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BARRIERS TO SUCCESS:
A STUDY OF THE ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, PHYSICAL, AND
EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES FACED BY THE ESL STUDENTS IN ONE
URBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

by
Brenda K. Custodio, M. A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
2001

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in an urban middle school. It was designed to follow a group of adolescent immigrants through one school year, focusing on the main issues which impacted their academic achievement. The study grouped those issues in four broad categories: academic, social, physical, and emotional. Personal, family, and school situations were described which affected the students in each of these areas.

A literature-based curriculum organized around historical fiction novels, specifically designed to provide background knowledge of American culture and to assist these second language students with critical reading, writing, and study skills, was described. The instructional decisions that were made in the implementation of the curriculum were also analyzed and reported. The difficulties involved with creating a curriculum to meet the needs of a widely divergent population is discussed.
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to Kenneth T. Woodard, Supervisor of the English as a Second Language Program for Columbus Public Schools. Under his leadership, the program was founded in the late 1970s to assist Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees. From this humble beginning of 77 students and a few part-time tutors, the program has grown to over 2400 students and 180 full-time staff members. Innovative programs such as the Welcome Centers for new arrivals, self-contained classrooms for elementary newcomers, sheltered instruction for middle and high school students, a unique career center/GED program for overage adolescents with limited formal schooling, and an expanded after-school and summer school program lead the state in meeting the needs of second language learners. Working with him has truly been an inspiration. He has dedicated his career and his life to providing a quality education to all students and this study is in turn dedicated to him.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study would not have been possible without the assistance of a number of people. First of all, there would have been no study without the students. They enthusiastically agreed to be surveyed, interviewed, and videotaped; no one refused participation. This study is truly their story.

Of equal importance are the adults who comprised the ESL team: Kosal Hung, the Cambodian assistant; Ayanle Mohamed, the Somali assistant; Sally Gibson, the math instructor; Leonard Loftus, the principal; Suzanne Panferov, the student teacher; and Khadar Bashir-Ali, my Somali lifeline and guide. Without their presence, I could not have completed this study. We worked as a team throughout the year and their support was invaluable.

My dissertation committee took a rough draft and fashioned a completed document, primarily with the guidance of Dr. Charles R. Hancock. His profuse but insightful comments and corrections shaped this study from the beginning.

Finally, I must thank the three people who enabled this document to flow from the computer to paper—not an easy process. Computer crises plagued this dissertation, but Vicki Payne, Gary Hart, and Terry, the owner of This Old Mac, coaxed me and my laptop through each problem.

Yes, Dr. Hancock, there is a light at the end of the tunnel.
VITA

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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Education

Minor Fields: TESOL, Adolescent Literature, Reading, and Secondary Language Arts
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND SETTING

"Very little research deals specifically with the unique characteristics of and special challenges faced by immigrant adolescents with limited schooling." (Mace-Matluck, Alexander-Kasparick, and Queen, 1998, p. 11) This study describes one middle school English as a Second Language classroom, describing the characteristics of its immigrant students and the literature-based program designed to meet the special challenges they face.

The significance of this type of study is evidenced by a commission, formed in 1994 by the National Research Council, which was charged with reviewing current second language literature and revealing areas of research that were worthy of more focused attention. They labeled four areas of interest as "highest priority": content area learning, second-language English literacy, intergroup relations, and the social context of learning. (August and Hakuta,
Accordingly, this study is a combination of all four of these interrelated elements. In the classroom of this study, the curriculum combined literacy development with content area knowledge. Thus the students learned the language while immersed in social studies and language arts. The study focused as well on the challenges created by the social aspects of an ESL classroom in which various cultural groups interacted on a daily basis within the larger context of an American middle school predominately populated with native English speakers.

Definition of Terms

Following is a list of terms used in this study. Many are commonly used in either the children's literature or the second language field. This alphabetical listing may also serve as a glossary to interested readers. Each term is defined operationally as they are used in this study.

Adolescent literature--books specifically written with themes and characters for the young adult audience.
BICS- *basic interpersonal communicative skills*;
a term coined by Jim Cummins (1981) to describe the social
language that develops within the first two years of exposure to a
new language and culture.

CALP- *cognitive academic language proficiency*;
also a term by Cummins (1981) used to describe the academic use of
a second language. CALP takes much longer to develop than BICS,
often 5-7 years or more according to Collier (1987).

Content-based instruction--the integration of a particular
content (such as science or social studies) with language-teaching
aims in which the focus is primarily on language development, not
the subject matter.

ELL--an acronym for *English language learners*, students who
continue to need assistance in English language development through
specialized instruction.

Historical fiction--a genre of literature set in the past,
with a mixture of fictional characters and authentic historical
figures. In this study, the term refers to the genre of stories
written specifically for adolescents.
Immigrant--a person who has moved to the United States, including those who voluntarily choose to leave their native country and those forced to leave because of economic or political problems. For the purposes of this study, this definition also includes those children who are born in the United States from parents in the above two categories, because those students associate themselves strongly with the country and culture left behind.

L1--the language a person learns first, also known as native language, home language, or mother language.

L2--a language learned after a person's native language, not always chronologically a second language

LEP student--LEP is an acronym for Limited English Proficient, a label used by many government and educational agencies to describe students still developing their English skills.

Literature-based instruction--an approach to classroom instruction in which the daily activities are centered around the literature being read and studied by the class.

Refugee--a person forced to leave his/her country because of political upheaval, religious persecution, or a widespread natural
disaster. The majority of children in this study came to the United States as refugees and face additional difficulties here as a result.

