The Effectiveness of an English Language Learner Center for Elementary Students

Stephanie L. Merriott
B.A., Graceland University, 2002
M.A.T., Webster University, 2008

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Susan K. Rogers, Ph.D.
Major Advisor

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Harold Frye, Ed.D.

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Janet Richards, Ed.D.

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Abstract

This mixed methods study took place in the Independence School District in Independence, Missouri, using data from 2011 to 2016. Students' language proficiency data and state assessment data, as well as teacher focus group perceptions, were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of two models of ELL instruction in the district's elementary schools. At the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, the district transitioned from an ELL pull-out model of instruction to a full-day proficiency-based ELL center that students attended once each week. Composite scores on the ACCESS for ELLs for students in grades 1-5, the number of students who exited the ELL program, and ELA MAP proficiency scores in grades 3-5 were used to determine the differences. The researcher also conducted teacher focus group interviews to gather teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness, positives, and negatives of the two models of ELL instruction. The results of the data analysis indicated statistically significant differences; students who attended the ELL center scored higher on the ACCESS, exited the program at a proportionately higher rate, and scored proportionately more at proficient or advanced level on the ELA MAP than did the students who participated in the pull-out program. Teacher perceptions revealed that there were pros and cons to the ELL center; teachers in primary grades saw more disadvantages of the ELL center, and teachers in upper grades were indifferent or saw more advantages. The researcher suggested implications for action based on the results of the study that may improve the current ELL model in the ISD, such as a gradual attendance model for first graders, and ideas to increase communication between the ELL center and the home school. Future research in large school districts completing studies surrounding best practices in ELL instruction

could replicate or extend the current study by focusing on middle and high school students, using different measures of achievement such as the ACT or End of Course exams. The study could also be replicated in an urban or rural setting in different states across the nation. Results from future studies might show different outcomes if focus groups included parents and students in addition to teachers.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to Ken Mulliken, for instilling in me a love of learning. Your unconditional love and support have always shown that blood is not what determines family. You are my dad in every sense of the word. You have inspired and influenced me in more ways than you could possibly know.

Impersonation is the highest form of flattery.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter One

Introduction

According to the National Council of Teachers of English (2008), the foreign-born population in the United States has tripled over the past thirty years. The Pew Research Center's (2015) analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data cited that as recently as 2013, there were over 41 million immigrants living in the U.S. According to the 2015 U.S. Census, there were 40 million U.S. residents over the age of five who spoke Spanish in the home; this is a 131.2% increase in Spanish-speakers since 1990. A prediction is that by the year 2060, the nation's population of Hispanics will grow to 119 million—28.6% of the nation's total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Based on the 2015 Census, almost 25% of elementary and high school students in the United States were Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Districts across the U.S. have been playing catch-up to serve the children of these families, and other non-native English speakers, attending the nation's public schools as English Language Learners (ELLs). These students constitute the fastest-growing population in schools today. Using data from the U.S. Department of Education, Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova (2015) reported that during the 2012-2013 school year, nearly 5 million ELLs were enrolled in public schools across the nation; this represented almost 10% of enrolled students in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Although the largest increase in ELL population growth has occurred on the West Coast, the Midwest has seen a significant increase in the ELL population. In the ten-year time span from 2002-2003 to 2012-2013, Kansas experienced the largest percentage–point increase in ELL enrollment in the United States with ELLs comprising just over

10% of the total K-12 enrollment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). By 2013, the percentage of ELLs was 3% of total K-12 enrollment in Missouri (Ruiz Soto et al., 2015).

Van Roekel (2008) stated that although the number of ELLs in classrooms has grown substantially, practitioners have not been given professional development on effective ELL instruction to keep up with the demand; this is still a relevant problem today. The increase in ELL population in public schools brings new challenges to teachers. Teachers lack the appropriate tools and strategies to teach ELLs and do not have appropriate assessments that measure students' achievement. Another challenge is that approximately two-thirds of ELL students qualify as low-income. In 2015, the U.S. Census reported that the median household income among Hispanics was just over $45,000, with a poverty rate of 21.4%, compared to a median household income of $62,950 for non-Hispanic Whites, and a poverty rate of 9.1% (Proctor et al., 2016). The academic performance of ELLs is well below that of their peers, and ELLs continue to have a higher-than-average dropout rate (Fry, 2008; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). The National Education Association (NEA) estimated that by the year 2025, one out of every four public school students might be an ELL (Van Roekel, 2008).

According to data from the 2011-2012 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), there were 24,939 ELL students in Missouri. Of those ELL students, 37% of those in fourth grade in Missouri scored at or above basic on the NAEP reading test, with the remaining percentage of ELLs scoring at below basic (Murphey, 2014). The Independence School District (ISD) in Independence, Missouri, has not been exempt from any of the challenges so far discussed. The district, too, experienced an increase in

the number of Hispanic students from 13.4% to 17.3% of the total enrollment since 2010 (Director of ELL Services, personal communication, October 3, 2016). Excluding the free and reduced lunch category, this was a larger increase than any other demographic in the district (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016). Classroom teachers in the district have not seen the student achievement growth they would like to see, and state assessment scores among the ELL population have declined or remained stagnant (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016). The district drastically changed its approach to ELL instruction in the 2013-2014 school year. They went from an ELL pull-out model to a proficiency-based ELL center for students to attend once each week for a full day of instruction at their grade-level and English proficiency level. The determination of whether the new model has a different effect on ELL elementary students' achievement is important to the ISD.

Background

The Director of ELL Services shared information relevant to the study in October of 2016. In 2008, there were 327 students in grades kindergarten through 12 who qualified for ELL services in the ISD using an adaptive screening tool, the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment-Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (WIDA-ACCESS) Placement Test. The screening tool from the ACCESS assessment is used to determine English proficiency of ELL students. By 2010, the number of ELL students had grown to 434, and in 2012, the total number of students qualifying for ELL services had reached 578. Although many students in this group speak Spanish, the district also supports students who speak Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Arabic. In total, there are over 21 languages spoken in ISD homes; students of these

families needed support in English that they were not getting in the general education setting. As a proactive step toward serving ELL students better, the district radically changed their approach to ELL instruction (Director of ELL Services, personal communication, October 3, 2016).

In 2010, the ISD began using the ACCESS for ELLs to monitor student progress annually and determine the correct placement level for ELL services. Scores in listening, speaking, reading, and writing are reported as raw scores, scale scores, and English language proficiency (ELP) levels. The ACCESS for ELLs measures students' social and academic proficiency by assessing English used in social and academic context across language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies (Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin, 2014).

The state of Missouri requires all students, including those who qualify for ELL services, in grades 3-5 to take the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics, in addition to science in fifth grade (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016). Student scores in the ISD from 2010-2016 on the ACCESS and MAP have shown that ELL students in the ISD were not progressing as quickly as they should have been (Director of ELL Services, personal communication, October 3, 2016).

Table 1 presents ISD third grade ELL and White student data from the MAP. The table shows percentages of students scoring proficient or advanced from years 2010-2016, and the difference between the two groups. As presented in Table 1, the percentage of ELL students performing at proficient or advanced on the ELA MAP in third grade increased by 13.1% from 2010 to 2016. The percentage of White (not

Hispanic) students who scored at proficient or advanced increased by 18.8% from 2010 to 2016. The growth gap has increased 5.7% from 2010 to 2016 between these two groups of students, and the average difference in the percentage of students scoring at proficient or advanced was 21.7% from 2010 to 2016.

Table 1

Percentage of ISD Third Grade Students Scoring Proficient and Advanced on the 2010-2016 ELA MAP

	Year						
Student Groups	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
ELL	29.3	21.7	16.1	14.6	17.2	45.2	42.4
Whites (not Hispanic)	41.9	41.9	46.3	47.0	44.9	55.8	60.7
Difference	12.6	20.2	30.2	32.4	27.7	10.6	18.3

Note. Adapted from *Missouri Comprehensive Data System: Quick facts* by Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016. Retrieved from https://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/Pages/State-Assessment.aspx.

Table 2 displays ISD fourth grade ELL and White student data from the MAP. The table shows percentages of students scoring proficient or advanced from years 2010-2016, and the difference between the two groups. As displayed in Table 2, the percentage of ELL students performing at proficient or advanced on the ELA MAP in fourth grade increased by 14.6% from 2010 to 2016. The percentage of White (not Hispanic) students who scored at proficient or advanced increased by 9.6% from 2010 to 2016. The growth gap in fourth grade has decreased by 5.0% between these two groups of students from 2010 to 2016; however, the White (not Hispanic) proficiency percentage

is still significantly higher, and the average difference in the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was 24.7% from 2010 to 2016.

Table 2

Percentage of ISD Fourth Grade Students Scoring Proficient and Advanced on the 2010-2016 ELA MAP

	Year						
Student Groups	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
ELL	25.0	30.4	23.3	25.0	17.2	34.7	39.6
Whites (not Hispanic)	49.6	50.3	50.4	53.2	46.1	59.1	59.2
Difference	24.6	19.9	27.1	28.2	28.9	24.4	19.6

Note. Adapted from *Missouri Comprehensive Data System: Quick facts* by Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016. Retrieved from https://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/Pages/State-Assessment.aspx.

Table 3 contains ISD fifth grade ELL and White student data from the MAP. The table shows percentages of students scoring proficient or advanced from years 2010-2016, and the difference between the two groups. As shown in Table 3, the percentage of ELL students performing at proficient or advanced on the ELA MAP in fifth grade increased by 3.8% from 2010 to 2016. The percentage of White (not Hispanic) students who scored at proficient or advanced increased by 7.1% from 2010 to 2016. The growth gap has increased by 3.3% between these two groups of students from 2010 to 2016. The average difference between ELL and White students scoring proficient or advanced was 25.4% from 2010 to 2016.

Table 3

Percentage of ISD Fifth Grade Students Scoring Proficient and Advanced on the 2010-2016 ELA MAP

	Year						
Student Groups	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
ELL	40.0	19.0	28.3	20.0	18.3	30.8	43.8
Whites (not Hispanic)	55.2	50.5	49.3	47.4	53.2	60.2	62.3
Difference	15.2	31.5	21.0	27.4	34.9	29.4	18.5

Note. Adapted from *Missouri Comprehensive Data System: Quick facts* by Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016. Retrieved from https://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/Pages/State-Assessment.aspx.

To address the gap in achievement between ELL students and non-ELL students, the ISD revamped their elementary ELL model at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. Instead of an ELL teacher traveling to different elementary schools and pulling students for 30 to 60 minutes of instruction each week, an ELL center was created. The district set aside classrooms on the third floor of Nowlin Middle School to open the ELL center for students in first through fifth grades. Under the new model, elementary students from across the district were bussed to the center one day each week, based on their grade-level and their English proficiency level. Teachers at the ELL center taught grade-level curriculum directly aligned with what students were learning in their home school classrooms, but also tailored to meet their ELL needs. In other words, the ELL teacher was familiar with the district curriculum and taught not only grade-level content but also provided ELL instruction at the students' English proficiency level. Under this new model, students received a minimum of four additional hours of instruction each week.

The ELL center provided instruction at students' English proficiency level to over 500 pupils who natively speak over 20 different languages.

Presented in Table 4 are students' proficiency scores on the ACCESS from school years 2011-2012 through 2015-2016. Proficiency scores describe a student's performance on the ACCESS in terms of the WIDA proficiency levels: 1-Entering, 2-Beginning, 3-Developing, 4-Expanding, 5-Bridging, and 6-Reaching. Since the inception of the ELL center, the percentage of ELL students scoring 5.0 or higher on the ACCESS has increased by 4.8%.

Table 4

English Proficiency Scores: Percentage of ISD ELL Students Grades 1-5 Scoring 5.0 or Higher on the 2012-2016 ACCESS

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Percentage	20.9	23.9	25.2	26.7	25.7

Note. Data obtained from the Director of ELL Services, personal communication, October 3, 2016.

The Director of ELL Services explained that kindergarten students and newcomers to the United States receive support in the ISD, though not at the ELL center. The ISD supported students in kindergarten through a pull-out model for low proficiency students, students new to the United States, and those who spoke a language other than English in their home. These students received pull-out ELL services from ELL center traveling teachers one day each week for 45 minutes. The focus during this direct instructional time was on district phonics curriculum. Students were also enrolled in a computer program called Imagine Learning. Students enrolled in Imagine Learning logged on for a minimum of 100 minutes each week, and worked through a series of

lessons at their level. Guided by Imagine Learning, the students practiced reading, speaking, and writing. At the secondary level, the district offered Newcomer Centers for non-English speakers. There were also intermediate proficiency level classes, an ELL Resource Class for help with regular classes, and a Spanish for Native Speakers class (Director of ELL Services, personal communication, October 3, 2016).

The categorized achievement of different grade-level groups of students on the 2016 ACCESS is presented in Table 5. Students in grades 1-5 attended the ELL center, and 33.3% of them scored 5.0 or higher on the 2016 ACCESS. Kindergarten had 13.3% fewer students scoring at 5.0 or higher on the 2016 ACCESS compared to students in grades 1-5 who attended the ELL center. Sixth through eighth grade had 26.4% fewer students scoring at 5.0 or higher than those students who attended the ELL center, and at the high school level, there were 14.6% fewer students scoring at 5.0 or higher on the 2016 ACCESS than students in grades 1-5 who attended the ELL center. As shown in Table 5, those who attended the ELL center had the highest percentage of students who achieved 5.0 or higher on the ACCESS.

Table 5

English Proficiency Scores: Percentage of ISD Students Scoring 5.0 or Higher on the 2016 ACCESS

Grade Span	Percentage
Kindergarten	20.0
Grades 1-5	33.3
Grades 6-8	6.9
Grades 9-12	18.7

Note. Data obtained from the Director of ELL Services, personal communication, October 3, 2016.

As a comparison with the ISD, data from a "sister district" similar in size, percentage of free and reduced lunch, and percentage of Whites (not Hispanic) and Hispanics was reviewed to compare ELL students' performance on the ELA MAP with ELL students' performance in the ISD. The districts' percentages of White (not Hispanic) students who scored proficient or advanced were compared with the districts' percentages of Hispanic students who scored proficient or advanced to determine growth in the percentage of students who scored in the proficiency categories. By looking at the total percentages of students who scored proficient or advanced, the researcher was able to see growth gaps in student achievement. One major difference between the two districts was the model of ELL instruction the students were receiving in the two compared districts. According to the Director of ELL Services (personal communication, October 3, 2016), after the inception of the elementary ELL program in the ISD, the district had functioned using a pull-out model as previously described. Under the pull-out model, each ELL teacher was free to instruct as he or she desired for the group of

students with whom they were working; they were not guided by district curriculum or grade-level resources as they are at the ELL center once it opened at the start of the 2013-2014 school year. According to the sister district's website (District S, 2016), if a student qualifies for ELL services, the student received additional help from an English teacher or a tutor. At the elementary level in the sister district, three designated schools housed an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) endorsed teacher who provided direct language instruction to ELLs. The amount of ELL instruction the student received was based on the students' abilities.

