with the environment, like now not being shunned like the foreigner who don't speak, now she's gradually being included.

I think, you know, when we talk about ELL, I think the language comfort—the comfort of using the language and having some English-speaking kids to converse with—is number 1

objective to me, because all the rest of the stuff should come if they understand how to converse. You know, if they didn't understand how to make a sentence in English, to say "I don't understand," if they don't get that part squared away with, asking any question regarding anything else can't come through. So I think ELL this year, I think I see an improvement. Rather than send them to math and they get frustrated, not even understanding what I'm trying to explain, first thing is they've got to know how to make sentences, to ask the question, to state their feeling or their opinion. Otherwise, nothing else can pass [3].

I think you're working very hard and doing a good job with the ELL. It's up to the kids. I don't know how you're going to tell them to make friends to an English-speaking person when the English-speaking person has their own cliques and they're looking at this foreigner—unless there's somebody who will act like a mentor, you know, take this kid aside and say "come have lunch with us," talking this constant daily stuff, rather than only saying naughty things, bad words, you know, that kind. They catch on really fast to those off-color languages.

You know what—the younger brother [Xian] does not work at the store [4]. Like she's in charge of the cash register and takes the order and then says the Chinese language to the father what is wanted. Because, you know, one of the dishes was kind of spicy, yeah, so I told her I don't want too hot, because we're Americans, hot, but not very hot, so she was able to parlay that to the father and tone down on how much of that peppery thing he puts on there. She's like the sole person up front, giving the order and trying to talk to the customer, which I don't see the younger brother doing. I think because she is older they expect her to do a little bit more, plus she is going to school, and the interpretation, I think they rely heavily, "we depend on you to do this," so, you know, that area of responsibility lies heavily on her, that she interprets correctly. But the younger brother, I don't think he cares because he's not the one in charge, right? So I

think that having this business and the parents relying on her has to make her a little more motivated.

I think Chen may have the motivation or the desire to go beyond high school. She wants to push for getting a college degree, and she can do it. She has the drive to go, meticulously going over things. She just knows that what she wants is a lot of hard work and she is willing to put out the effort [4]. Willing to sacrifice, plus she's got to work at the store so there's not much time to just roam the street and talk story and go hang out over there after school, you know [4]. The only concern I might have is the balance of some kind of extracurricular activity [5] in her tight schedule. The motivation to do well, the responsibility to have to help at that shop and report there regularly—so as far as saying, let's say, develop her in her athletic abilities, like canoeing or running, there's no time. And she spends so much time trying to use the translator, trying to interpret. So I spoke to her, and she said the hard part for her is word problems because all the words are not clearly defined in her translator. Some don't have the Chinese counterpart to tell her what it is. So that was what she said was a concern to her when she's trying to look at the solution or find out what the math word problem means, because no more the Chinese counterpart. But I think Chen is one of the most successful in the ELL program, getting out. And it is her ambition [4], compared to the younger brother.

Is there another child? No? Just two of them. Maybe if the parents start depending on the younger brother and say “Chen, you can go and participate in sports” or whatever. “Hey you, you have to come here and work the register and ...” Maybe now say, “You do the cleanup.” Right now say, “You know what? Clean up,” because right now Chen does that too. You know, when you sit down and eat—and wiping the table and all that—she's doing that also, instead of

them telling, “You are responsible for sweeping the floor and taking care of all that and serving the customer water when he comes sit down and eat.”

6. Mrs. Lynwood

Jeannie— I knew her last year, but I didn’t have her last year, I just knew who she was. This year she started out not trying or putting any effort in, but the last month, she’s really putting effort in [4]. She’s copying, writing, asking questions, staying on task and focused, working cooperatively with others [3] over the last month, so there’s been a huge turnaround. More positive. I haven’t heard any foul language. Before she had a lot of inappropriate comments to other students, teasing, playing. It’s a lot more focused. I don’t hear anything, or a lot, coming out of her that is negative. So it’s better socially, use of her social skills [2], versus the negative. Just that she was absent, so making up work. Recently she was sick. She said she’s working on it and will be turning in work tomorrow.