Secondary—in the school system in which this study took place, secondary is defined as grades 6-12, while this study took place wholly in a middle school (grades 6-8).

Sheltered English approach—content courses taught in a second language to a segregated group of learners by a content area specialist. The focus is primarily on the subject matter, with language development being a secondary concern.

Whole language approach—an approach to teaching in which all language skills are taught in an integrated program of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, rather than as discreet skills.

Significance of the Study

The wave of immigration over the past two decades has had such a profound effect on our society that it can almost be regarded as the equivalent of a demographic revolution. And nowhere is that impact more obvious than in our schools. (Friedlander, 1991)

The U. S. Census Bureau (1997) states that approximately 1,000,000 immigrants arrive in the United States each year. They
comprise about 10% of the total U.S. population. This tide of immigrants resulted in 3.4 million LEP students in U.S. schools in 1998 according to the Office of Bilingual Education. It is estimated that by 2004, 22% of the school-age population will be composed of limited English proficient (LEP) students (Fix and Passel, 1994).

How is this “demographic revolution” affecting our schools? What specific and unique needs do these students bring with them to school? What can schools do to help them adjust and find academic success? To what extent are immigrants being successfully prepared for full participation in mainstream U.S. society? These are some of the questions being studied by professionals in the second language field, both academicians and organizations such as TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), the Center of Applied Linguistics (CAL), and OBEMLA (the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs). They are also some of the questions which prompted this research project.

In 1994, CAL commissioned a series of books to focus specifically on the educational issues facing adolescent immigrants. The first book, written by Lucas (1998) noted that relatively little research has been conducted on effective teaching approaches for
immigrant students at the secondary level. Garcia mirrored these comments in an ERIC/CLL News Bulletin in which she issued a call for further research into L2 literacy instruction. She was especially concerned about

the types of instruction that promote bilingual students’ literacy development. We need longitudinal research that documents the types of instruction that bilingual students receive . . . , taking into account the languages and settings in which they are taught and the influence of social, political, and cultural factors. [Also critical is] research that evaluates . . . instructional approaches such as balanced literacy, literature-based reading, and reader response. (Garcia, 1999, p. 4)

This study was conducted to make a contribution in this critical area, providing a window into the world of immigrant adolescent students. It offers educators, both classroom teachers and school administrators, a picture of the everyday struggles that this particular group of English-language learners faced during the year under study.

Basic Assumptions

Like most qualitative research, this study began with certain basic assumptions. First, that “teachers as researchers” is a valid approach to qualitative research. Teacher-research is defined by
Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) as "systematic and intentional inquiry carried out by teachers." Woods (1986, p.8) stated that "Teachers can bring ethnographic techniques to bear on the evaluation of their work, on pupil motivation and learning, on their own careers and development. . . . [In this type of research,] the researcher \textit{is} the chief research instrument."

Teachers have the opportunity to observe students daily. As a teacher studying my own class, I had the privilege to work with them through their failures and their successes. I had a unique perspective into the world of my classroom and into the lives of my students. I understood my class as it related to the school, the ESL department, and the district. I did not need to take the extended time to observe and familiarize myself with the setting of the classroom which most qualitative research would have required; I lived it every day.

The dual role of researcher and teacher caused occasional conflicts. Teaching and recording cannot easily be done simultaneously. Taking the time to record events as they occurred sometimes detracted from teaching time. However, I felt that the only way to "tell the story" of the day to day experiences of both
myself and my students was through this approach, and I believe that the students benefited from my careful note-taking about their educational struggles. It forced me to reflect upon each instructional decision and to reconsider its value to the individual students and to the overall program.

Secondly, this study contains five basic assumptions of language learning and development, the foundation of my personal classroom philosophy:

- Language is learned most successfully when the learner is “immersed in an environment in which other language users continually demonstrate the form and use of the language during meaningful communication rather than ‘model’ that language for learners to imitate and repeat.” (Altwerger and Ivener, 1994) Students are then using the language to learn, not just learning about the language.

- Children increase their language proficiency by interaction with language that is somewhat more mature than what they currently use. (Krashen, 1981; Johnson and Louis, 1987) This theory was labeled “i + 1” or *comprehensible input* by Krashen. This assumption is also reflected in Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of
Proximal Development (1962) in which peers or instructors guide a learner to a more advanced level of educational development. This philosophy underlay many of my curricular decisions concerning material selection and classroom activities.

- Second language learning takes place best in a "low-risk" setting, i.e., an environment where students' experiences and contributions are valued (Law and Eckes, 1990). I constantly endeavored to ensure that the ESL classroom was one area of the school in which each student was respected and challenged without being embarrassed.

- Many sound practices for literacy teaching and learning for native speakers are also sound practices for ESL students (Freeman and Freeman, 1992). Literacy and language instruction in this study was centered around the whole language approach, popular in many reading/language arts classrooms, and classroom activities mirrored some of the current best practices for L1 literacy development.

- The use of the term "grade level" is used in this study to indicate the average skills and reading ability found in native-
speaking peers of the same chronological age as the students in the study. It is understood that second language students, especially those with interrupted schooling, will not yet be able to demonstrate these same skills. However, this terminology was used in this study because of its frequency of use in the educational field.

These five pedagogical assumptions influenced the curricular and instructional decisions shown in this study, and they are therefore inherently linked to this research project.