As shown in Table 6, the percentage of ELL students in the comparison sister district performing at proficient or advanced on the ELA MAP in third grade increased by 11.5%, compared to the ISD's growth of 13.1% from 2010 to 2016. The percentage of White (not Hispanic) students who scored proficient or advanced in the sister district increased by 22.3% compared to the ISD's growth in the percentage of White (not Hispanic) students who scored proficient or advanced of 18.8% from 2010-2016. In the ISD, there was a 5.7% increase in the growth gap between these two groups of students. In the sister district, there was a 10.8% increase in the growth gap between ELLs and Whites. In the ISD, the average difference in the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced from 2010 to 2016 was 21.7%, and in the sister district, it was 25.3%. In 2010, 2011, 2015, and 2016, the ISD showed less of a difference in the percentage of proficient or advanced students between ELLs and Whites than did the sister district.

Table 6

Sister District and ISD Comparison: Percentage of Third Grade Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on the 2010-2016 ELA MAP

	Year						
Student Groups	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
ISD ELL	29.3	21.7	16.1	14.6	17.2	45.2	42.4
SD ELL	25.0	6.1	18.2	17.6	18.6	42.7	36.5
ISD White (not Hispanic)	41.9	41.9	46.3	47.0	44.9	55.8	60.7
SD White (not Hispanic)	41.5	43.4	45.8	49.9	40.6	58.0	63.8
ISD Difference	12.6	20.2	30.2	32.4	27.7	10.6	18.3
SD Difference	16.5	37.3	27.2	31.3	22.0	15.3	27.3
ISD v. SD Difference	-3.9	-17.1	3.0	1.3	5.7	-4.7	-9.0

Note. SD = Sister District. Adapted from *Missouri Comprehensive Data System: Quick facts* by Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016. Retrieved from https://mcds.dese.mo.gov/ quickfacts/Pages/ State-Assessment.aspx.

Presented in Table 7, the percentage of ELL students in a comparison sister district performing at proficient or advanced on the ELA MAP in fourth grade increased by 15.0%, compared to the ISD's growth of 14.6% from 2010 to 2016. The percentage of White (not Hispanic) students who scored proficient or advanced in the sister district increased by 16.1% compared to the ISD's growth in the percentage of White (not Hispanic) students who scored proficient or advanced of 9.6% from 2010-2016. In the ISD, there was a decrease in the growth gap of 5.0% from 2010 to 2016, and in the sister district, there was a 1.1% increase in the growth gap. In the ISD, the average difference in percent proficient or advanced was 24.7%, and in the sister district, it was 24.2%. In

2011, 2012, and 2015 the ISD showed less of a difference in the percent of proficient or advanced students between ELLs and Whites than did the sister district.

Table 7

Sister District and ISD Comparison: Percentage of Fourth Grade Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on the 2010-2016 ELA MAP

	Year						
Student Groups	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
ISD ELL	25.0	30.4	23.3	25.0	17.2	34.7	39.6
SD ELL	34.4	17.9	8.1	34.1	18.9	32.3	49.4
ISD White (not Hispanic)	49.6	50.3	50.4	53.2	46.1	59.1	59.2
SD White (not Hispanic)	50.6	47.3	48.3	53.6	40.1	58.1	66.7
ISD Difference	24.6	19.9	27.1	28.2	28.9	24.4	19.6
SD Difference	16.2	29.4	40.2	19.5	21.2	25.8	17.3
ISD v. SD Difference	8.4	-9.5	-13.1	8.7	7.7	-1.4	2.3

Note. SD = Sister District. Adapted from *Missouri Comprehensive Data System: Quick facts* by Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016. Retrieved from https://mcds.dese.mo.gov/ quickfacts/Pages/ State-Assessment.aspx.

As seen in Table 8, the percentage of ELL students in a comparison sister district performing at proficient or advanced on the ELA MAP in fifth grade increased by 5.1%, compared to the ISD's growth of 3.8% from 2010 to 2016. The percentage of White (not Hispanic) students who scored proficient or advanced in the sister district increased by 14.2% compared to the ISD's growth in the percentage of White (not Hispanic) students who scored proficient or advanced of 7.1% from 2010-2016. In the ISD, there was an increase in the growth gap of 3.3% from 2010 to 2016, and in the sister district, there was

a 9.1% increase in the growth gap. In the ISD, the average difference in percent proficient or advanced was 25.4%, and in the sister district, it was 28.6%. In 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2016 the ISD showed less of a difference in the percent of proficient or advanced students between ELLs and Whites than did the sister district.

Table 8

Sister District and ISD Comparison: Percentage of Fifth Grade Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on the 2010-2016 ELA MAP

	Year						
Student Groups	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
ISD ELL	40.0	19.0	28.3	20.0	18.3	30.8	43.8
SD ELL	26.7	22.7	7.9	8.9	27.9	28.1	31.8
ISD White (not Hispanic)	55.2	50.5	49.3	47.4	53.2	60.2	62.3
SD White (not Hispanic)	48.1	46.4	45.8	46.9	48.0	56.4	62.3
ISD Difference	15.2	31.5	21.0	27.4	34.9	29.4	18.5
SD Difference	21.4	23.7	37.9	38.0	20.1	28.3	30.5
ISD v. SD Difference	-6.2	7.8	-16.9	-10.6	14.8	1.1	-12.0

Note. SD = Sister District. Adapted from *Missouri Comprehensive Data System: Quick facts* by Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016. Retrieved from https://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/Pages/ State-Assessment.aspx.

The growth gaps between ELL and White (not Hispanic) students in grades 3-5 in the ISD have improved from 2010-2016 when compared to the growth gaps from the sister district. Third grade data in the ISD showed a 5.7% increase in the growth gap compared to a 10.8% increase in the growth gap in the sister district. In fourth grade, the growth gap in the ISD decreased by 5.0%, whereas in the sister district, the growth gap

increased by 1.1%. The fifth grade data showed an increase in the growth gap in the ISD of 3.3%, and the sister district had a 9.1% increase in the growth gap. The 2010-2016 comparison data shows that growth gaps between ELL and White (not Hispanic) students in grades 3-5 in the ISD have decreased or are less than the growth gaps in the comparison district, according to the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MAP.

Statement of the Problem

Over the past decade, the ISD has seen increases in the ELL student population. When the ISD significantly changed the method of ELL instruction, they were taking an innovative, and perhaps risky, approach. The Director of ELL Services knew that the pull-out model the district had been using was not closing the learning gap and that something needed to change (Director of ELL Services, personal communication, November 9, 2016). The ELL proficiency-based center was a new and unique approach to ELL instruction in a district with the socioeconomic and geographic demographics like those of the ISD. There was a need for more research on the effectiveness of the ELL instruction and the influence of a proficiency-based ELL center on student achievement and English language proficiency when compared to the achievement and English language proficiency of students receiving the pull-out model of ELL instruction.

Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of this study was to determine if there was a difference in first through fifth grade ELL students' achievement, as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs composite score, between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program. The second purpose of this study

was to determine whether there was a difference in the number of students who exited the ELL program between those who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and those who attended an ELL pull-out program. The third purpose was to determine the extent to which there was a difference in third through fifth grade ELL students' achievement as measured by the ELA MAP, between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program. The final purpose of this study was to gain insight into the practitioner's views by gathering teachers' perceptions of the differences between the pull-out program and the full-day separate-setting ELL program to gain insight into the practitioner's views.

Significance of the Study

At the time this study was conducted, the ELL instructional model being implemented in the ISD was unique; no other district in the state of Missouri was using an ELL center approach to instruction (Director of ELL Services, personal communication, November 9, 2016). Few rigorous research studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of different ELL models or methods of instruction (Sparks, 2016; Wilkins, 2015). Sparks (2016) also found that there was very little evidence on the effectiveness of instructional methods for specific ELL populations, such as studies on different age groups and different languages spoken. In their research, Moughamian, Rivera, and Francis (2009) discussed the importance of considering contextual factors that may affect students' performance in any ELL program. These factors, including but not limited to socioeconomic status, immigration status, cultural considerations, and teacher quality, could influence students' performance in an ELL program. These contextual factors, the researchers argued, make it difficult to implement a "one size fits

all" ELL model (Moughamian et al., 2009). Although this may be true, it was necessary for the ISD to determine the best model for ELL instruction to meet the needs of its students.

Delimitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined delimitations as "self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study" (p. 134). The delimitations of this study include:

1. The student participants included ELL students in grades 1-5 in the ISD in Independence, Missouri.

2. Student achievement data included ACCESS scores (grades 1-5) and ELA MAP scores (grades 3-5) from before and after implementation of the full-day pull-out ELL program as a measure of student achievement.

3. Teachers in the focus groups taught in the ISD from 2010 (or before) until 2017.

Assumptions

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), "Assumptions are postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research" (p. 135). This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. The teachers providing instruction through pull-out services and at the ELL center over the course of the study did not change.

2. The ACCESS assessment administered to students at the ELL center during the study was the same or similar from year-to-year.

3. Students gave their best effort on the assessments.

4. Scoring on assessments was objective and accurate.

5. The teachers who participated in the focus group interviews understood the questions they were asked.

6. The teachers who participated in the focus group interviews responded truthfully.

7. The interpretation of the focus group interviews accurately reflected the teachers' perceptions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study to determine the effectiveness of the full-day separate-setting ELL model as compared to the ELL pull-out model of instruction:

RQ1. To what extent was there a difference in ELL students' achievement (grades 1-5), as measured by ACCESS for ELLs composite score, between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program?

RQ2. To what extent was there a difference in the number of students exiting the ELL program between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program?

RQ3. To what extent was there a difference in ELL students' achievement (grades 3-5), as measured by the ELA MAP Assessment, between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program?

RQ4. What were teacher perceptions of the ELL pull-out program and the full-day separate-setting ELL program?

Definition of Terms

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) discussed the importance of defining "key terms central to the study" (p. 118) to help the reader avoid confusion. This section includes the definition of terms used in the study.

ACCESS for ELLs. The ACCESS for ELLs is "A secure large-scale English language proficiency assessment" designed to "assess the four language domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing" (Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin, 2014, para. 1).

ELL. An ELL is a student who is not able to learn effectively or communicate with fluency in English. These students often come from homes or backgrounds where English is not spoken. They "typically require specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses" (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013, para. 1).

ELL pull-out program. In an ELL pull-out program, the ELL teacher pulls students out of their homeroom classroom to work in a small group. Students miss instruction in their grade-level classrooms and may be in a mixed-proficiency group (Haynes, 2016).

ELL separate setting. In an ELL separate setting program, students are tested to determine their English proficiency level. They attend school for one full day each week at an off-site ELL center with grade-level *and* proficiency-level peers to receive instruction from a grade-level ELL teacher (Haynes, 2016).

Exiting the ELL program. When the researcher refers to students exiting the ELL program, this means that the students no longer receive ELL instruction. Students take the ACCESS for ELLs in January to determine their status for the following school year. If students obtain a composite score of five or greater on the ACCESS, and they are showing similar success in school, they are placed on monitor status. Students are placed on monitor status for two years, and the classroom teacher completes a monitor checklist after the first and third quarters of school for both of those years. When students are placed on monitor status, they are no longer attending the ELL center or receiving pull-out ELL instruction; essentially, they have exited the program (Director of ELL Services, personal communication, November 9, 2016).

MAP Grade-Level Assessments. The MAP is designed to determine the extent to which a student has mastered the Missouri Show-Me Standards (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011). The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education states that the MAP Grade-Level Assessments are norm-referenced tests, delivered each spring in communication arts and mathematics for grades 3-8 (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011).

Organization of the Study

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter one included the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and the definition of terms. Chapter two presents a review of the literature, which includes challenges facing ELL students, changing requirements of ELL programs in U.S. schools, best practices in ELL instruction, achievement of ELLs, teacher perceptions, and different approaches to ELL

instruction. Chapter three includes a description of the methodology used for this study, including the research design, selection of participants, measurement, data collection, data analysis and hypothesis testing, and the limitations. Chapter four includes the results of the hypotheses testing and the qualitative analysis from the teacher focus groups. Presented in chapter five are the study's interpretation and recommendations including a summary of the study, the findings related to the research, and the conclusions.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

An estimated 4.5 million students in U.S. public schools were ELL students during the 2013-2014 school year. In the same year in Missouri, over 25,000 students participated in ELL programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). By the year 2020, the number of school-age children of immigrants is predicted to grow to a staggering 17.9 million; large portions of these children are expected to require ELL services. This ever-increasing population is also one of the lowest-performing (Fry, 2008). Schools across the nation continue to work to close the learning gap between ELL and non-ELL students.

In this chapter, the literature on ELL instruction and academic achievement related to this study is presented. First, the challenges facing ELL students are discussed. Next, the changing requirements of ELL programs in U.S. schools are explored. Best practices in ELL instruction are reviewed, and the achievement of ELLs is surveyed. Research pertaining to the current study's variables including teacher perceptions and approaches to ELL instruction are also examined.

Challenges Facing ELL Students

The ELL student population is extremely diverse; it is not comprised solely of students who speak Spanish as their first language but includes students who speak any language other than English as their first language. In the nation's public schools, this presents an added challenge for ELL students and their teachers. "Many students today struggle to meet high academic standards, but ELLs have the added complexity of having to learn and use high-level academic English as they study challenging content in a new

language" (Echevarria, 2008, p. 1). The acquisition of vocabulary is paramount in successful acquisition of the English language. Gersten et al. (2007) found that the vocabulary gap between native English speakers and ELLs begins before these students even enter school. Simple words, like bank and can, are used by teachers and textbook publishers without an explicit vocabulary focus; it is assumed that all students know these basic vocabulary words and can understand content when these words are used. Furthermore, the teachers' manuals do not provide guidance on how to teach these basic words to students who do not know them. For example, a math problem may describe a boy walking four blocks to the park (Levien, 2009). The mental image in a native-English speaker's mind is a boy walking four city blocks and arriving at the park; an ELL will picture a boy carrying four building blocks and walking with them in his arms to the park.

Fry's (2008) research in collaboration with the Pew Research Center explained that oftentimes, ELL students attend public schools that already have low standardized test scores, which are not necessarily attributed to the poor achievement of ELL students exclusively, but to additional circumstances including high student to teacher ratio, families and students living in poverty, and high enrollment numbers in general. Fry (2008) went on to say that "when ELL students are not isolated in these low-achieving schools, their gap in test score results is considerably narrower" (p. 1).

Gersten et al. (2007) noted that the reading achievement gap between fourth grade native English learners and ELLs was 35 points in 2005, making it greater than the Black-White achievement gap. Hanover Research (2014) cited that "research has demonstrated that when ELL students are not isolated in low-achieving schools and are

able to attend schools with a certain percentage of white students, achievement gaps narrow" (p. 4). The authors also stated that socioeconomic status is a major factor which contributes to achievement gaps. "Recent research indicates that by far, socioeconomic status has the strongest correlation to cognitive scores than by any other factor" (Hanover Research, 2014, p. 4). The authors go on to discuss racial and ethnic achievement gaps, specifically the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs. Included in the report is a statement by the NEA indicating that the gap is a "deeply rooted, pervasive, complex, and challenging issue" (Hanover Research, 2014, p. 9).