Chen—I had her last year. She improved drastically from when she first got here and hardly spoke, until the end of the year she was asking questions [1]. She would come up to me in between classes and talk to me, try to start conversation. She borrowed several books for the summer and read them and brought them back. And so I always see her working too. She’s always working on something to improve. No, I think the students that really want to be successful are successful. So the ones that are academically driven are successful in improving their English and in getting up to par with their peers who are not ELL. But the ones that are not academically motivated are harder to make progress [4].

Dayton was never in my room.

7. Bea

Academically with Jeannie, she has really improved from where she first started because she didn't know much of the language, the English barrier language [1]. Now she can communicate as well as do the work in the classrooms more independently now. I have her in math class with Mrs. Inouye. She does really well in Mrs. Inouye's class. She doesn't get some of the work, but she tries to do the work on her own first and then she asks for help [3]. I have her again this year, only for math, though. Socially she's more open than what she was last year, and I think everyone over here can vouch for that. She is more socialized [2] with other kids in the program as well as when they come in here. She does socialize with other kids outside of her race now. They play games in here. She's mostly in here about three or four times out of the week now, recess and lunch. She comes in here and hangs out with her friends. She's more open to talking story with everyone now. I would like to see her talk more in English. Like sometimes when she is in here she speaks the native language with some of the girls she knows in here. But I'd like to see her do the English language more. She does talk in class, she uses her English, but there are some times when she slips and uses her native language when she doesn't get it or understand it.

The big thing that I've noticed with Jeannie alone is the fact that she is becoming more independent, especially with reading [7]. She reads more, and even though it's a math class I have her in this year, she's learned to read more of the written problems a lot more clearer and she's a lot more understanding than when she was in the sixth grade with Ms. Hernandez. So she's improved a lot within the last year. And that's one of my successes with her is watching her improve in all the different subject areas as well as social skills [2]. All in all she's improved a lot, and I know she can improve more; we just need to get with her, get on her. The only

concern I have is that she'll fall behind again in the classes. I don't have her in the other classes; I only have her in math. I'm just hoping that the success we had last year, that she has the help [5] and the push to do it again this year.

Chen—I like her. When I first met her she hardly knew any English. Her social skills—she had none [2], she was pretty much quiet to herself, doesn't talk, and in this past year I've seen her venture out of her little shell. Academically-wise she's improved a lot more because, like I said, she didn't know much of the English words [1]. And working with her this past year, I've seen a big improvement in her English skills, writing skills, and I've noticed this year, because I have her for English, she doesn't use her translator hardly ever, even for the benchmarks. I hardly ever see her pick it up and use it unless she's using it to find a word [7]. Within this past year she's put that aside more and more. She still struggles with the understanding of some of the work, but she tries to do her best, and if she doesn't get it she's learned to ask for help now. That's one of the big things that I've seen different with her from seventh grade and now eighth. She's improved dramatically, I'd say, within the past year, and I can see her improving even more this year. Socially she's still quiet, but yet now in a way she's a little bit more open, because before she didn't talk to anyone and now she plays games with some of the other kids and she is learning more social skills with the other kids, and that's a plus.

For me, overall, seeing her English reading skills go from none to now at least understanding half of the work, that was a big improvement for me working with her [7]. Because not only was there a language barrier, but she's also embraced learning the English as well as teaching others her language and where she's from. And so she gets a little of both worlds now, because she can share her native background with others. Before she never did, and now she's sharing more with other kids, I've noticed [2]. And the success is the fact that she's

embraced everything she wants to learn about English and she's doing the best she can to succeed in education, and that's always a plus.

Concerns I have are honestly, it's more of her not having the time to do all the work after school hours because she does a lot of family stuff with the restaurant and she has expressed she doesn't have time like she used to to do her homework. My concern is that she's going to start falling behind if she doesn't get the extra help. And I know she has told me she gets more help from you now this year that and she tries to go and get more help. I would love to see more ELL support for the kids [5] who are in those classes so that they don't fall behind and they can get up to grade. I just feel like sometimes they get pushed to the side and they're not given the attention that they need to understand some of the work that's being taught to them. And that's one of my concerns, that I would love to see more help for the kids, not only ELL students, but the SPED kids. They're just like any other kids and they deserve their education, deserve to be helped.