Limitations of the Study

It was impossible for me to have a completely objective view of my own teaching. The simultaneous role of teacher/researcher caused some hurdles, but it also allowed a view of the classroom that was more thorough and probably more realistic than that of a short-term observer who would not understand all the intricacies of this classroom and school setting. It is the belief of this researcher that the unique perspective available in the role of teacher/
researcher gave a depth to this study that would have been unavailable to an outside observer.

Methodology of the Study

This qualitative study focused on one setting or population, the English language learners in one urban middle school classroom. The study utilized criteria recommended by Geertz (1993) in creating an ethnographic study: thick description, participant observation, prolonged exposure to the target culture, use of interviews and demographic data, as well as document analysis, triangulation, and self-reflection. These qualitative research techniques facilitated credibility and transferability, leading to trustworthiness of the data (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). A full description of the research procedures is presented in Chapter Three.

Setting for the Study

The School District
Rapid growth of immigrant population

In the school district in which this study took place, the immigrant population was growing rapidly. Located in a U.S. city of over one million inhabitants, immigrants were being attracted by a growing economy with a plethora of low-skill employment opportunities. As each new wave of immigrants was being established, the word seemed to go out around the country that low-cost housing and adequate social service assistance was available in this large Ohio city and the numbers of new arrivals continued to increase. The largest new group of refugees to settle in this city at the turn of the twenty-first century has been the Somalis. (See Appendix A, B, and C)

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) recently reported that "Ohio is one of the states that have been experiencing a significant increase in the number of refugee children enrolled in elementary and secondary schools." ("Assistance for refugee students," 2000) This increase is composed of both "primary migration," or families placed in central Ohio directly from refugee camps by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, and "secondary migration,"
which means that after originally settling in a "port of entry" city such as Atlanta or New York, families choose to resettle here.

A number of Hispanics have also recently moved to Columbus.

Word of Columbus' need for workers has spread throughout Latin America, many immigrants say, drawing those who have legal permission to work in the United States and those who come without documents -- both enticed by the chance to prosper. (Edwards and Ortega, March 13, 2000)

Due largely to this influx of immigrant and refugee students to the district, the ESL population more than doubled in the two-year period previous to this study, from approximately 800 in the 1997-1998 school year to more than 2000 in the 1999-2000 school year (K. Woodard, ESL Supervisor, May 4, 2000).

The only community organization that deals with all immigrant groups in the city, the Community Immigrant and Refugee Service (CRIS), reported the following estimates of people (Figure 1.1) from the major new cultural groups living in the metropolitan area in the spring of 2000.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Hispanics</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopian/Eritrean</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Indian</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West African (Mauritania and Sierra Leone)</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.1
Estimated Population of Major Immigrant Groups in Columbus

Problems of the school district

In the 1999-2000 school year, there were approximately 65,000 students in this urban public school district. As with many urban districts, poverty and other social issues complicate the educational process. More than 37% of the students in this district are living below the poverty line and only 57% are graduating, according to the Ohio Department of Education. In 1998, the percentage of district students who passed the state graduation test ranged from 39% in math to 77% in writing, well below the state average (Appendix E, State of Ohio 2000 School District Report Card, p. 4).

Consequently, in the fall of 1999, the Ohio Department of Education placed this urban school district in a state of “academic emergency,” the final step before the state takes over control of the district (Appendix D, “Report cards are in. . .,” 1999). This rating was based on the fact that the district was performing acceptably in only 4 out of 18 areas including attendance, graduation rates, and passage rates on state-mandated proficiency tests.
Impact of immigrant students

One factor in the poor passage rates in the district was the number of students with little or no previous education and limited English proficiency (Personal communication, K. Woodard, ESL Supervisor, April 5, 2000). For example, over one thousand new English language learners (ELLs) had entered the district during the 1999-2000 school year.

The school system established a task force in the Spring of 1999 to review the situation and to consider the best methods for assisting these students academically. The task force offered the following solutions:

- creating a special newcomer program for low-schooled adolescents with little or no previous education or literacy skills
- increasing the number of schools with ESL programs and lowering the teacher/pupil ratio at each site
- providing staff development opportunities for mainstream teachers
- increasing the amount of training for healthcare professionals working in schools with large LEP populations
• hiring a full-time supervisor for the growing ESL program
• assessing students throughout the summer
• visiting school systems with similar populations and issues to determine which of their programs would work in this district

These suggestions (Appendix G, Summary of Needs, 1999) were considered by the district and were then implemented in varying degrees during the 1999-2000 school year.

The School

Community characteristics

This study was conducted in a large, urban middle school in which 90 students were designated limited English proficient out of the total school population of 750. The school is located in a section of town that has a mixture of low and middle income families. The school population was 47% white (many of whom are of Appalachian heritage), 39% African-American, 6% African (Somali, Ethiopian, and Sierra Leone), 7% Asian, and 1% Hispanic. The immigrant population in this section of town has been
predominately southeast Asian for the past fifteen years, but most recent immigrants have been either Hispanic and African. The percentage of students in this school eligible for free or reduced lunches was 72%. (Statistics provided by the principal, Mr. Loftus, in personal communication, April 3, 1999.) Sixty of the ninety LEP students in this school were assigned to this school only because of the ESL program; their home schools were actually adjacent middle schools which did not offer ESL services.

The school was built in the late 1950's in response to the residential growth in this section of town. The area is still predominately residential, with a few small businesses. The building is in good repair and was recently given a new exterior and a new roof. An adjacent city park is used regularly for athletic events and community recreation.

Impact of ESL students

The school follows the district curriculum for middle schools, with most classes being taught in blocks of 90 minutes. ESL students attend ESL class instead of regular language arts class.
The remainder of the school day, they attend science, math, social studies and unified arts classes with their native English-speaking peers.