For a student to become proficient in academic English, it takes five to seven years, and seven to ten years to reach grade-level norms (Haynes, 2010). Although students may gain proficiency in social English more quickly, they need the academic English to be successful long-term in school and a job (Breiseth, 2015). ELL students may have strengths such as a strong interest in education, and academic skills in their native language; however, they lack the ability to practice and develop academic language at home, do not have consistent language instruction in school, and experience high levels of transiency and poverty. These challenges may stand in the way of the achievement of ELLs (Breiseth, 2015).

In addition to challenges that ELL students face, over which they have no control, there are often misconceptions, stereotypes, and perceptions held by educators that stand in the way of teaching and learning. Gonzalez (2016), an ESL teacher from North Carolina, cited some of these assumptions and the realities to counter them in a commentary published in Education Week Teacher. She argued that these assumptions

not only hinder a teacher's ability to relate to his or her ELL students, but they may also stand in the way of educating ELLs well (Gonzalez, 2016).

The first assumption Gonzalez (2016) stated is the belief that ELLs are a homogeneous population made up of poor, uneducated Hispanics. In reality, the ELL population made up of Asians, Middle Easterners, Africans, and Europeans continues to grow (Gonzalez, 2016). Furthermore, there are many ELL families who are well-educated who emigrate for professional promotions (Gonzalez, 2016). Educators also assume that ELL students are fluent in their native language (Gonzalez, 2016). The reality outlined by Gonzalez (2016) is that it is not "uncommon for children to replace their first language with English, especially international adoptees" (Gonzalez, 2016, p. 10). In some homes, parents are also trying to learn English, and so they stop speaking in their native language to support English language development. Students who are fluent in neither their native language nor in English need scaffolded instruction to be successful learners (Gonzalez, 2016). Keeping that in mind, it is incorrect to assume that English language proficiency is an indicator of intellect. Gonzalez (2016) discussed the possibility of ELLs being academically gifted, and the importance of ruling out language issues when trying to determine if an ELL student has a learning disability (Gonzalez, 2016). Assuming that students who have acquired social English proficiency are also proficient in academic English is another mistake that teachers can make (Gonzales, 2016). Students who are fully conversational with their peers may still struggle with academic English for up to 10 years (Gonzalez, 2016). Teachers may assume that students are lazy or apathetic toward their learning when in actuality, there are large language gaps that are interfering with their learning (Gonzalez, 2016). The biases and

misconceptions that teachers hold contribute to challenges in learning for ELL students that other students in the classroom do not face.

Changing Requirements of ELL Programs in U.S. Schools

As part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the subsequent 1974 Supreme Court case Lau v. Nichols, ELL students must be provided accommodations to help them learn English to give them equal access to education (Sparks, 2016). Federal law requires schools to take necessary steps to offset ELLs' language barriers, and guarantee that these students are able to participate in schools' educational programs (Sparks, 2016). Under No Child Left Behind, now known as The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Title III professional development funds could only be used to assist teachers in meeting certification requirements to teach ELLs. With the new requirements in ESEA amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), professional development funds may now be used for all teachers, not just those who work with ELLs. Furthermore, the funds can be used for teachers to learn how to teach ELLs more effectively.

ELL students make up almost 10% of the nation's student population, and in some districts, a much higher percentage of the student population. Despite many strides to close the achievement gap among this population, in the 2013-2014 school year, the high school graduation rate for ELLs nationwide was only 62.6%, compared to 82.3% for all students (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). ESEA amended by ESSA outlined the goal of the U.S. Department of Education to help ELLs achieve at the same academic success rate as their non-ELL peers. The amended ESEA outlined how schools can and should use Title III funds to provide services to students that supplement current programs to improve English language proficiency *and* ELL academic achievement. In

addition to providing clarity on how to use funds, section B of the ESEA contains an explanation of the requirements for English language proficiency standards. Each state's plan shall demonstrate that the state has adopted English language proficiency standards that: "(i) are derived from the 4 recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing; (ii) address the different proficiency levels of English learners; and (iii) are aligned with the challenging state academic standards" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, p. 15).

To align a state's English language proficiency standards with academic standards, the language standards must align with content vocabulary across all subjects. For instance, ELLs must learn and understand English concepts in math, science, and social studies in addition to being proficient in literacy-based concepts in English. "The goal of English language proficiency standards is to build a foundation in the English language that will enable EL students to succeed in each academic content area" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, p. 16). When the academic content standards are aligned with language proficiency standards, ELLs are in a position to graduate from high school college- or career-ready at the same rate of their non-ELL peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Section C of the ESSA-amended ESEA included the requirement that schools use federal Title III funds to ensure that Language Instruction Educational Programs (LIEP) continue to be "scientifically based," and added that by July 2017, the LIEPs must be "effective" (p. 18). An effective LIEP will increase English language proficiency and student academic achievement, help ELLs meet academic standards across content areas and be proven successful. To determine whether a district's LIEP is indeed "effective"

under the new standards, the ESEA suggested considering the use of data, involving stakeholders in discussions, setting measurable and achievable goals, and making changes if warranted (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Although states are not required by the amended ESEA to implement a specific LIEP, they are required to monitor the effectiveness of their chosen LIEP:

> If multi-year student performance data demonstrate that ELs in a particular LEA [Local Educational Agency] are not making sufficient annual progress towards English language proficiency and gains in academic achievement, the State should work with the LEA to revise its LIEP and strategies for instructing ELs using evidence and research to guide its decision-making. (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, p. 21)

Best Practices in ELL Instruction

Many different approaches to ELL instruction are being used in public schools today; however, there are conflicting reports as to the solitary effectiveness of any one approach (Gersten et al., 2007; Hanover Research, 2014; Toledo-Lopez & Penton Herrera, 2015). Ramirez, Yuen & Ramey (1991) compared the relative effectiveness of three bilingual education program models for elementary ELL students: immersion strategy, early-exit, and late-exit transitional. In an immersion strategy program, all instruction is received in English by teachers with either bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) credentials. Content and language development are taught to students with the intention of mainstreaming after two to three years (Ramirez et al., 1991). An early-exit program differs because there is some initial instruction taught in the student's primary language; however, this is quickly phased out over a two-year period so that all

instruction is in English by second grade (Ramirez et al., 1991). A late-exit program instructs students in their native language at least 40% of the time, and students stay in the program through sixth grade (Ramirez et al., 1991). They found that students in an early-exit program were reclassified to Fluent English Proficient (FEP) status at a higher percentage in grades one through four than in the immersion or the late-exit program (Ramirez et al., 1991). The results of the study determined that students in late-exit program sites who used the most Spanish during instruction achieved higher growth than the late-exit program sites who transitioned into almost all English during instruction (Ramirez et al., 1991). The authors suggested that ELL students who received a large portion of their instruction in their first language were not hindered in their acquisition of English, but that this model provided equal effectiveness as when students were provided with large amounts of English instruction (Ramirez et al., 1991).

Historically, ELL students are much less likely than other students to score proficient or advanced in both mathematics and reading language arts (Neill, 2005). According to the Institute of Effective Sciences (2007), the scientific research on effectively instructing ELLs was limited. The authors asserted that there were few rigorous research studies to establish which instructional practices actually produce better academic outcomes for ELLs (Gersten et al., 2007). ELL programs and practices in districts across the nation must continue to be researched and analyzed to understand better the acquisition of English proficiency.

Teachers need to understand the importance of scaffolding and supporting ELLs as they acquire English orally and in writing. Teachers must continue to assess and monitor students' proficiency levels, and plan instruction accordingly (Francis, Rivera,

Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006). According to Haynes (2016), ELLs benefited most when teachers could scaffold lessons so that the students were able to participate in classroom activities, and when they were immersed in a "continuous communicative experience with their monolingual peers in order to acquire English" (Haynes, 2016, para. 12).

Research indicates that a dual language or bilingual education program is a highly effective model to impact student achievement (Toledo-Lopez & Penton Herrera, 2015). "Dual Language Education is one research-based instructional practice that has emerged as successful in increasing the achievement of ELL students" (Hanover Research, 2014, p. 10). Elementary ELL and native-English speaking students who studied in a dual language setting achieved high levels of reading and writing in both languages (Toledo-Lopez & Penton Herrera, 2015).

A dual-language program varies by how much of the instruction is provided in the student's native language. The most common dual language program is the 50/50 model. Half of the instruction is provided in the native language, and the other half of the instruction is in English. Translation is not provided using the 50/50 model (Howard & Sugarman, 2009). Another common model is known as 90/10. Using this model, the percentage of instruction in the native language versus English gradually decreases by 10% each year from kindergarten through fifth grade. For example, 90% of instruction in kindergarten would be provided in the native language. In first grade, 80% of instruction would be in the native language, and so forth. By fourth grade, the students would be immersed in a 50/50 model, which would continue in fifth grade (Howard & Sugarman, 2009).

Gersten et al. (2007) outlined five recommendations for improving reading achievement and the development of English in elementary grades. The first recommendation was to use formative assessments to identify those ELL students who need more instructional support in literacy. Gersten et al. (2007) discussed that early assessment was important in guiding teachers to put the right interventions in place. A long-held belief is that if an ELL student was not proficient in oral language, the results of a reading assessment would not be accurate; however, "research has consistently found that early reading measures administered in English are an excellent means for screening English learners, even those who know little English" (Gersten et al., 2007, p. 5). The authors went on to discuss the necessity of early assessment in kindergarten to determine proficiency in phonological processing, letter recognition, phonics and other basic reading skills. Assessments in these areas have been able to "accurately predict later reading performance" (Gersten et al., 2007, p. 5).

The second recommendation was to provide small-group reading interventions for ELLs who may be at-risk for reading problems. "Explicit, direct instruction should be the primary means of instructional delivery" (Gersten et al., 2007, p. 10). An interesting outcome was that students thrived in homogenous groups based on their reading skill, regardless of whether or not they were ELLs. Gersten et al. (2007) stated that there might be pros to groups consisting of native English speakers and ELLs, as long as there was flexibility to regroup based on progress.

The third recommendation was to provide high-quality and rigorous vocabulary instruction throughout the day. Gersten et al. (2007) suggested teaching "essential content words in depth" and to "use instructional time to address the meanings of

common words, phrases, and expressions not yet learned" (p. 13). Explicit vocabulary instruction is not often embedded in the literacy resources teachers use in their classrooms. Additionally, it is necessary to incorporate vocabulary instruction across all content areas as a vital part of developing proficiency in the English language. "The goal of rich vocabulary instruction is for students to develop an understanding of word meanings to the point where they can use these and related words in their communication and as a basis for further learning" (Gersten et al., 2007, p. 13). Rather than providing a long list of words to look up and define, Gersten et al. (2007) suggested students be encouraged to use new vocabulary in an authentic manner, perhaps writing and using student-friendly definitions to aid in language development.

ELLs must learn to develop their academic English skills, which is the fourth recommendation. Gersten et al. (2007) described academic English as "the language of the classroom" (p. 16). They went on to describe how common words such as fault, power, and force take on different and special meanings when those words are used in a science setting. Understanding these sometimes-subtle differences is an essential step towards English proficiency and gaining an understanding of the core curriculum across all content areas in a school setting. ELLs do not need to master conversational English, complete with proper semantics and pragmatic skills before being taught academic English. Rather, it is important to teach academic English in conjunction with the subject being taught to enhance understanding and practical application (Gersten et al., 2007).

The fifth recommendation to increase the development of English skills was intentionally scheduling peer-assisted learning opportunities. Gersten et al. (2007) discussed that teachers who utilized peer-assisted learning opportunities allowed all

students in their classrooms the opportunity to discuss ideas, practice concepts, and build social and academic vocabulary skills. All students were able to participate at their level, focused on language arts activities such as answering comprehension questions, partner reading, and summarizing texts. When students were engaged in structured and meaningful peer-assisted learning activities, the teacher could monitor progress, formatively assess, and work with low-performing students who required extra one-on-one teacher instruction. While documented success has been reported that suggests positive outcomes of peer-assisted learning models, Gersten et al. (2007) reminded that it is not to be utilized as a replacement for teacher-led instruction. Rather, "it is an evidence-based approach intended to replace some of the independent seatwork or round-robin reading that students do, for example, when the intention is to provide practice and extended learning opportunities for students" (Gersten et al., 2007, p. 21).

McIntyre (2010) stated that "building background is essential for all learners, but it takes the explicit linking of past to present for ELLs, because they are learning content and language simultaneously" (p. 73). In interviews, ELL students reported that their teachers helped them learn by allowing them to do group projects, giving them more time to complete assignments, using visual aids as they taught, and utilizing pictures from a variety of sources to enhance their instruction. These methods benefited all learners in a classroom and were not necessarily specific to teaching ELLs. Successful ELL instruction does allow time for students to acquire the skills to speak English. "One student stated, 'She also helps us [the students] sound like Americans' by teaching local language and pronunciation" (McIntyre, 2010, p. 62), thus indicating the importance of acquiring pragmatic language as well as academic language. However, McIntyre (2010)

asserted that "it is not just enough to *talk*. Children get very good at that quickly. They must learn to talk, read, and write about the topics they are studying, using the language of the discipline as much as possible" (McIntyre, 2010, p. 72). She discussed the importance of rigorous instruction and curriculum when teaching ELLs. McIntyre (2010) stated that "too many educators make the wrong assumption when they learn that students have limited English skills. Students need to be exposed to the content and vocabulary at their grade-level and supported with adaptations in the pedagogy" (p. 74).

One factor to keep in mind is the importance of excellent teaching in every classroom, not just those rooms with students who are ELLs. Teachers must understand the importance of implementing rigorous instruction with a quality curriculum focused on problem solving and critical thinking to reach students on an instructional level (McIntyre, 2010). The results of Hattie's (2003) research indicated that the quality of the teacher, through feedback, instructional quality, direct instruction, and remediation, has the largest effect size on student achievement, ranging from .65 to 1.13. He emphasized that "excellence in teaching is the single most powerful influence on achievement" (Hattie, 2003, p. 4). The amended ESEA outlines the need for high-quality teachers, especially for ELLs.

> Access to effective educators is critical for supporting ELs; research has shown that teacher effectiveness is strongly correlated with student success. To promote positive educational outcomes for ELs, preparation and professional development for teachers of ELs and school leaders should improve instruction, increase teachers' and school leaders' ability to implement effective curricula for ELs,

> increase students' English language proficiency and improve students' academic achievement. (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, p. 25)

Tucker and Stronge (2005) purported that an effective teacher possesses strong content knowledge and effective pedagogical knowledge. A teacher who is able to increase student achievement has keen verbal skills, the ability to use a wide range of teaching strategies with skill, and is enthusiastic about what he or she teaches. They hold high expectations for themselves and their students and work to build and foster meaningful relationships with students and their families. Effective teachers are proficient at using data to drive their instruction and are willing to dedicate extra time to preparation and reflection (Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

Achievement of ELLs

According to data from the 2011-2012 NAEP, there were 4,472,563 ELL students in the US. Of those ELL students, 31% of fourth graders nationwide scored at or above basic on the NAEP reading test—this means that nearly 70% of the nation's fourth grade ELL students scored below basic. Thomas and Collier (2001) determined that dual language and bilingual immersion programs were the only ones where the outcome was that students reached the 50th percentile in all subjects, maintained that level of achievement, reached even higher levels throughout their schooling, and had the fewest dropouts (Thomas & Collier, 2001). One factor that affected the achievement of ELLs was the quality of the ELL program. Some programs' features have proven enhanced potential to affect student achievement, while others exist but there is no reason to believe that the program will help ELLs close the achievement gap (Thomas & Collier, 2001). Programs need to be implemented and evaluated fully and effectively and need to

develop academic and social English in students in order to have a long-term effect (Thomas & Collier, 2001). ELLs who were immersed in a mainstream classroom showed large decreases in their math and reading achievement by the fifth grade—the largest number of dropouts also came from this group (Thomas & Collier, 2001).

On March 23, 2007, Co-Chair of the Hispanic Education Coalition, Peter Zamora, testified in front of Congress regarding ELL students' academic performance. Some of the statistics that he shared included data from the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). A sampling of fourth graders across the nation was administered a basic reading test. The 2005 NAEP results showed that 29% of ELLs scored at or above basic in reading, compared with 75% of non-ELL students. Zamora (2007) also cited that Latino ELLs had a 59% dropout rate. The gap between ELL and non-ELL students' proficiency in basic reading, based on NAEP results from 2000-2013, has remained unchanged at about 40 percentage points (Murphey, 2014). The 2013 NAEP report showed that 31% of ELLs scored at or above basic in reading, but also that students who are not currently ELL students but have received ELL services within the past two years achieved at a comparable level to non-ELL students (Murphey, 2014).

Improving ELL student achievement and helping students to become proficient in English must be a priority for school districts. The Center for Public Education (CPE) (2007), suggested that school and district leaders make decisions that consider the ELL population they serve but should focus on certain priorities. The first of these priorities was to make proficiency in academic English the goal (CPE, 2007). When ELL students were proficient in academic English, they were able to learn across all content areas (CPE, 2007). The second priority was to increase professional development so that

teachers could help ELL students achieve at high levels. Especially at the middle and secondary levels, teachers need support to learn ways to help improve ELL students' comprehension (CPE, 2007). One way CPE (2007) suggested teachers accomplish this was to explicitly teach specific literacy strategies and vocabulary and find ways to increase students' background knowledge. Whenever possible, teachers should provide some instruction in the students' first language and make the achievement of ELL students a school-wide priority and focus (CPE, 2007). Lastly, CPE (2007) cautioned against premature reclassification of ELL students. Students may be pulled out of English support programs too soon without the proper support programs in place (CPE, 2007).

Teacher Perceptions

In areas in which there is not a population to support bilingual or dual-language programs, most ELL students are in mainstream classrooms. This reality might tend to cause negative feelings toward ELL students or ELL instructional programs. Research suggested that mainstream classroom teachers may be concerned about ELL students slowing down the class progress through the curriculum and learning the necessary curriculum if their instruction was over-modified to meet ELLs' learning needs (Reeves, 2006). In her study of secondary teachers' perceptions of ELL inclusion, Reeves (2006) found that a majority of teachers reported that ELL inclusion created a positive atmosphere in schools; however, those who responded did not believe that all students benefited from ELL inclusion, and the teachers did not believe that ELLs should be mainstreamed unless they had a minimum level of English proficiency (Reeves, 2006). Almost 70% of the 279 secondary teachers that Reeves surveyed reported that they did

"not have enough time to deal with the needs of ESL students" (Reeves, 2006, p. 136), although only 53% of those surveyed were interested in receiving additional training in how to work with ELL students. Reeves (2006) also found that 39% of the teachers polled thought that ELLs should stop speaking in their native language at school and should gain English acquisition within two years of enrolling in school (Reeves, 2006). Another major finding of Reeves's (2006) research was that teachers had misconceptions regarding their knowledge of how second languages are learned. Wilken (2015) found that there have been no studies that directly addressed elementary teachers' attitudes toward ELL inclusion in classrooms. He went on to state that

> teacher attitudes toward the inclusion of ELL students in the mainstream classroom, or in public school education at all for that matter, may be influenced by the likelihood of English language learners to perform more poorly on standardized tests, as well as classroom assessments. (Wilken, 2015, p. 9)

Teachers in classrooms do not possess the tools and strategies they need to teach ELL students effectively. Furthermore, they have not been provided with appropriate or consistent professional development on effective ELL instruction to keep up with the demand (Van Roekel, 2008). Although there is little research on how teacher expectations affect students' academic achievement, Hinnant, O'Brien, and Ghazarian (2009) found that among children who might be considered at risk, teacher expectations were more strongly related to their later achievement. As populations of ELLs increase, schools and communities are enriched; however, the clear majority of teachers in classrooms speak only one language, resulting in a breakdown of cultural understanding

and inclusion (Roy-Campbell, 2012). When ELL students enter schools, they are generally placed in classrooms based on their chronological age. Teachers typically have the expectation that these students possess the same knowledge base as their same-age peers even though these students have not been exposed to the same base of knowledge that would allow them to compete academically with their native-English-speaking classmates (Roy-Campbell, 2012). These factors may have caused teachers to assume that these students will score low on standardized tests, and teachers may perceive these students as a burden in the classroom (Roy-Campbell, 2012). To change teachers' internalized negative views of ELL students, they need to be provided with knowledge of and professional development on how to effectively work with ELLs (Roy-Campbell, 2012).

Overman (2013) conducted research to examine Arizona teachers' perceptions of an English Language Development (ELD) 4-hour block ELL program, and how it affected ELL students' achievement. Analysis of her teacher focus groups and individual interviews indicated that most teachers held the opinion that the ELD block had a negative impact on student achievement; teachers reported that their ELL students were unable to meet grade-level standards and that they did not perform well on standardized assessments (Overman, 2013). One reason that the teachers gave as to why the ELD block was negatively impacting student achievement was that the ELL students did not have a language proficiency model to emulate and felt isolated in an ELD class. Teachers also reported that it was difficult to keep students focused on practicing English because with only Spanish-speaking students in the classroom, students would lapse into Spanish instead of conversational English (Overman, 2013). Teachers in the focus

groups were most concerned about the social isolation of ELL students in the ELD block. Second to this concern was the worry about students' inability to become proficient in grade-level standards and content (Overman, 2013).

Approaches to ELL Instruction

The 1991 Ramirez Report compared the relative effectiveness of three program models for ELLs in elementary schools. The three models compared were an English immersion program, an early-exit bilingual program where Spanish was quickly phased out of bilingual instruction after first grade, and a late-exit bilingual program, where through the sixth grade, students still received instruction in Spanish for up to 60% of the day (Ramirez et al., 1991). Each program model allocated the same amount of time for instruction in each content area and had similar instructional activities across all grades in the longitudinal study. Ramirez et al. (1991) found that students in the early-exit program were reclassified to Fluent English Proficient (FEP) status at a higher percentage in grades one through four than in the immersion or the late-exit program (Ramirez et al., 1991, Table 2). Students in the two late-exit sites that used the most Spanish during instruction achieved higher growth than the late-exit site that transitioned into almost all English during instruction (Ramirez et al., 1991). The authors summarized their findings in support of primary language development in students furthering their acquisition of English language skills. They suggested that ELL students who received a large portion of the instruction in their first language were not hindered in their acquisition of English, but that this model was as effective as being provided with large amounts of English instruction (Ramirez et al., 1991).

Collier and Thomas (2002) discussed the detrimental effects of pull-out ELL programs. They asserted that ELL pull-out programs are the least effective instructional model and the most expensive since they require extra resource teachers. In traditional ELL pull-out programs, students are in mixed age groups and varied proficiency levels, making it difficult to meet their individual needs. Collier and Thomas (2002) followed nearly 50,000 students from low socioeconomic backgrounds in ten districts who had no proficiency in English when they entered school in kindergarten. Of those who received ELL services through a pull-out program, they left high school performing at the 11th percentile. The authors did recognize that not all schools have a large enough number of ELLs of one language to justify bilingual classes, spurring the development of content teaching (also known as sheltered instruction). Using that model, academic courses are taught by language specialists trained to teach language and content at the same time. Under this content teaching model of ELL instruction, graduates reach the 22nd percentile by the end of their high school career (Collier & Thomas, 2002). Collier and Thomas (2002) cited that a few U.S. schools were experimenting with ways to connect English mainstream with a content/sheltered instruction model. "Integrated forms of this model may be the key to higher achievement, but these experiments are still in their infancy, and it is not yet known how students will do academically" (Collier & Thomas, 2002, p. 34).

Collier and Thomas (2004) wrote a research report on their findings from a nearly two-decade longitudinal program evaluation conducted in 23 school districts from 15 states in urban, suburban, and rural areas. They found that a dual language program was the only program for ELLs that fully closed the achievement gap. If students were in a specialized remedial program and later were mainstreamed, those students made progress

consistent with their native-English-speaking counterparts, maintaining, but not further closing the gap. Collier and Thomas (2004) classified remedial programs as intensive English classes, ELL pull-out, ELL content instruction with no primary language support, structured English immersion, and transitional bilingual education. Collier and Thomas (2004) asserted that if students remained isolated from the mainstream curriculum, or received "watered down" instruction, they did not make more than one year's growth every year—the necessary growth to eventually close the learning gap. Of the four dual-language programs studied in their research (one-way 90:10 and 50:50 and two-way 90:10 and 50:50), Collier and Thomas (2004) found that students in all four models reached higher achievement levels and accelerated growth in English in the long term. Additionally, from their analyses in the Houston Independent School District, Collier and Thomas (2004) were able to find 1,599 students who entered the Houston Independent School District as beginning ELL students, but whose parents refused ELL services. The researchers found that while those students were on grade level in second grade, by 11th grade those who were still in school were scoring at the 12th percentile, and the majority of this group did not complete high school.

Honigsfeld and Dove (2008) explored the idea of using and adapting co-teaching models from the field of special education for ELL students. The authors argued that one benefit of an ELL co-taught classroom was that ELL students learned mainstream content along with their monolingual peers. Under a co-teaching model, ELL students were given the opportunity to work with other students who had well-developed vocabulary skills and high academic capabilities. English-proficient peers could serve as language models for ELL students, and the mainstream teacher was able to implement the same

strategies used by the ELL teacher, even when that teacher is no longer present in the classroom. Honigsfeld and Dove (2008) concluded that co-teaching effectively met the diverse needs of ELLs and that it increased collaboration between the classroom teacher and the ELL teacher.

Saunders, Goldenberg, and Marcelletti (2013) explained the essence of a sheltered instruction model of ELL. When the use of the students' primary language was not possible, students received instruction that was adjusted to help students learn skills and knowledge in different content areas. The primary goal of this type of ELL instruction is to support students as they continue to learn English, especially academic language, and to learn the content; learning the language is a secondary goal (Saunders et al., 2013).

Innovative approaches to ELL instruction show progress that is needed in the field of researching effective ELL practices. There are few large-scale, randomized, longitudinal evaluations of effective strategies for ELLs (Cheung & Slavin, 2005). Murphey (2014) found that ELL student populations vary greatly from state to state, making it difficult to pinpoint one factor that affects ELL student achievement. Murphey (2014) argued that the gap between ELL and non-ELL students may be related to specific policies, curriculum, school and community supports, and other characteristics in states that have been relatively more successful in promoting the achievement of ELL students.

Summary

In chapter two, the relevant literature related to ELL instruction was reviewed. Unique challenges facing ELL students was discussed as were the changing requirements of schools to change best practices to meet ELL students' needs. Achievement data of ELL students was reviewed. Also, teacher perceptions of ELL students and different

ELL programs and approaches to instruction were examined. The research methodology used in conducting this study is presented in chapter three. The research design, selection of participants, measurement, data collection, hypothesis testing and analysis, and limitations of the study are described.

Chapter Three

Methods

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the ELL center in the ISD. Specifically, the purpose was to determine if there was a difference in student achievement when a pull-out model of instruction was used compared to a full-day separate-setting model of instruction. Student achievement data from the ELA MAP and ACCESS was analyzed, as well as the number of students exiting services in both programs. The researcher also collected and analyzed teacher perceptions of both models of instruction. Presented in this chapter is the methodology utilized in this study, which includes the following sections: research design, selection of participants, measurement, data collection procedures, quantitative data analysis and hypothesis testing, qualitative data analysis, and limitations.

Research Design

A mixed methods design was used for this study. According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), "a mixed methods study offers a way to lend credibility to your study and triangulate your data while providing rigor to your study" (p. 108). A quasi-experimental research design was used for the quantitative portion of this study. Quasi-experiments differ from true experiments in a significant way, in that in quasi-experiments, individuals are not randomly assigned as they are in true experiments (Creswell, 2009). The researcher did not randomly assign participants to the two different ELL groups that were part of this study. The researcher used archival data to analyze students' English proficiency before the ELL center was started and compared the data to that taken after the inception of the center. The independent variable in the study was the mode of

instruction (full-day separate-setting and pull-out). The dependent variables in the study were elementary ELL students' ACCESS and MAP scores, and the number of students exiting the ELL programs. For the qualitative portion of this study, the researcher collected the interview data from the teacher focus groups, transcribed the responses, and analyzed the responses to describe and interpret teachers' perceptions of the two ELL programs.

Selection of Participants

The participants in the quantitative portion of this study were ELL students in the ISD enrolled in grades 1-5 attending 19 elementary schools from the 2011-2012 to 2015-2016 school years, who qualified for ELL services based on their proficiency on the ACCESS assessment. In the 2011-2012 school year, there were 361 ELL students in grades 1-5. In the 2012-2013 school year, 360 ELL students were enrolled in grades 1-5. In the 2013-2014 school year, 386 ELL students were enrolled in grades 1-5. There were 436 ELL students in grades 1-5 in the 2014-2015 school year, 473 enrolled in grades 1-5 in the 2015-2016 school year. In total, for the years 2011-2016, the sample for the ACCESS assessment was ELL students in grades 1-5 consisted of 2,519 students. Only students in grades three through five were administered the MAP. In the spring of 2012, 241 ELL students in grades three through five took the ELA MAP. In the spring of 2013, 248 ELLs in grades three through five took the ELA MAP. In the spring of 2014, 311 ELLs in grades three through five took the ELA MAP. There were 343 ELL students in grades three through five who took the ELA MAP in the spring of 2015, and in the spring of 2016, 364 ELL students in grades three through five took the ELA MAP. In total, for

the years 2012 through 2016, the sample of ELL students who took the ELA MAP in grades 3-5 consisted of 1,507 students.

The participants in the qualitative portion of this study were ISD teachers. The researcher sought to recruit a dozen current teachers who had been teaching in the ISD since at least 2010 and had had ELL students in their classrooms under the ELL pull-out model of instruction and the ELL full-day separate-setting ELL program. These criteria provided the researcher a basis for the selection of the sample.