This school has been the site of an ESL satellite unit for fourteen years. I have been the ESL teacher and a member of the staff for ten years. Many of the other teachers were also veterans and had worked with immigrant students for several years.

There was growing dissatisfaction among the staff about the increasing number of ESL students and the effect these students were having on the way schools are “graded” in the state: state-wide proficiency test results. Both teacher and administrator evaluations (and pay raises) are based in a large part on the scores their students make on these tests, and the statistics were disturbing at the middle school in which this study took place. The fact that LEP students are seen as a factor in these ratings is shown by the decision made jointly by the district and the teacher’s union in the fall of 2000 to include the number of ESL students in the formula that determines how teachers’ raises are determined, along with the percentage of free and reduced lunches, student mobility
A sixth-grade version of this graduation test, given in the spring of 1998, revealed the following passage rates for this middle school, compared to the district and state average:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency Test Area</th>
<th>School Average</th>
<th>District Average</th>
<th>State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.2
Sixth Grade Proficiency Test Scores for School, District, and State
Source: Ohio Department of Education Report Cards, 1999
(Appendices E and I)

The school was slightly below the district average, but significantly under state averages by as much as 50% or more in all areas except writing. One possible reason the local school's scores
were so low was that over 100 students, out of the total school population of 750, were second language learners and ninety qualified for ESL services. These students were expected to take the test, and at the time of the spring 1998 test, their scores were included in the school's average, regardless of the length of time in the country or the language proficiency of the child. Students were allowed to "waive" the test if their language proficiency was extremely limited (as determined by district assessment), but the test was then scored as a zero and averaged into the school's composite score.

A subsequent decision by the state legislature in the summer of 1999 exempted L2 students from counting against the school's score during their first two years in the country. This ruling, however, did not impact the school during the academic year in which this study took place (1998-1999).
The ESL Program

Assessment and placement

Ninety of the one hundred second language students in this school were labeled “limited English proficient” according to the district’s criteria, i.e., their English language proficiency was rated at Levels I to IV according to an annual assessment. (Levels will be described on page 33.) When students first enter the district, they are given a placement examination. Each year thereafter, a version of the test is re-administered to determine if students continue to be in need of extra assistance. This assessment determines which students qualify for ESL services.

Countries represented in ESL program

The majority of the students in this program were Somalis (47 out of 90), forty-three of whom has been in the United States less than two years. Due to the fighting and the devastation that occurred during the civil war in Somalia in the early 1990s, they had
been forced to flee their homeland. Many escaped to Kenya, where it was against the law for a child who was not a citizen of Kenya to attend school. Consequently, most Somali students arrived in the U.S. having little or no previous education. Some of these students came to secondary school in the U.S. having never held a pencil or written their own name.

The second largest cultural group in this researcher's classroom during the study were Cambodian students. Most of these thirty students were second generation immigrants whose parents came to the United States after years in refugee camps in Thailand. Others came as small children, and did not remember any home other than the United States. The English oral proficiency of these students was near native level, but they still had difficulty with reading and/or writing English, even after several years in U.S. schools.

The other thirteen of the 90 students in this study were from eight different countries. Three were Hispanic, the second most rapidly growing immigrant population in this metropolitan area. Four were other southeast Asians, a Laotian and a Vietnamese with educational experiences similar to the Cambodians and two recent
U.S. arrivals from Vietnam and China with prior education in their home country equivalent to their assigned grade level in the U.S.. Two others were refugees from the war in Kosovo, and one was a refugee from Ethiopia. Together they represented many of the "typical" adolescent second language learners found in classrooms across the United States. Some were well-educated and needed to focus primarily on English acquisition and cultural adjustment, while others were below grade level in academic skills and required much more assistance to survive and succeed in a secondary school. Figure 1.3 summarizes the countries represented in the ESL program at this research site.
Figure 1.3

Total number of students from each country represented at the research site
Level of prior education and length of time in United States

The two factors which most impacted instructional decisions in this classroom were the length of time the students were in the United States and their amount of previous formal education. Students new to the country usually had the least proficiency in English and therefore needed more individualized instruction. They could not work independently because they often did not understand the directions, had less experience with the American school system, and typically required step by step monitoring.

Figure 1.4 indicates the length of time the students were in the United States in four categories: students who were in the United States less than two years, three to four years, five to ten years, and those who were born here. The majority of the students (60%) in this classroom were new arrivals, having lived in the U.S. less than two years.
Figure 1.4

Length of time in the United States of students in the study

Source: Self-reporting data of students in ESL classroom
Students with little prior education intensified the need for one-on-one assistance. Many of the students in this classroom had never spent time in a formal educational setting and needed practice with common school tasks such as using scissors, calculators, rulers, dictionaries, and computers. Classroom behaviors which most children learn in kindergarten such as turn taking and sharing had to be modeled and practiced. Even the practice of needing a hall pass for the drinking fountain or restroom had to be explained and reinforced.

Teachers in other classes were also overwhelmed by the basic needs of these students. For example, math teachers who were being pushed by the district to raise their standards and present a more rigorous academic curriculum were frustrated at the difficulty of now having three or four students per class who could not do simple addition or subtraction. Social studies and science teachers who traditionally had students spend a large portion of the class reading and writing were even more overwhelmed. Even the physical education, music, and art teachers felt the impact. Students had to be taught to draw, cut, or glue. Some had religious beliefs that forbade music or drawing human or animal figures and none of the
Moslem students could wear the required "gym clothes." Girls especially had difficulty finding acceptable apparel for basketball or soccer.