Measurement

For this study, two summative assessments were used to measure students' achievement. The ACCESS for ELLs was utilized to measure students' achievement in language proficiency in the previous pull-out ELL model and the current full-day pull-out ELL program. Per the WIDA Technical Report, the ACCESS for ELLs measures English language learners' social and academic language proficiency in English (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2015). The test consists of four parts, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The listening and reading tests contain multiple-choice questions, and are adaptive, meaning the difficulty of subsequent questions is based on the student's performance on prior questions answered. The writing and speaking portions of the test contain performance tasks which are scored using specific criteria. Students are not strictly timed on the assessment; however, there are recommended time allotments for each section which provide guidance regarding how long the assessment should take a student (Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin, 2014).

The ACCESS for ELLs assesses the English language development of ELLs in grades K-12 and places students into proficiency levels (Center for Applied Linguistics,

2015). The students' overall composite proficiency score is used for the evaluation of the reliability of the ACCESS assessment, which is very high across all grade levels. Pertinent to the current study, the reliability coefficient for kindergarten was .973, for grades 1-2 was .943, and for grades 3-5 was .937 (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2015, p. iv). To validate the assessment, the ACCESS for ELLs uses an "argument-based validation framework" (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2015, p. iv). The framework puts the information contained in the technical report into tables and figures which are linked to "claims relate to Assessment Records through an Assessment Use Argument, which allows stakeholders to better interpret and use ACCESS for ELLs" (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2015, p. iv).

Also in this study, the researcher used ELA MAP scores for ELL and non-ELL students in grades three through five. Students' MAP results can be used to guide teachers in instruction that is aligned with the requirements specified in the state standards and can also be used to inform stakeholders in the district of the efficacy of individual schools (Data Recognition Corporation, 2015). By the spring of 1999, Missouri was required to administer the MAP beginning in third grade. Presently at the elementary level in Missouri, students take the MAP in ELA and math beginning in third grade and continuing through fifth, where they additionally test in science. Students who take the MAP encounter different types of questions including, but not limited to, multiple choice and constructed response. Their proficiency is determined based on the number of questions they answer correctly.

The researcher used the reliability data reported in the MAP technical report from the Cronbach's coefficient alpha column of data.

> The reliability of raw scores by test form was evaluated using Cronbach's (1951) coefficient alpha, which is a lower-bound estimate of test reliability. The reliability coefficient is a ratio of the variance of true test scores to the variance of the total observed scores, with the values ranging from 0 to 1. The closer the value of the reliability coefficient is to 1, the more consistent the scores are, where 1 refers to a perfectly consistent test. As a rule of thumb, reliability coefficients that are equal to or greater than 0.8 are considered acceptable for tests of moderate lengths (Data Recognition Corporation, 2015, p. 176).

The MAP technical report showed high reliability for the ELA portion of the assessment in grades three, four and five, ranging from .86 to .91 across all versions of the assessment. The Data Recognition Corporation also did principal components analysis and reported the variance explained by the first component as evidence for convergent validity. "All of the MAP subject area tests exhibit first principal components accounting for more than 15% of the test variance for ELA" (Data Recognition Corporation, 2015, p. 181).

The interview questions for the teacher focus group were written to solicit responses without bias. The researcher developed the interview questions that would prompt teachers to share information regarding the implementation of the two ELL models, advantages and disadvantages of both, and the extent to which they were seeing academic growth and increased language proficiency in their students. The focus group interview questions were open-ended and written to encourage teachers to discuss their answers with the focus group participants. To conduct the qualitative analysis, the researcher recorded the interviews and transcribed the responses using an online audio

player with a text editor to slow down, speed up, pause, and stop the audio recording, which allowed for accurate transcription of the interviews. Once transcribed, the researcher listened to the recording at full speed while reading the transcription to ensure accuracy. The researcher then coded and analyzed the transcripts to determine themes and interpret teachers' perceptions. Creswell (2009) insisted that researchers recognize and acknowledge their bias as a validity procedure. The researcher recognized the personal bias she brought to the study as she interpreted the findings, and made every effort not to let that cloud her interpretations.

Data Collection Procedures

In July of 2016, the Director of ELL Services was informally interviewed by the researcher and agreed to share ACCESS data after approval was given to the researcher. The ISD superintendent, assistant superintendent, and Director of ELL Services granted approval to conduct the study and use archival data in January of 2017 (see Appendix A). An Institutional Review Board (IRB) form was submitted to Baker University on January 20, 2017, to gain approval for the study and the collection of data (see Appendix B). The IRB committee granted approval of the IRB on February 1, 2017 (see Appendix C). On February 2, 2017, the superintendent of the ISD granted permission to the researcher to conduct teacher focus groups (see Appendix D). The researcher met with the Director of ELL Services in February of 2017 to gather the ACCESS, MAP, and ELL exit data from school years 2011-2012 through 2015-2016. The researcher removed student names, gender, and school of attendance from the data and used only the grade-level and the assessment scores.

Data collection for the qualitative portion of the study occurred during two teacher focus group interviews. In February of 2017, the researcher emailed a query to 25 teachers who might wish to participate in one of the two focus groups for the qualitative portion of the study (see Appendix E). The email addresses were available to the researcher through the district contact list, which is public to district employees. The email described the purpose of the study and informed teachers that their participation was voluntary and would be anonymous. Teachers were given a general idea of the content of the questions they would be asked, which centered around implementation of both models of ELL instruction, advantages and disadvantages of both models of ELL instruction, and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of both models of ELL instruction (see Appendix F). The researcher sought at least four participants in each focus group; the first focus group contained five participants, and the second group contained four. All interview participants had signed a consent form before the interview started (see Appendix G). The researcher interviewed two focus groups of teachers and recorded and transcribed their responses using a digital recording device and transcription website, transcribe.wreally.com.

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

This study was guided by the research questions and hypotheses listed below. Each of the four research questions is listed and followed by the corresponding hypothesis statement and data analysis used to test the hypothesis. The data was downloaded to IBM® SPSS® Statistics Faculty Pack 24 for Windows for data analysis.

RQ1. To what extent was there a difference in ELL students' achievement (grades 1-5), as measured by ACCESS for ELLs composite score, between students who

attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program?

H1. There was a difference in ELL students' achievement, as measured by ACCESS for ELLs, between students who attended a full day separate setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program.

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to test H1. The *t* test was conducted to test for difference in first through fifth grade students' composite scores on the ACCESS for ELLs between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program. The level of significance was set at .05.

RQ2. To what extent was there a difference in the number of students exiting the ELL program between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program?

H2. There was a difference in the number of students exiting the ELL program between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program.

A χ^2 test of equal percentages was conducted to address H2. The χ^2 of equal percentages was conducted to test for comparisons between the number of students in grades 1-5 exiting the ELL program in a pull-out ELL program and a full-day separate-setting ELL program.

RQ3. To what extent was there a difference in ELL students' achievement (grades 3-5), as measured by the ELA MAP Assessment, between students who attended

a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program?

H3. There was a difference in third through fifth grade students' achievement on the ELA MAP between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program.

A χ^2 of equal percentages was conducted to address H3. The χ^2 of equal percentages was conducted to test for comparisons in third through fifth grade students' observed and expected frequencies in the proficiency levels on the ELA MAP between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program. The level of significance was set at .05.

RQ4. What were teacher perceptions of the ELL pull-out program and the full-day separate-setting ELL program?

To address research question four, the researcher analyzed qualitative data gathered during two teacher focus groups. The researcher transcribed the teacher focus group interviews and analyzed the responses to determine similarities, differences, and trends. The analysis of the transcription was conducted using thematic coding following Gibbs' (2010) explanation of Bryman's stages of qualitative analysis. The researcher coded the transcriptions from the focus group interviews, then looked for repetitions, common words and ideas, and omissions to allow for generalizations and themes.

Limitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated that limitations are "factors that may have an effect on the interpretation of the findings or on the generalizability of the results" (p. 133). One limitation of this study was that the new ELL model might not have been the

only factor affecting student achievement on the standardized assessments. Students' language acquisition and academic proficiency could be affected by internal factors including age, personality, intrinsic motivation, and intelligence. External factors that may affect academic achievement include culture and status, instruction by the teacher(s), curriculum to which the students are exposed, and access to native speakers (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013; Macaro, 2010). A final limitation of this study was the opinions expressed during the teacher interview focus groups. A small number of participants volunteered and were selected to share their perceptions and opinions in detail; however, their ideas may or may not encompass the perceptions of the majority of teachers in the ISD.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the research design of this mixed-methods study. A quasi-experimental research design was used for the quantitative portion of this study, and interview data from teacher focus groups was used for the qualitative portion. The selection of participants included ELL students in grades 1-5 and ISD teachers of grades 1-5. The measurement tools used in this study included first through fifth grade students' composite scores on the ACCESS for ELLs, third through fifth grade students' ELA MAP proficiency, and teacher interview data. The researcher collected data after being granted district permission to collect and analyze the archival data and to conduct the teacher focus group interviews. The data analysis and hypothesis testing conducted for the current study, and limitations of the study were also discussed. In chapter four, the results of the hypotheses testing and qualitative data are presented.

Chapter Four

Results

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if there was a difference in student achievement and English language proficiency when two different models of ELL instruction were provided. Another purpose of this study was to gather and interpret teachers' perceptions of the two ELL models of instruction to understand the practitioners' points of view. Provided in this chapter are the results of the hypothesis testing and the results and analysis from the teacher focus groups.

Hypothesis Testing

In this section, the results from the hypothesis testing conducted to address the quantitative research questions are reported and explained. Each of the three research questions is listed with the related hypotheses statements. The analyses used to address each hypothesis statement are described, followed by the results of the testing for RQ1-RQ3. The researcher conducted teacher focus group interviews to address RQ4.

RQ1. To what extent was there a difference in ELL students' achievement (grades 1-5), as measured by ACCESS for ELLs composite score, between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program?

***H1*.** There was a difference in ELL students' achievement, as measured by ACCESS for ELLs, between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program.

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to test H1. The *t* test was conducted to test for differences in first through fifth grade students' composite scores on the

ACCESS for ELLs between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program. The level of significance was set at .05.

The results of the analysis were statistically significant, $t = -4.761$, $df = 2,448$, $p = .000$. The mean composite scores for students in grades 1-5 who attended the pull-out ELL program ($M = 4.15$, $SD = .95$) were lower than the mean composite scores for students in grades 1-5 who attended the full-day separate-setting ELL program ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.05$). This evidence supports H1 that there was a difference in ELL students' achievement between students in grades 1-5 who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students in grades 1-5 who attended and ELL pull-out program.

RQ2. To what extent was there a difference in the number of students exiting the ELL program between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program?

H2. There was a difference in the number of students exiting the ELL program between students who attended a full-day, separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program.

A χ^2 of equal percentages test was conducted to address H2. The observed frequencies were compared to those expected by chance. The level of significance was set at .05.

The results of the analysis indicated statistically significant differences in the proportion of students in grades 1-5 who exited the program between students in the pull-out ELL program and students in the full-day separate-setting ELL program, $\chi^2 = 44.803$, $df = 4$, $p = .000$. The number of students in grades 1-5 who exited the full-day separate-

setting ELL program was more than expected by chance (n = 369) (see Table 9). The number of students in grades 1-5 who did not exit the pull-out ELL program was more than expected by chance, n = 611. The proportion of students in grades 1-5 who exited the pull-out ELL program (0.230) is smaller than the proportion of students in grades 1-5 who exited the full-day separate-setting ELL program (0.770). The hypothesis, which stated that there was a difference in the number of students exiting the ELL program between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program, was supported.

Table 9

Observed and Expected Number of Students Who Exited Each ELL Program

Program	Counts	Exited	Did Not Exit
Pull-Out	Observed	110.00	611.00
	Expected	171.31	549.69
Full-Day	Observed	369.00	926.00
	Expected	307.69	987.31

Note. Table 9 compares students in grades 1-5 who exited (did not receive ELL instruction) in the pull-out ELL program and the full-day separate-setting ELL program.

RQ3. To what extent was there a difference in ELL students' achievement (grades 3-5), as measured by the ELA MAP Assessment, between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program?

H3. There was a difference in third through fifth grade students' achievement on the ELA MAP between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program.

A χ^2 of equal percentages test was conducted to address H3. The observed frequencies were compared to those expected by chance. The level of significance was set at .05.

The results of the analysis indicated statistically significant differences in the proportion of students scoring at the four proficiency levels between students in grades 3-5 in the pull-out ELL program and students in grades 3-5 in the full-day separate-setting ELL program, $\chi^2 = 76.448$, $df = 3$, $p = .000$. The number of students in grades 3-5 who attended the full-day separate-setting ELL program scoring at the proficient level was greater than expected by chance ($n = 244$). The number of students in grades 3-5 who attended the full-day separate-setting ELL program scoring at the advanced level was $n = 82$. Both the number of students scoring at advanced and proficient were greater than expected by chance. The number of students in grades 3-5 who attended the pull-out ELL program scoring at the basic level was $n = 293$ (see Table 10). The number of students in grades 3-5 who attended the full-day separate-setting ELL program scoring at the below basic level was $n = 294$ which is greater than expected by chance. H3, which stated there was a difference between third through fifth grade students' achievement on the ELA MAP between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pull-out program, was supported.

Table 10

Observed and Expected Number of Students in Each Proficiency Category on the ELA MAP

Program	Counts	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Pull-Out	Observed	84.00	293.00	84.00	18.00
	Expected	123.34	216.01	107.02	32.63
Full-Day	Observed	294.00	369.00	244.00	82.00
	Expected	254.66	445.99	220.98	67.37

Note. Table 10 compares students in grades 3-5 in the pull-out ELL program and the full-day separate-setting ELL program.

Teacher Focus Groups Analysis and Findings

In addition to the quantitative data, the researcher sought to understand teachers' perceptions of how the different models of ELL instruction impacted student achievement and language proficiency in the classroom. The researcher hosted two focus group interviews and invited classroom teachers to participate; teachers were required to have taught during the ELL pull-out program years and the full-day separate-setting ELL program years and had students in both programs. Their responses were recorded and transcribed, and then analyzed to determine common themes.

RQ4. What were teacher perceptions of the ELL pull-out program and the full-day separate-setting ELL program?

The following information is based on two focus group interviews with nine elementary teachers from the ISD. These male and female teachers represented four elementary schools, and each of the teachers had personal experience with the former pull-out ELL program and the current full-day separate-setting ELL program. The

teachers are identified as Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 3, Teacher 4, Teacher 5, Teacher 6, Teacher 7, Teacher 8 and Teacher 9.

To address RQ4, the researcher analyzed the qualitative data gathered during interviews from two teacher focus groups. The researcher transcribed the teacher focus group interviews using an online audio player with a text editor, which allowed the researcher to slow down, speed up, pause, and stop the audio recording. These capabilities enabled the researcher to transcribe the interviews accurately. Once transcribed, the researcher listened to the recording at full speed while reading the transcription to ensure accuracy. The researcher then coded and analyzed the transcripts to determine themes and interpret teachers' perceptions, and analyzed the responses to determine similarities, differences, and trends. The analysis of the transcription was conducted using thematic coding following Gibbs' (2010) explanation of Bryman's stages of qualitative analysis. The researcher coded the transcriptions from the focus group interviews, then looked for repetitions, common words and ideas, and omissions to allow for generalizations and themes.