Figure 1.5

Total years of previous education of Somali students

Source: Self-reporting survey of Somali students in the ESL classroom at this research site
Placement in the ESL Program

All students in this school district who speak another language at home, or who come from a home in which a language other than English is spoken, have their language proficiency assessed. This entrance exam is mandated by the Office of Civil Rights as a result of a Supreme Court decision in 1974, Lau v. Nichols. In this legal case, a boy from San Francisco was deemed to have had his civil rights violated when proper assistance was not provided to him to compensate for the language barrier that existed due to his Chinese heritage. Consequently, all second language students in public schools must now be assessed to determine if they could benefit from special language instruction, even though placement in the program is optional.

Assessment and placement in the school district of this study was done based on scores received on a modified version of the Brigance Inventory of Essential Skills, combined with the oral version of the Language Assessment Scale (LAS). The Brigance is used to assess the students' knowledge of basic concepts such as time, money, prepositions, the alphabet, numbers, and functional
signs. It also examines knowledge of sentence structure and grammar, word attack skills, oral reading ability, and reading comprehension. The LAS is used to assess listening and speaking skills.

Language proficiency in this school district is divided into five numerical categories, ranging from Level One (beginner) to Level Five (proficient). Level One to Level Four students qualify for English as a Second Language services, while Level Five students are mainstreamed without ESL assistance. A detailed description of those levels is provided in Figure 1.6:
Level I  Students speak only in phrases or chunks. They are just beginning to read, write, and speak English. Most students remain at this level for about one to two years.

Level II Students can form complete sentences and are able to use basic written and oral discourse for communication. They can read short stories or easy chapter books and can function in content area classes to a limited degree.

Level III Students have mastered their BICS (basic interpersonal communication skills per Cummins, 1981), and are making headway on their CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency). They can read longer, more complex text -- both fiction and nonfiction. Their writing is also more mature and detailed.

Level IV Students are reaching near native proficiency. They are proficient in oral communication, but still have difficulties with written English. Reading comprehension is approaching grade level.

Level V Students have demonstrated the ability to use English well enough to be totally mainstreamed in all academic classes but may need occasional classroom support.

Figure 1.6: Description of English Proficiency Levels
Source: Columbus Public Schools ESL Program, 1999
Language proficiency of students in study

Almost half of the students (43 out of 90) in the class being studied were beginners (Level I) according to the district assessment. The rest of the students were almost equally distributed between low intermediate (Level II), high intermediate (Level III), and advanced level (Level IV) students according to their language proficiency. This distribution is represented on the following bar graph (Figure 1.7).
Figure 1.7: English Language Proficiency of Students in Study
Once students have been assessed, they are assigned to the school closest to their home which offers ESL services. Secondary students receive these services during their language arts block. They spend the majority of this time on language development activities such as reading, speaking, and writing. A bilingual assistant is available in each classroom to assist the teacher with instruction, work with small groups of students on individualized activities, help with homework, and serve as a liaison between the school and the home through phone calls, home visits, and translating at parent conferences held at the school.

Focus of the Study

Acquiring a new language is a complex and time-consuming process. When coupled with the requirements of the U. S. secondary educational system, the task can be even more daunting. Studies conducted in the United States and Canada have revealed that students with a basic education before immigration usually take from 5 to 7 years to become proficient in English. However, for students with little or no prior education the time increases to 36
7-10 years (Cummins, 1981, Collier, 1987, Collier and Thomas, 1989). ESL adolescents in the American school system do not have seven to ten years in which to complete their education.

Both Cummins and Collier suggest that, to save valuable time, academic instruction continue in the child's native language while English is being acquired. When this is not possible, sheltered courses and intensive English instruction are critical. Due to the number and variety of languages present in both the school district and this classroom, bilingual programming was not feasible and students received only a scheduled double block of ESL instruction daily. It is this period of instruction that was the focus of this study.

The ESL program at this school was originally developed to meet the needs of the Southeast Asian students in the neighborhood. A literature-based program of reading and writing instruction based on a series of historical fiction novels was created and implemented for this specific population over a period of several years. The curriculum was designed for second language students who spoke English fluently and had a background of education in the United States. It concentrated on building reading comprehension, cultural
self-awareness and self-esteem, and the background knowledge and learning strategies needed for success in content-area subjects. However, the influx of new arrivals into the class, many with little previous education, impacted the curriculum and caused a change in both instructional design and delivery. The needs of these new students were different and required more time and different resources than previous groups of students. How the curriculum changed and the challenges involved are a major focus of this study.

When I first planned and designed this study, my intention was to concentrate solely on the curriculum designed to meet the academic needs of the students in my class. I wanted to do a longitudinal study of the effectiveness of a literature-based program with middle school second language learners. However, as the study progressed, I became concerned with the issues and difficulties these students were facing and how they impacted their ability to focus academically and achieve their dreams. It was these issues and difficulties that became an additional, and unexpected, focus of the study. I wanted to tell their stories of “dreams deferred,” (Hughes, 1951) and of the myriad barriers these students
faced and attempted to overcome on a daily basis. To do otherwise would have been to tell only half the story.

Research Questions

This study described the ESL program in one urban middle school, following the students for the period of one academic year (nine months), focusing on the following research questions:

1. What academic, social, physical, and emotional needs did this specific population of students bring to the classroom that impacted and/or impeded their academic achievement?
2. What impact has the literature-based program that was designed specifically to meet the academic needs of these students had on their reading ability and interest?
3. What curricular and instructional decisions occurred during the one-year study of this particular class?
Summary

This qualitative study was set in an urban middle school in which a high percentage (60%) of the second language learners had little previous education. The researcher was the English as a second language teacher in this school. The classroom is set in a school district which is being impacted by a number of recent immigrants.

This type of study is significant because little research is available which deals specifically with adolescent English language learners, ELLs, and their academic challenges. According to August and Hakuta, “Priority should be given to addressing important [research] gaps in population coverage, such as certain age or language groups, for whom the applicability of current findings from a more limited population can be tested. For example: English acquisition, literacy development, content area learning, intergroup relations, and the social context of learning are all important issues to be addressed for older students with little or no formal education.” (1997, p. 6) This study speaks to each of these critical areas.
First, the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of the English language learners in this school was described. Secondly, the study described the curriculum used in this particular classroom and discussed its effectiveness with this population. And finally, the teacher-researcher discussed the curricular and instructional decisions made throughout the school year and reflected upon those decisions.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

English language learners at the secondary level in the United States share many common needs and barriers. Problems specific to this population include:

1. A limited amount of time available to acquire English

2. The need to develop the specific background knowledge and reading skills required for cognitively-demanding mainstream coursework in science, math, and social studies, often lacking due to interrupted schooling or time lost learning English

3. The need to be prepared for the demands of a mainstream language arts classroom, both at the secondary and post-secondary level, with skills often not taught in traditional ESL programs (Custodio and Sutton, 1998)
This literature review examined the types of programs used most often with adolescent ELLs and what criteria is used to determine the program and curricula selected for each population. The difficulties associated with developing literacy as a component of language development with adolescent L2 learners was also reviewed. Of special interest were studies describing the academic and literacy needs of older adolescents with interrupted schooling, with suggestions for educators. And finally, studies focused on content-based and literature-based curricula were reviewed to lay the foundation for the type of curriculum developed to meet the needs of this particular group of students.

When structuring learning strategies, one must take into consideration the following differences among immigrant students: educational background and quality of previous education, economic resources and socioeconomic context, reason for coming to the U.S., age of arrival in the U.S., immigration status, personal and collective strengths and resilience, intergenerational relationships, race, gender, and physical and mental health. (August and Pease-Alvarez, 1996, p. 4)
There are seven types of programs specifically designed to meet the linguistic needs of second language students in the United States, according to a study by August and Hakuta (1997).

1. traditional ESL
2. content-based ESL
3. sheltered immersion
4. structured immersion
5. transitional bilingual education
6. maintenance bilingual education
7. two-way bilingual education

Traditional ESL focuses on development of the four skill areas, reading, writing, speaking, and listening, often through specifically designed textbooks, grammar and speaking exercises, and controlled reading passages. In contrast, content-based ESL develops the four skill areas through material developed for academic classrooms such as science and social studies. The focus of content-based ESL is on learning to use the language for a task, not the study of the language.
Sheltered immersion is similar to content-based except the focus is on learning the subject matter rather than using the subject matter to practice the language. The material is presented in a format that takes the language proficiency of the student into consideration. Programs 4, 5, 6, and 7 offer various levels of bilingual instruction, for various lengths of time.

The school district in which this study took place used traditional ESL in each of its satellite units due to the large number of nationalities (105) enrolled in the school district of the classroom being studied and the difficulty in finding certified teachers to present instruction in the native language. Bilingual assistants were provided for each classroom, but often the assistant spoke the language of only a limited number of the students. ESL was provided as a "pullout program" offering intensive language instruction and some homework assistance for other subjects. Students were mainstreamed the remainder of the school day.

Two other programs on the August and Hakuta list were also being implemented in this district on a limited basis at the time of this study: content-based ESL and sheltered immersion. ESL
students at the secondary level, especially low-schooled adolescents, often require more than just English language instruction. Because many had received little or no prior education, they often lacked the skills and content knowledge to function in a mainstream secondary classroom. They needed extra assistance with content subjects as well as in English.

Content-based instruction, combining academic subject matter and language development with an emphasis on English acquisition, was being offered in many elementary and some secondary classrooms to help students build basic academic skills. Sheltered immersion, which combines academic coursework with language learning with an emphasis on the subject matter, was being piloted at both the middle and high school levels in science, math, and social studies.

In both programs, the students were provided with "comprehensible input" (Krashen, 1982), information presented at an instructional level that is slightly higher than the linguistic ability of the students. Thus, students were challenged, but not frustrated. However, sheltered immersion is expensive to operate because small classes are needed and teachers need special training.
Scheduling is difficult in schools with small numbers of ESL students. Consequently, this option was available in only three high schools across the district. It was not available at the school in which this study took place.

Specific Programming Needs of Refugee Students

Refugee students, especially those with limited prior education, have specialized needs above and beyond those of some other second language students. Refugees "are people whose lives have been indelibly marked by painful separation and loss. Unlike immigrants who choose to leave their homelands, refugees are forced into exile by war, by oppression, and by fear." (Scheinfeld, 1993, p. i) According to Mace-Matluck et al. (1998, p. 13), "students lacking rudimentary literacy skills in their native language are especially challenged in secondary school and may need many years of intensive work in order to graduate or make the transition to an appropriate program."

Mace-Matluck et al. continue with a list of three basic needs that this type of student typically experiences in secondary school:
(a) linguistic needs which primarily focus on learning English, (b) schooling needs such as literacy and job training, and (c) socialization needs to guarantee emotional and psychological growth. Programming to meet these needs in the time available is the concern of secondary language educators. "High school students have to worry about not getting behind academically while they are learning the second language. This is even a more critical issue for older students who have received little or no formal schooling."