Interview question 1. Describe how the pull-out ELL program of instruction was implemented at your school.

In both groups, teachers reported that one teacher came to the room to pick up ELL students one day each week; the ELL teacher was only in the building that one day, and there was no contact between the classroom teacher and the ELL teacher throughout the week. Teacher 1 said,

> The teacher would come and take the child out, and they would leave with the child for *x* amount of time—maybe 20 minutes, maybe 30. If the child

happened to be gone, that was too bad. If we happened to have a snow day or anything else, they would just not get services.

Both groups mentioned that service days for ELLs were not made up if they were missed. Teacher 3 commented that "She had so many kids she needed to see—she had five or six, and it was several first graders and maybe some second graders. It was all mixed." Teacher 6 commented that not all ELL students received services, but those that did showed improvements in the classroom.

Interview question 2. In what ways was the pull-out program effective or ineffective in helping ELL students reach language proficiency?

In general, the teachers in both focus groups reported that they did not have much communication with the ELL teachers under the pull-out model of instruction. Teacher 2 said, "Truthfully, we never received any data on what they did, we never knew what they did, we never knew what progress they made." Teacher 7 said that there was no information shared, and the students just left the classroom and then came back, so it was hard to know if the ELL instruction was effective or not. Some teachers noticed that students seemed to gain vocabulary skills faster, and they attributed it to more direct instruction.

Interview question 3. Explain the way ELL students who were in the pull-out ELL program met the academic standards in your class. What was your evidence?

All the teachers in the focus groups voiced that the way to measure the ELL students' academic progress was no different than measuring other students' academic progress. With the pull-out model of ELL instruction, there was not a connection to the

class curriculum. Teacher 6 provided specifics on what she noticed as a former primary teacher. She said,

> Most of the students pulled out were in the mid-range of learning English. There was no correlation to our class curriculum, but the ELL teachers did their best to concentrate on ELA, so there was little time lost there. I was in 1st grade at the time, and I felt that I saw better success with sounds and increased vocabulary when doing the quarterly tests with the pull-out ELL model. I know that the students are passing through the levels of the ELL test in 4th grade, but I am not seeing any improvement in the comprehension scores in the classroom, or an increase in their vocabulary, or better verbal skills.

Teacher 3 indicated that it was difficult to assess whether the progress made by students was really due to the ELL services, or just the natural progression of their learning.

Interview question 4. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the pull-out model?

One advantage that the teachers in both focus groups saw with the ELL pull-out model was that students spent less time away from their home classroom. They could participate in planned activities, they got to go to specials, and they did not feel like they were missing out on school. Several of the teachers in the focus groups, especially those of primary grades, felt like a major advantage of the pull-out model was that the students did not feel any stress or anxiety about going into the hallway or to another classroom in the building to get their ELL minutes. They stayed at school, and so ELL time flowed with the rest of the school day. The ELL students would see students in special education going with different teachers, or students in Title 1

leaving the classroom for a few minutes, and so it was just a normal procedure that other students followed.

Another advantage expressed was that the classroom teachers got to see the ELL teacher and had the opportunity to make face-to-face contact if they needed to ask a question or share information. Teacher 5 commented that

> The ELL teacher that we had was very familiar with our families because since she just serviced students at our school, she knew about the siblings, their friends, and things like that. There was more of a connection to the child as a person, not just a kid in an ELL classroom.

Teacher 3 agreed with the relationship advantage. She said that,

> When they started the ELL pull-out model, there were very few kids that got services—it's not like it is now—so the groups could have been one-on-one. They would have the same teacher working with the same kids, so that's how they got to know them.

Perceptions of the disadvantages of the pull-out model were few. The main disadvantage expressed in the focus groups was that there were not as many ELL students who received services. Another disadvantage was that there was less time for the students to work with the ELL teacher one day a week.

Interview question 5. Describe how the full-day ELL model of instruction is currently implemented in the district?

Teachers in both focus groups remember the Director of ELL coming to their schools to do a presentation on the ELL center, and explaining the process before implementation the year. They also said that there was an open house that parents and

teachers are invited to at the beginning of each year. Teachers had a good understanding of how the model is implemented. All teachers explained the procedure for students at different proficiency levels going to the ELL center on specific days. Teacher 6 shared that she was glad that students at the highest proficiency levels are scheduled to attend the ELL center on Mondays and Fridays since those days are often missed due to holidays and professional development. Students who are at the lowest proficiency levels receive the most consistent services. Teacher 2 did not feel like it was implemented well, and some of the teachers in the focus group agreed with her. As a first grade teacher, she expressed that since it is the first year they go to the ELL center, the students

> have no clue what they're doing. They're getting on a bus with strange people they've never met, and they are leaving their comfort zone to go somewhere that they've never been. So, in first grade, it's a huge stressor. There needs to be a better way to transition.

Teacher 5 was a fifth grade teacher in the same focus group, and she expressed that the implementation is fine the way it is. She said, "By fifth grade, it's pretty fluid, and kids don't mind going at all."

Interview question 6. Explain the way ELL students who are in the full-day ELL program are meeting the academic standards in your class. What is your evidence?

Teachers in both focus groups struggled to answer this question. The common theme expressed was that the teachers saw no difference or regression from students who attend the ELL center. Teachers said that they felt their students were missing too much classroom instruction time in their homerooms. They do not feel like they are seeing additional academic progress from students who go to the ELL center, but they are seeing

growth from these students if they, as teachers, provide additional accommodations for them in the classroom. Teacher 3 commented,

> If they miss an introductory lesson, a lot of those kids struggle anyway, even when they are in my room, and so they really have a hard time catching up when they've missed that first lesson going into a new unit.

In that focus group, the researcher followed up with the question, "It sounds like instead of noticing evidence that students who attend the full-day ELL program are meeting academic standards in your classroom, you feel like they are not meeting academic standards?" The whole focus group answered yes, and attributed it to students being gone for a full day. In the second focus group, Teacher 8 commented that

> These students are not meeting standards based on a lot more than just being gone one day a week. I think it is good for these students to get the grade-level instruction at the ELL center, and get the language support they need.

The second focus group agreed that for some students, the ELL center does better for the students than staying in the classroom, especially for the ones with the lowest English proficiency.

Interview question 7. In what ways is the full-day program effective or ineffective in helping ELL students reach language proficiency?

Both focus groups had a difficult time differentiating between language proficiency and academic achievement. The researcher attempted to help teachers to just focus on students' language proficiency, not overall academic success by restating the question. Teacher 5 said that teachers at the ELL center had shared ACCESS

scores with her, and these have helped with her understanding where her ELL students are in their language proficiency achievement. She said,

> I have found that the scores are very enlightening for me, especially as far as the listening and speaking scores. I don't remember ever seeing those scores when it was pull-out. I never saw ACCESS scores back then. They show that my students are progressing, but it is hard to see those language gains in the classroom and not tie it to academics.

Teacher 9 said that while he does not notice progress that he labels as better language proficiency, he does notice that his students seem to gain more confidence as the year goes on. "They volunteer more in class, they aren't embarrassed to read, they ask me questions, and follow routines that other students do. So, I suppose that is part of the process of their language development."

Interview question 8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the full-day program?

Most of the teachers in the focus groups agreed that the advantages of the full-day ELL center are that students are working with grade-level peers who are at their same English proficiency level. Teacher 8 said, "At the ELL center, there is more time for students to work on specific skills they are missing. They get to work on focused vocabulary lessons, and they have more individualized instruction at their level." Teacher 3 said, "I think that my students who go to the ELL center are probably happy once they get over there and are in an environment where they aren't embarrassed if someone doesn't know what they are trying to say."

The disadvantages voiced by both focus groups were also very similar. Teachers in both groups felt like there was a complete disconnect between the ELL center and the school. Teacher 2 said, "I don't get any information from the center unless I reach out to them. I didn't even know who the teacher was until November." Teacher 7 said, "I will ask my students when they get back, 'Hey, what did you do today?' But most cannot tell me what they did. I might see a writing project or a craft that they did, but that's all." Teacher 3 said something similar

> I had one student last year that would always come back with a reading passage, and she always wanted to read it to me so I would make time for that. But now this year, they come back, and I'm in the middle of teaching, so they have to figure out what we're doing, where we are--there's not an opportunity to have a dialog, unless I take instruction time, or their recess time to say, 'Hey what did you do?'

Another disadvantage the teachers expressed was that many students do not want to go to the ELL center, and it is very stressful and anxiety-inducing; the researcher noticed this to be especially true of teachers of primary grades. The primary teachers indicated that the students cry when it is their day to go to ELL, they often miss school on their designated day, and their parents try to pull them out of services because they do not like to hear that their kids are unhappy. Another common theme concerning disadvantages is that there is a pervasive belief that students are missing instruction in their home classroom that is not equal to the instruction they are gaining at the ELL center. Repeatedly, teachers in the focus groups commented that their students were

"missing out," that they were "losing instructional time" and that "they aren't getting the same instruction as my other students over there."

Summary

In chapter four, the results of the data analysis and related hypothesis testing regarding the effectiveness of the full-day separate-setting ELL program compared to the ELL pull-out program were stated. The researcher presented the results of the independent samples *t* test, χ^2 test of equal percentages, and analysis of teacher focus group interviews. Chapter five contains a study summary, findings related to the literature, and the conclusions.

Chapter Five

Interpretation and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a difference in student achievement and language proficiency when comparing two models of ELL instruction in the ISD: a pull-out ELL model and a full-day separate-setting ELL model. Quantitative data from student assessments and qualitative data from teacher focus groups were used to make conclusions. This chapter contains a summary of the study, the findings related to the literature, and the conclusions.

Study Summary

This section provides a summary of the current study. The summary contains an overview of the problem, student achievement and English language proficiency under a pull-out model of ELL instruction and a full-day separate-setting ELL model of instruction. The summary also includes the purpose statement and research questions. Next, the methodology used in the current study is reviewed, followed by the major findings.

Overview of the problem. Successfully addressing the academic and language gaps among the ever-increasing ELL population is a problem that is not unique to the ISD (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). As the number of ELLs in the nations' schools continues to rise, school districts are met with new challenges in providing ELL students with an appropriate and equitable education (Sparks, 2016). The ISD significantly changed their method of ELL instruction from a pull-out model to a full-day separate-setting proficiency-based ELL center. There was a need for more research on effective ELL instruction and the influence of a proficiency-based ELL center on student

achievement and English language proficiency development when compared to the achievement and English language proficiency development of students receiving the former pull-out model of ELL instruction (Director of ELL Services, personal communication, October 3, 2016).

Purpose statement and research questions. The goal of the current study was to determine if there was a difference in student achievement and English language development under two different models of ELL instruction: a pull-out model and a full-day separate-setting ELL model. The first purpose was to determine if there was a difference between first through fifth grade ELL students' achievement in language proficiency, as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs composite score, between students in the two different models of ELL instruction. The second purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a difference in the number of students who exited the ELL program between students under the two different ELL models. The third purpose looked at the students' state standardized test scores to determine the extent to which there was a difference between third through fifth grade ELL students' achievement between students who were in an ELL pull-out program, and students who attended the ELL center. The final purpose of this study was to gather teachers' perceptions of the differences between the two ELL models to better understand the practitioner's views. Four research questions were written to address the purposes of this study.

Review of the methodology. A mixed method research design was used in the current study. The study was conducted in the ISD in Independence, Missouri, using data from school years 2011-2012 through 2015-2016. The researcher collected quantitative data to address RQ1-RQ3 and qualitative data to address RQ4. ACCESS scores from

students in grades 1-5 in both ELL programs were compared to determine language proficiency; ELA MAP scores from students in grades 3-5 in both ELL programs were compared to determine academic proficiency: and the number of students in grades 1-5 who exited the program under both ELL models of instruction was compared. Statistical tests used for the quantitative portions of this study included an independent samples *t* test and a χ^2 test of equal percentages. To address the qualitative portion of this study, the researcher collected data by conducting two focus group interviews with nine elementary teachers who had taught under both ELL models compared in this study. The researcher transcribed the teacher focus group interviews and analyzed the responses to determine similarities, differences, and trends. The analysis of the transcription was conducted using thematic coding following Gibbs' (2010) explanation of Bryman's stages of qualitative analysis. The researcher coded the transcriptions from the focus group interviews, then looked for repetitions, common words and ideas, and omissions to allow for generalizations and themes.

Major findings. There were several major findings from the quantitative data and the qualitative data analyses conducted in this research study. The results of the study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in first through fifth grade ELL students' achievement between those who attended a pull-out ELL program and those who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program. The mean composite scores on the ACCESS for students in grades 1-5 who attended the full-day separate-setting ELL program were higher than the mean composite scores on the ACCESS for students in grades 1-5 who attended the pull-out ELL program.

Additionally, the results of the study indicated that the proportion of students in grades 1-5 in the full-day separate-setting ELL program who exited the program was higher than the proportion of students in grades 1-5 in the pull-out program who exited. This outcome further supports the findings from RQ1 regarding students' ACCESS scores; if students are, on average, achieving higher scores on the ACCESS, which measures language proficiency, then it makes sense that those same students would require less language instruction. Consequently, a larger proportion of students in the full-day separate-setting ELL program exit the ELL program than the proportion of students who were in the pull-out ELL program.

A third major finding of this study was that the proportion of students in grades three through five who attended the full-day separate-setting ELL program scoring advanced or proficient on the ELA MAP was higher than the proportion of students scoring advanced or proficient who attended the pull-out ELL program; however, the proportion of students in the full-day separate-setting ELL program who scored below basic is higher than the proportion of students who scored below basic in the pull-out ELL program. Interestingly, under the pull-out model of instruction, the proportion of students in grades 3-5 who scored in the basic category was higher than the proportion of students in grades 3-5 in the full-day separate-setting ELL program who scored in the basic category.

In general, teachers seem to prefer the pull-out ELL program over the full-day separate-setting ELL program—especially teachers of students in grades one and two. One common reason for this that was expressed in the focus groups was that the students in the younger grades do not easily transition when leaving their home school to attend

the ELL center. Teachers indicated that students were stressed, did not like riding on the bus, and missed activities and learning in their homerooms. Another finding from the focus groups was that teachers do not seem to fully understand how to differentiate between a student's language proficiency and their academic proficiency; teachers in the focus group seemed to lump it all together. If an ELL student showed little academic growth in the classroom, teachers attributed this to students missing classroom instruction while they were at the ELL center. Teachers did not notice that students' English was improving, and seemed to focus more on what the students were missing on the day they left their home school. Classroom teachers do not systematically assess students' language proficiency in isolation, so it was difficult for them to delineate between language proficiency and academic achievement. The preference for the pull-out ELL model of instruction had much to do with less interruption for students and teachers, less stress for students, and more communication opportunities for the ELL teacher and the classroom teacher.