(Collier, 1995, p. 18) Mace-Matluck et al. continue with this comment:

very little research has been conducted on recent arrivals who have been through traumatic experiences and have little or no formal first language schooling. These students especially need lots of first language academic support to develop literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies knowledge as efficiently as possible to make up missed years of academic instruction. . . . Some students also need lots of emotional support and counseling to deal with the scars of violence they have witnessed, and the continuing trauma of establishing stable family relations in their new country and meeting their basic survival needs. (p. 23)

No amount of academic curriculum and literacy instruction can meet these emotional and physical needs. The school district in this study, as is the case with many districts, was not prepared to deal with the myriad problems these refugee children brought with them.
to the school setting. Even finding the resources and skills to assist with their academic needs posed a challenge. Literacy development was one of the first hurdles.

Second Language Literacy and Reading Instruction

“Reading is probably the most important skill of L2 learners in academic contexts.” This quotation by Grabe (1991, p. 375) introduced his review of twenty-five years of second language reading research and theory in TESOL Quarterly. The critical nature of literacy to academic success is echoed in the quotations that introduced this study made by the authors of the studies funded by the National Research Council (August and Hakuta, 1997) and the International Reading Association (Spangenburg-Urbschat and Pritchard, 1994).

Grabe noted that the understanding of the reading process has changed considerably since the mid 1960’s when reading in L2 classrooms was basically a reinforcement of oral skills. He stated that this evolution has occurred because of the changing views of reading theory as well as changes in the ESL population itself.
One change has been the flood of ESL students across the English-speaking world in the final quarter of the twentieth century due to economic and political factors. English is no longer an academic choice but a life necessity for many people globally. Learning to live and function in an English-speaking society has forced teachers to create programs that compress language learning into an intense yet thorough preparation for academic readiness such as the CALLA program (Chamot and O'Malley, 1987) discussed later.

At the same time, reading experts such as Frank Smith (1971) and Kenneth Goodman (1967) have argued over the years that learning to read is more than decoding skills and vocabulary development. They suggested that readers use context, prediction, and hypotheses in order to build comprehension and fluency. Because many of our current views of second language reading are shaped by research in first language learners, . . . it makes good sense then, for second language researchers and teachers to consider what first language research has"to say about the nature of the fluent reading process and the development of reading abilities." (Grabe, 1991, p. 378)
The reading process is a field which has been studied extensively and much is known about what constitutes fluent reading. (Goodman, 1993; Stanovich, 1991; Weaver, 1994) Most researchers agree that fluency is reached when a text can be read rapidly with few miscues and a high level of comprehension. The best method to help a reader develop that fluency and how much decoding skills influence fluency is still being debated. In addition, reading for L2 students has a few barriers that are not as critical for L1 readers.

One area of obvious difference between L1 and L2 reading, and one that needs further research, is the problem of where and when decoding skills should enter the picture. “Sounding out” words may be valuable to readers who have extensive oral vocabularies, but what about the limited English proficient student? Sounding out a word with which you are not familiar is a futile and useless process. Consequently, L2 readers constantly face “the task of trying to understand a text containing words and structures that even if decoded successfully are still not comprehended because they are
not within the reader’s oral language knowledge.” (Chamot, 1994, p. 85)

How much vocabulary introduction needs to be done for ESL readers? There is a large amount of vocabulary needed to read even intermediate level children’s books, let alone survive in a secondary school classroom. Estimates of a vocabulary of up to 40,000 words are needed for L1 academic needs at the upper elementary level, while the typical intermediate ESL student has a vocabulary of only about 5,000 - 7,000 words (Grabe, 1991). Swaffer, Arens, and Byrnes (1991, p. 44) stated that for second language learners, “vocabulary remains one of the greatest stumbling blocks to fluent reading.”

Second language students also have a limited repertoire of reading strategies at their disposal. These students do not yet realize what good readers do when they read or what specific strategies they employ. Reading is seen as a chore, with a focus on specific skills. All text is read in the same manner, without regard to the purpose or style of the material. Christine Sutton, in her 1998 article in The Reading Teacher, pointed out that “good readers use many strategies and techniques to help themselves understand
print texts of various types. LEP students can make use of these same tools if shown what they are and provided with ample opportunities to practice them.” (p. 687)

Another area of study for L2 researchers has been the role that schema development and activation play in reading comprehension. Research has verified that both pre-reading activities (Sutton, 1989) and comprehension strategy training (Chamot and O’Malley, 1987) improve L2 reading success. A critical component to the teaching of reading to L2 students is the connection of background knowledge to comprehension. Bartlett (1932), Rumelhart (1980), and Carrell (1987) argued that prior knowledge was essential to bringing meaning to text. Carrell’s studies were also founded in part on the work of psycho-linguists Frank Smith (1971) and Kenneth Goodman (1967), who argued that readers use their knowledge of text to construct meaning from print. For ESL readers this area is especially critical, because teachers cannot assume that students come to class with a common set of information due to their diverse backgrounds and histories. Background knowledge must be specifically introduced before reading is comprehensible for many ESL readers.
Other L2 reading researchers have looked at how second language readers process text. Clark and Silberstein (1977), characterized second language reading as an active process of comprehension and pushed for students to be taught specific reading strategies. Like Christine Sutton, they advocated for L2 students to be given opportunities to experience varieties of texts while practicing new techniques for reading mastery. Coady (1979) suggested an L2 reading model that has three components: the process strategies and background knowledge mentioned above, as well as development of conceptual abilities. He believed that beginning readers focus on the process strategies while more proficient readers can move on to cognitively demanding conceptual tasks.