Findings Related to the Literature

In this section, the results of the current study are compared to the literature reviewed in chapter two. The existing literature and the results of the current study show similarities and differences in findings. The comparisons are presented in order of the research questions.

In their study, Ramirez et al. (1991) found that students who had been in an early-exit program, where some initial instruction was provided in the student's primary language, were reclassified to Fluent English Proficient (FEP) status at a higher percentage rate than students in the other two models of ELL instruction in their study,

immersion and late-exit. The results of the current study differed from their results. In the current study, there was no instruction taught in the student's primary language. Ramirez et al. (1991) also utilized different methods, which could have affected their results; however, similar to the current study, in an early-exit program, all instruction is in English by second grade (Ramirez et al., 1991). Results of the current study showed that students achieve higher levels of language proficiency in a full-day separate-setting ELL program. Students in grades 1-5 who attended the full-day separate-setting ELL program achieved higher composite scores on the ACCESS than students in grades 1-5 who attended the pull-out ELL program. These findings indicate better results in language proficiency for students who attended the full-day separate-setting ELL program.

Regardless of the ELL program, Gersten et al. (2007) found that ELLs must learn to develop their academic English skills. When students are able to understand how words take on different meanings in different settings, they take a step towards English proficiency *and* academic success. They argued that even if students have not mastered conversational English when they are taught academic English within the specific correlating subject, students will have an enhanced understanding and be able to apply the knowledge in a practical setting (Gersten et al., 2007). The findings of Gersten et al. (2007) explained why students in the full-day separate-setting ELL program showed higher success rates with their English proficiency and exit status. Composite scores on the ACCESS determined student readiness to exit the ELL program. There were proportionally more students in grades 1-5 who exited the ELL program when they attended the full-day separate-setting ELL program compared to students in grades 1-5

who attended the separate-setting ELL program. These findings further support that students who attended the full-day separate-setting ELL program achieve higher levels of English language proficiency than did students who attended the pull-out ELL program. Because students are taught grade-level curriculum and standards in conjunction with language instruction and English language support, they showed that they were able to make real-world use of their acquired knowledge.

Haynes (2016) found that ELLs benefit most when teachers can scaffold lessons so that the students are able to participate in classroom activities, and when students are immersed in a "continuous communicative experience with their monolingual peers in order to acquire English" (Haynes, 2016, para. 12). The ELL center in the ISD is proficiency- and grade-level-based, allowing students to be in a setting similar to the one described by Haynes (2016), and achieve at high levels. ELA MAP is used to determine the extent to which students understand and apply their knowledge of grade-level standards. The results of the current study showed that the proportion of students in grades 3-5 who attended the full-day separate-setting ELL program scoring advanced or proficient on the ELA MAP was higher than the proportion of students in grades 3-5 scoring advanced or proficient who attended the pull-out ELL program. These results indicate that a higher proportion of students in grades 3-5 who attended the full-day separate-setting ELL program met grade-level standards than students in grades 3-5 who attended the pull-out ELL program. Although the existing literature on ELL achievement shows that there has been little extensive longitudinal research conducted to arrive at definitive conclusions regarding effective ELL instruction and ELL achievement, excellent teaching in every classroom, not just those with students who are ELLs, must

occur (CPE, 2007; Institute of Effective Sciences, 2007; Reeves, 2006; Sparks 2016; Thomas & Collier, 2001; Wilkins, 2015). Teachers need to combine rigorous instruction and quality curriculum focused on problem solving and critical thinking to reach students on an instructional level (McIntyre, 2010).

Teacher perceptions were gathered and analyzed to determine themes and commonalities in expressed opinions. Most teachers prefer the pull-out ELL program instead of the full-day separate-setting ELL program. They felt like students were better able to adapt to ELL services when they were given at their home school. Teachers also expressed that there was better communication between the ELL teacher and the classroom teacher under the pull-out ELL model. Teacher perceptions of ELL students and ELL programs in the current study were similar to perceptions of teachers found in the existing literature. Reeves' (2006) study of secondary teachers' perceptions of ELL inclusion found that mainstream classroom teachers were concerned about ELL students slowing down the class' progress. While the results of the current study did not indicate that opinion voiced by teachers in focus groups, both studies shared the teacher belief that ELL students should not be mainstreamed unless they have a minimum level of English proficiency. Teachers in Reeves' (2006) study reported that they did "not have enough time to deal with the needs of ESL students" (Reeves, 2006, p. 136). Teachers in the current study reported that they did not have the time or the training to know how to work with ELL students in their classrooms. One teacher from the current study's focus group interviews expressed frustration in not having time to work with ELL students one-on-one, and feeling like if she did, other students were missing out on her instruction. Another teacher in the focus group interviews discussed that she had not been trained on

how to read data provided by the ELL teachers, such as ACCESS scores and Imagine Learning progress, and she would welcome professional development on using the data. Reeves (2006) found that 53% of the teachers she surveyed were interested in additional training on ELL instruction; however, the teachers in the focus groups in the current study all expressed interest in learning more and having more collaboration opportunities with ELL teachers.

Overman (2013) conducted research examining Arizona teachers' perceptions of an English Language Development (ELD) 4-hour block ELL program, and how it affected ELL students' achievement. Overman (2013) found that most teachers held the opinion that the ELD block had a negative impact on student achievement; teachers reported that their ELL students were unable to meet grade-level standards and that they did not perform well on standardized assessments (Overman, 2013). Teachers in the Overman (2013) focus groups were most concerned about the social isolation of ELL students in the ELD block. Overman's (2013) findings are similar to the perceptions of the current study's focus groups regarding the social and academic development of ELLs. In general, teachers seem to prefer the pull-out ELL program over the full-day separate-setting ELL program—especially teachers of students in grades one and two. One common reason expressed in the focus groups in the current study was that the students in the younger grades do not seem to enjoy leaving their home school to attend the ELL center. Teachers indicated that students were stressed, did not like riding on the bus, and missed activities and learning in their homerooms. Another finding from the focus groups was that teachers do not seem to fully understand how to differentiate between a student's language proficiency and their academic proficiency. If an ELL student

showed little academic growth in the classroom, teachers attributed this to students missing out on classroom instruction while they were at the ELL center. Teachers did not notice that students' English was improving, and seemed to focus more on what the students were missing on the day they left the school. Classroom teachers do not systematically assess students' language proficiency in isolation, so it is difficult for them to delineate between language proficiency and academic achievement. The preference for the pull-out ELL model of instruction had much to do with less interruption for students and teachers, less stress for students, and more communication opportunities for the ELL teacher and the classroom teacher.

In this section, the researcher discussed the results of the current research study, and how they relate to the literature on ELL instruction and achievement. Similarities and differences between the results of the current study and the existing literature were explored. Conclusions from the current research study follow.

Conclusions

In this section, the conclusions from the current study are shared. Implications for further action for district leadership are suggested. Recommendations for future research are presented. This chapter closes with concluding remarks.

Implications for action. The results and conclusions from the current study can be used by ISD leaders and leaders in surrounding large school districts with similar demographics to the ISD who are working to change and improve their ELL program and increase the achievement of ELL students. Findings from the current study showed that students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL center based on their grade and proficiency level increased their English language proficiency as measured by ACCESS

composite scores. Moreover, proportionally higher numbers of students who attended the ELL center exited ELL services compared to students in the pull-out program. Based on these findings of increased English language proficiency, district leaders should continue the full-day separate-setting ELL program.

The current study results showed that proportionally higher numbers of students in grades three through five who attended the ELL center scored proficient or advanced on the ELA MAP state assessment compared to students who received pull-out ELL instruction. These results show that more students are meeting academic state standards when they attend a full-day separate-setting ELL program with grade-level peers who are at the same English proficiency level. This finding further supports the continuation of the current ELL model in practice in the ISD. To address the proportionally higher number of students who are still scoring below basic even though they attended the ELL center, the researcher suggests that students who have a composite score of one or two on the ACCESS attend the ELL center twice each week instead of once. The researcher also suggests that these students be placed in the same mainstream classroom at their home school if possible. This way, it may be feasible for the classroom teacher to collaborate with the ELL teacher and implement similar strategies to allow for consistency in instruction and extra support for language and academic development.

From the teacher focus groups, the researcher discovered that most of the teachers agreed that the biggest advantage of the full-day ELL center is that students work with grade-level peers who are at their same English proficiency level. Teachers in both focus groups voiced concern that there is a disconnect between the ELL center and the school. They also expressed that, especially in the primary grades, many

students do not want to go to the ELL center. Parents of ELL students also can elect to pull them out of ELL, which benefits no one. The researcher found that there is a widespread belief among classroom teachers that students are missing too much vital instruction in their home classroom, causing ELL students to fall further behind. They believe that the instruction students are missing is more detrimental to their achievement than the positive impact instruction at the ELL center may be having on their academic progress. To address these findings, the researcher suggests a focused effort on communication between the ELL center teachers, classroom teachers, and parents of ELL students. The goal would be for the teachers and parents to have a shared investment in the students' success and work as a partnership to counteract the negative feelings. If possible, one day each week, the teacher from the ELL center could call, meet electronically, or meet face-to-face with classroom teachers at each school to share information about students' progress at the ELL center. Teachers could exchange classroom newsletters to keep both parties informed about what is going on in each respective setting. Classroom teachers could invite ELL center teachers to parent-teacher conferences as another advocate for the student's academic success. The researcher also suggests a transition phase for first grade students. Perhaps for the first quarter, the ELL teacher could go to the school and provide some push-in support in the student's classroom. During the second quarter, the ELL teacher could operate under the pull-out model of ELL instruction, still housed within the school in a comfortable setting for the student. During the third quarter, the students could start attending the ELL center as a whole first grade group to get used to going to a new setting with grade-level peers. Fourth quarter, students could attend the ELL center

based on proficiency, as in the upper grades. This slow phase-in may help students and teachers feel less anxious about attending the ELL center, and it may also prevent parents from asking their children be removed from ELL services.

Recommendations for future research. The current study supports the body of research on ELL models of instruction and how those models affect students' English language development and academic achievement. The following recommendations are made for future researchers who are interested in completing studies surrounding best practices in ELL instruction, especially in large school districts where ELL students speak many different languages.

1. Future research should replicate and extend the current study to include ELL students in middle school and high school. It is possible that the effectiveness of a full-day separate-setting ELL center for upper grades might be different.

2. Future researchers should consider using additional measurement tools to determine academic achievement of ELL students, such as ACT scores, End of Course exams, or other district assessments. By using these other assessments, researchers can gather and analyze more information about specific strengths or missing skills of ELL students.

3. Future research should be a replication of the current study, but be conducted in a rural or more urban setting. The results of the study may have been affected by the demographics of the ISD.

4. Future research should extend the qualitative portion of the current study to include surveys or focus group interviews with students and parents in the ELL program. The teacher focus groups provided valuable information to the study, and gathering

student and parent perceptions would provide further insight to the researcher, and allow for additional conclusions.

5. Future research should replicate and extend the current study to compare the effectiveness of different models of ELL instruction in school districts with similar demographics across the nation. The current study compared the effectiveness of two models of ELL instruction within the same district. It would be interesting to take the results of the current study and compare them to data of ELL students under different models in school districts with similar demographics.

Concluding remarks. ELL students are an ever-increasing population in our nation's schools. Federal law mandates that these students receive a fair and equitable education, that they receive accommodations to help them learn English (Sparks, 2016). Evaluation of the current full-day separate-setting ELL program in the ISD was important to determine its effectiveness in increasing students' English language proficiency and academic achievement. Data from this study show that the ELL center is effective in increasing students' English language proficiency as measured by the ACCESS and proportion of students who exit the ELL program, as well as academic achievement as measured by the ELA MAP. There is still room for improvement in communication between ELL teachers and classroom teachers, as well as providing professional development opportunities for mainstream classroom teachers to better support ELL students. The findings are meaningful to ISD leaders and may help to determine plans for program improvement and teacher professional development opportunities.

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Appendices

Appendix A: District Approval Paperwork

January 5, 2017

Dear Dr. Herl,

I submit this letter to request permission from the Independence School District to conduct the current proposed research study as a partial fulfillment for my doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from Baker University. I will use archival data for this study, and no direct contact will be made with students.

The purpose of my study is to determine the extent to which the ELL program in the ISD affects student achievement on the ELA MAP, proficiency on the ACCESS assessment, and progression toward ELL monitor status. Archival data from MAP (ELL students, grades 3-5) and ACCESS from 2012-2016 will be used. Names of students will be removed from all data to ensure confidentiality and privacy. I request permission to use the name of the ISD's ELL director (D. Stidham), and the name of the district (Independence School District/ISD) in my dissertation.

I request your permission to conduct this study as proposed. It is my intent to complete my dissertation by March 31, 2017.

Respectfully,

Stephanie Merriott

District Representative granting study permission:

Dr. Dale Herl

Position: Superintendent

Dr. Janet Richards

Position: Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education

Debra Stidham

Position: District ELL Coordinator

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION **Form 1440.1**

School/Community Relations

Research Requests Agreement

AGREEMENT FOR RESEARCH STUDY

To be completed by the Investigator and submitted in duplicate.

Topic The Effectiveness of an ELL Center for Elementary Students Date 12-9-16

Name of Investigator Stephanie Merritt Phone 816-213-9939

Address 215½ N. Main St. Independence, MO 64050

Investigator's University or Institution Baker University

Purpose of the Study (describe briefly): To determine the extent to which the ISD's ELL Center affects student achievement on ACCESS, MAP, and progression toward monitor status, compared to the previous ELL pullout model.

Procedure:

Archival data from ACCESS and MAP (years 2010-2016) will be used.

Students to be involved: ACCESS sample: 2,158 How many MAP: 1507 Age, grade, or class grades 1-5

Schools all elementary schools - unspecified in the study

Total time required: During school time NA Out of school time NA

Beginning date NA Ending date NA

Teachers involved NA

How will this study contribute to professional knowledge that can lead to educational improvement? The ELL Model The ISD uses is unique. The finding seeks to contribute to the body of research on effective

List and attach the instruments to be used ELL practices/models, and support similar districts (demographically speaking) analyze their current model and perhaps make changes using the ISD as a model.

MAP and ACCESS archival data 2010-2016.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION **Form 1440**

School/Community Relations

Research Requests Review

RESEARCH REQUEST REVIEW

Has the investigator observed the following agreements?

✓ Submitted a letter of introduction providing evidence of sponsorship by a faculty member of an institution of higher education or professional organization.

_____ Obtained the Superintendent's approval of the District's participation.

✓ Submitted a copy of the research design, (three (3) pages or less) sample tests, questionnaires, interview guides and descriptions of materials, techniques and procedures to be used in the study.

NA Provided written approval of the principal(s) whose school(s) are to be involved which assures that data collecting will not in any way disrupt existing school programs.

NA Provided evidence that parents' permission has been secured for students directly involved as subjects.

✓ Assured that all information regarding individuals will be held in strict confidence.

✓ Submitted a definite date, not later than one month after conclusion of data gathering, for a preliminary report to the Superintendent on progress and findings to date, and a subsequent deadline for the final report.

✓ Assured that, at the conclusion of the study, a report of findings and interpretation will be provided to the Superintendent and copies sent to the principal of each participating school and the Office of Curriculum and Instruction.

Superintendent of Schools

Investigator

NA
Principal

Baker University
Institution

The investigator should obtain appropriate signatures, keep one copy, and return a copy of this agreement with one copy of the proposal to the Superintendent of Schools.

Appendix B: IRB Form

BAKER UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
GRADUATE DEPARTMENT

Date:1-16-17
IRB PROTOCOL NUMBER _____
(IRB USE ONLY)

IRB REQUEST
Proposal for Research
Submitted to the Baker University Institutional Review Board

I. Research Investigator(s) (Students must list faculty sponsor first)

Department(s) **School of Education Graduate Department**

Name	Signature	
1. Dr. Susan K. Rogers	Susan Rogers	Major Advisor
2. Dr. Li Chen-Bouck	Li Chen-Bouck	Research Analyst213
3. Dr. Harold Frye		University Committee Member
4. Dr. Janet Richards		External Committee Member

Principal Investigator: Stephanie Merriott
Phone: 816.213.9939
Email: stephaniemerriott@gmail.com
Mailing address: 215 ½ N. Main Street
Independence, MO 64050

Faculty sponsor: Dr. Susan K. Rogers
Phone: 913-230-2801
Email: srogers@bakeru.edu

Expected Category of Review: ___ Exempt X Expedited ___Full

II: Protocol: (Type the title of your study)

The Effectiveness of an ELL Center for Elementary Students

In a sentence or two, please describe the background and purpose of the research.

The study will take place in the Independence School District (ISD) in Independence, Missouri. The ISD is a large suburban/urban district with 19 elementary schools. The first purpose of this study is to determine if there is a difference between first through fifth grade ELL students' achievement, as measured by ACCESS for ELLs composite score, between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pullout program. The second purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a difference in the number of students who exit the ELL program between those who attended a full day, separate setting ELL program and those who attended an ELL pull-out program. The third purpose is to determine the extent to which there is a difference between third through fifth grade ELL students' achievement as measured by the ELA MAP, between students who attended a full-day separate-setting ELL program and students who attended an ELL pullout program. The final purpose of this study is to collect and analyze teacher perceptions of the differences between the pullout program and the full-day separate-setting ELL program.

Briefly describe each condition or manipulation to be included within the study.

There are no conditions or manipulations in this study.

What measures or observations will be taken in the study? If any questionnaire or other instruments are used, provide a brief description and attach a copy.

I will use archival data from the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (WIDAACCESS) Placement Test, and the English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program (ELA MAP) Assessment. WIDA-ACCESS for ELLs assessment, consists of four parts including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The ACCESS is an adaptive screening tool to determine English proficiency of ELL students. The MAP is designed to determine the extent to which a student has mastered the Missouri Show-Me Standards (About the Missouri Assessment Program, 2011). I will use composite scores for grades 1-5 from students in an ELL pullout program and composite scores from the ELL full-day separate setting program (ELL center), and ELA MAP scores for grades 3-5 in both groups. I will also conduct focus group interviews with teachers who have taught in the ISD since the ELL pullout program through the inception of the ELL separate setting program. I will use thematic coding to interpret the qualitative data from the focus group interviews (see attached example questions).

Will the subjects encounter the risk of psychological, social, physical or legal risk? If so, please describe the nature of the risk and any measures designed to mitigate that risk.

There are no psychological, social, physical, or legal risks in this study.

Will any stress to subjects be involved? If so, please describe.

There will be no stress for the subjects.

Will the subjects be deceived or misled in any way? If so, include an outline or script of the debriefing.

The subjects will not be deceived or misled in any way.

Will there be a request for information which subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive? If so, please include a description.

There will be no request for personal or sensitive information.

Will the subjects be presented with materials which might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading? If so, please describe.

There will be no offensive, threatening, or degrading materials presented to the

subjects.

Approximately how much time will be demanded of each subject?

The study will use archival data and will not require any extra time of the student subjects. For teachers who participate in the focus group interviews, participation will be approximately 45 minutes.

Who will be the subjects in this study? How will they be solicited or contacted? Provide an outline or script of the information which will be provided to subjects prior to their volunteering to participate. Include a copy of any written solicitation as well as an outline of any oral solicitation.

The participants in this study are comprised of ELL students in the ISD in grades 1-5 from 19 elementary schools from the 2012 to 2016 school years, who qualify for ELL services based on their proficiency on the ACCESS assessment. In 2012, there were 360 ELL students in grade 1-5. In 2013, there were 386. There were 436 ELL students in 2014, 473 in 2015, and 503 in the 2016-2017 school year. In total, for the years 2012-2016, the sample for the ACCESS assessment was ELL students in grades 1-5, consisted of 2,158 students. ELL students' ELA MAP data from 2010-2016 will be used. Student subjects do not need to be solicited or contacted as I am using archival data.

The participants for the focus groups are elementary teachers who have been teaching in the ISD (grades 1-5) since at least 2009. Teachers will receive an invitation through email to participate in the research (see attached).

What steps will be taken to insure that each subject's participation is voluntary? What if any inducements will be offered to the subjects for their participation?

There is no need to gain permission for student participation because archival data is being used. Focus group participants will receive an invitation to participate through email. The invitation will state that their participation in the study is voluntary and anonymous.

How will you insure that the subjects give their consent prior to participating? Will a written consent form be used? If so, include the form. If not, explain why not.

There is no need to gain student permission for participation because archival data is being used. Before the focus group interviews begin, teacher participants will have the opportunity to sign an interview consent form stating that their participation is voluntary and anonymous (see attached).

Will any aspect of the data be made a part of any permanent record that can be identified with the subject? If so, please explain the necessity.

No aspect of the data will be made part of any permanent record that can be identified with the subject. The researcher will not use student or teacher names or other identifying information in the reporting of the data.

Will the fact that a subject did or did not participate in a specific experiment or study be made part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher or employer? If so, explain.

Information will not be made part of any permanent record.

What steps will be taken to insure the confidentiality of the data? Where will it be stored? How long will it be stored? What will be done with it after the study is completed?

The study will use archival data and anonymous teacher focus group interview responses. The data will be stored on a flash drive and a computer that will be available only to the researcher. The data, audio recordings and transcripts from the interviews, and consent forms will be deleted and destroyed three years after the study is completed.

If there are any risks involved in the study, are there any offsetting benefits that might accrue to either the subjects or society?

There are no risks involved in this study.

Will any data from files or archival data be used? If so, please describe.

I will be using archival data from 2010-2016 from students in grades 1-5.

Teacher Focus Group Questions

1. Describe how the pullout ELL program of instruction was implemented at your school.

2. In what ways was the pullout program effective or ineffective in helping ELL students reach language proficiency?

3. Explain the way ELL students who were in the pullout ELL program met the academic standards in your class. What was your evidence?

4. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the pullout model?

5. Describe how the full-day ELL model of instruction is currently implemented in the district?

6. Explain the way ELL students who are in the full-day ELL program meeting the academic standards in your class. What is your evidence?

7. In what ways is the full-day program effective or ineffective in helping ELL students reach language proficiency?

8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the full-day program?

Email Invitation to Participate in a Focus Group Interview

Dear teachers,

My name is Stephanie Merriott, and I am the Assistant Principal at Korte Elementary School. I have worked in the ISD as a teacher and administrator for 14 years. I am conducting research through the Ed.D. program at Baker University about the effectiveness of the ELL center in the ISD. I would like to invite you to participate in a teacher focus group to gather teachers' perceptions of the previous ELL pullout program compared to the current ELL center. Your focus group of 4-5 teachers will be asked 14 questions relating to the differences between the two programs, student achievement, and advantages or disadvantages to each program. Your responses to the interview questions will be completely anonymous, and participation will take approximately one hour, but no more than one and a half hours. The results of the focus group interviews will provide valuable information to help clarify and understand the practitioner's opinions as they relate to the effectiveness of the ELL program in the ISD, and provide useful data that will be reported to the district.

I would greatly appreciate your voluntary participation in a focus group. If you have decided to participate in a focus group, please reply to this email with your preferred date of attendance. The location will be determined based upon the number of participants at a mutually convenient location. If you have any questions regarding the study or your participation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Focus group l: February 21, 2016, 3:30-4:30pm, Main Street Coffee House
Focus group 2: February 22, 2016, 7:30-8:30am, Main Street Coffee House

Thank you,

Stephanie Merriott

Teacher Consent Form to Participate in the Focus Group Interview

You are invited to participate in research conducted by Stephanie Merriott related to elementary teachers' perceptions of the ELL program in the ISD. Your participation will be around one hour.

I am conducting research through the Ed.D. program at Baker University about the effectiveness of the ELL center in the ISD. This teacher focus group interview will gather teachers' perceptions of the previous ELL pullout program compared to the current ELL center. Your focus group will be asked 14 questions relating to the differences between the two programs, student achievement, and advantages or disadvantages to each program. I am seeking your permission to conduct the focus group interview, and record and transcribe your responses as part of my research. Your responses will be recorded anonymously (Teacher A, Teacher B, etc.), and will be added to the interview analysis portion of my dissertation. I will not use your name or the name of the school where you work in the interview or in the dissertation. The recording and the transcription will be destroyed three years after the dissertation is complete. I will not use the recording or the transcription for any other purpose other than for reasons stated in this consent form.

By signing this form below, you grant Stephanie Merriott, the investigator, permission to conduct the interview and record and transcribe your responses during your participation in the focus group interview. Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you reserve the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue your participation at any time. There will be no penalty if you choose not to participate. You have the right to select which questions you choose to answer. Your privacy will be maintained at all times in all written data resulting from this study.

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I have received a copy of this Consent form.

_____ _____

Print Participant's Name Date

_____

Participant's Signature

Researcher contact information: Stephanie Merriott
stephanie_merriott@isdschools.org 816.213.9939

Appendix C: IRB Approval Letter

Baker University Institutional Review Board

January 24, 2017

Dear Stephanie Merriott and Dr. Rogers,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your research project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.

Please inform this Committee or myself when this project is terminated or completed. As noted above, you must also provide IRB with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If you have any questions, please contact me at EMorris@BakerU.edu or 785.594.7881.

Sincerely,

Erin R. Morris

Erin Morris PhD
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Joe Watson PhD
Nate Poell MA
Susan Rogers PhD
Scott Crenshaw

Appendix D: Email Granting Permission to Conduct Focus Groups

Re: dissertation question

Dissertation x

Dale Herl <dale_herl@isdschools.org>
Feb 2

to me

You can conduct the focus groups. Good luck.

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 2, 2017, at 5:25 PM, Stephanie Merriott <stephanie_merriott@isdschools.org> wrote:

Good evening, Dr. Herl,
In a recent meeting with my dissertation advisor and research analyst, they suggested that I add a qualitative piece to my study to gather teacher perceptions of the ELL center, and the previous pull-out model. Adding this component will not only enhance the quality of the work, it will also provide additional information to the district. I plan to have two focus groups of at least four teachers who have taught in the district since at least 2010.

May I have your permission to conduct these focus groups and add the qualitative analysis to my dissertation? Thank you for your consideration.

These are the questions I plan to ask:

Focus Group Questions

1. Talk to me about how the pullout ELL program of instruction was implemented at your school.

2. Talk to me about how the full-day ELL program of instruction was implemented in the district.

3. In what ways was the pullout program effective or ineffective in helping ELL students reach language proficiency?

4. In what ways is the full-day program effective or ineffective in helping ELL students reach language proficiency?

5. Explain the way ELL students who were in the pullout ELL program met the academic standards in your class. What was your evidence?

6. Explain the way ELL students who are in the full-day ELL program meeting the academic standards in your class. What is your evidence?

Appendix E: Email Invitation to Participate in Interview

Dear teachers,

My name is Stephanie Merriott, and I am the Assistant Principal at Korte Elementary School. I have worked in the ISD as a teacher and administrator for 14 years. I am conducting research through the Ed.D. program at Baker University about the effectiveness of the ELL center in the ISD. I would like to invite you to participate in a teacher focus group to gather teachers' perceptions of the previous ELL pullout program compared to the current ELL center. Your focus group of 4-5 teachers will be asked 14 questions relating to the differences between the two programs, student achievement, and advantages or disadvantages to each program. Your responses to the interview questions will be completely anonymous, and participation will take approximately one hour, but no more than one and a half hours. The results of the focus group interviews will provide valuable information to help clarify and understand the practitioner's opinions as they relate to the effectiveness of the ELL program in the ISD, and provide useful data that will be reported to the district.

I would greatly appreciate your voluntary participation in a focus group. If you have decided to participate in a focus group, please reply to this email with your preferred date of attendance. The location will be determined based upon the number of participants at a mutually convenient location. If you have any questions regarding the study or your participation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Focus group l : February 21, 2016, 3:30-4:30pm, Main Street Coffee House
Focus group 2: February 22, 2016, 7:30-8:30am, Main Street Coffee House

Thank you,

Stephanie Merriott

Appendix F: Teacher Focus Group Questions

1. Describe how the pull-out ELL program of instruction was implemented at your school.

2. In what ways was the pull-out model effective or ineffective in helping ELL students reach language proficiency?

3. Explain the way ELL students who were in the pull-out ELL program met the academic standards in your class. What was your evidence?

4. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the pull-out program?

5. Describe how the full-day ELL program of instruction is currently implemented in the district?

6. Explain the way ELL students who are in the full-day ELL program meeting the academic standards in your class. What is your evidence?

7. In what ways is the full-day model effective or ineffective in helping ELL students reach language proficiency?

8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the full-day program?

Appendix G: Teacher Consent Form

You are invited to participate in research conducted by Stephanie Merriott related to elementary teachers' perceptions of the ELL program in the ISD. Your participation will be around one hour.

I am conducting research through the Ed.D. program at Baker University about the effectiveness of the ELL center in the ISD. This teacher focus group interview will gather teachers' perceptions of the previous ELL pullout program compared to the current ELL center. Your focus group will be asked 14 questions relating to the differences between the two programs, student achievement, and advantages or disadvantages to each program. I am seeking your permission to conduct the focus group interview, and record and transcribe your responses as part of my research. Your responses will be recorded anonymously (Teacher A, Teacher B, etc.), and will be added to the interview analysis portion of my dissertation. I will not use your name or the name of the school where you work in the interview or in the dissertation. The recording and the transcription will be destroyed three years after the dissertation is complete. I will not use the recording or the transcription for any other purpose other than for reasons stated in this consent form.

By signing this form below, you grant Stephanie Merriott, the investigator, permission to conduct the interview and record and transcribe your responses during your participation in the focus group interview. Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you reserve the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue your participation at any time. There will be no penalty if you choose not to participate. You have the right to select which questions you choose to answer. Your privacy will be maintained at all times in all written data resulting from this study.

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I have received a copy of this Consent form.

_____ _____

Print Participant's Name Date

_____

Participant's Signature

Researcher contact information: Stephanie Merriott
stephanie_merriott@isdschools.org 816.213.9939