Grabe concluded his 1991 article with these seven guidelines for second language reading instruction (p. 396):

- Reading instruction should be taught in a content-centered, integrated skills curriculum.
- A reading lab should provide individualized instruction and practice opportunities.
• Sustained silent reading, known as SSR, should be encouraged to develop fluency.
• Reading should involve pre-, mid-, and post-reading frameworks.
• Strategy and skill instruction should have a high priority.
• Group work and cooperative learning should be used regularly.
• Students need to read extensively as well as intensively.

This research project looked at one literature-based program designed to assist second language students develop the skills listed above which have been deemed necessary for L2 reading success: extensive practice with authentic texts, focusing on strategy instruction, vocabulary development through context, and building text and background knowledge.

Literature-based Approach to Reading Instruction

Literature-based instruction, especially at the elementary school level, is not a new concept. Charlotte Huck advocated the use of children’s literature as the primary means of instruction for children as early as 1977, but the employment of literature for second language instruction with secondary students is a relatively
new field, growing in popularity within the last fifteen years. (Rigg and Allen, 1991; Allen, 1994; Freeman and Freeman, 1992)

“In its simplest terms, literature-based implies a movement -- particularly in literacy instruction -- away from the exclusive use of the basal reader and toward teaching and learning through children’s literature, both fictional and factual.” (Sloan, 1995) The movement toward literature-based instruction is grounded in the theoretical framework of Dewey (1929), Piaget, (1955) and Vygotsky (1962) who believed that children should be active participants in their education. It also has roots in the work of psycholinguists such as Kenneth Goodman (1986) and Frank Smith (1971) who studied how people learn to read and saw literacy and language development as a holistic process. They believe that language is not learned from the part to the whole, but from the whole to the part, and that all language functions, including reading, interrelate.

From this ‘holistic’ stance came ‘whole language.’ This theoretical approach advocated that language should not be fragmented into its component parts, but should be learned and used as a whole system of communication. (Goodman, 1986) The idea of
holistic instruction applies to second language learners as strongly as it does to native English speakers. In fact, "recent research [in L2] supports the contention that activities that tend to combine the four modes [i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing] are more likely to positively enhance both literacy and oral development." (Elley and Mangubhau, 1983)

Despite a rich literature describing the rationale for and uses of literature-based instruction in elementary schools, studies involving secondary schools or second language classrooms are relatively recent (Atwell, 1987; Rigg and Allen, 1991; Allen, 1994). These studies have discovered that many of the activities associated with this approach can work as well with L2 students as with L1 (Rigg and Allen, 1991; Freeman and Freeman, 1992; Hudelson, 1984).

Activities [for second language students] that are congruent with the whole language approach include reading aloud or telling stories, authentic writing, reading real literature, talking about the processes of reading and writing, students helping each other, language experience stories, dialogue journals, and group writing. (Terdal, 1993, p. 25)

In a literature-based classroom, activities center around and are related to the authentic texts being read by the students. A
typical day might include a picture book read aloud by the teacher, independent reading by the students, class discussion, and journal writing.

Advantages of a Literature-based Approach in ESL Classrooms

**Literature Promotes Literacy Development**

Literacy learning for language minority students happens by immersing them in reading and writing. Krashen (1982) suggested that a second language is best acquired when the conditions are similar to those present in L1 acquisition: when the focus of instruction is on meaning rather than form and when there is sufficient opportunity to engage in meaningful use of that language in a relatively anxiety-free environment. Both of these conditions are met in a literature-based classroom. Krashen also emphasized the role of authentic texts used for authentic purposes. Literature written for children and adolescents fits this role.

Krashen (1985) advocated using one extended text (such as a novel) or several similar texts (by the same author, on the same
subject, or of the same genre) with second language readers because it provides “comprehensible input” that builds schema and background knowledge. This idea of “narrow reading” helps students develop familiarity with a particular style or format and allows them to concentrate on the meaning of the text.

Talking about the use of literature with culturally diverse students, Judith Langer stated,

When students read literature, ‘horizons of possibility’ come to mind, moving them to reflect on and interpret ideas at hand; students raise questions, recognize problems, seek causes and solutions, and make connections. They explore multiple perspectives and imagine scenarios. This type of thinking is at the heart of literate thought. . . . Because it taps what they know and who they are, literature is a particularly inviting context for learning both a second language and a literacy. (1997, p. 607)

Langer believes that literature allows students to reflect on their lives, their learning, and their language. Literature can open “horizons of possibility,” allowing students to question, interpret, connect and explore. She called this the “heart of literate thinking.”
Literature Provides Language Models

The major goal of any ESL classroom is to provide students with the language skills they need to be successful in grade-level classrooms and to accomplish this in as short a period as possible. Most researchers in second language acquisition now agree that language needs to be taught in context and in a holistic manner—not as discrete skills. Jill Fitzgerald (1993, p. 643) stated that through interactions with others in a literate environment, students acquire a broad base of knowledge about the conventions and purposes of print. . . . ESL students who are beginning to learn to read and write in English, as well as those who are more advanced, benefit from classrooms and curricula structured to focus on and revolve around the functions and purposes of reading and writing in everyday and academic situations.

The use of authentic literature in ESL classrooms is becoming more common, as is the use of whole language activities. They fit well with the communicative approach which emphasizes teaching language with authentic tasks and materials. (Savignon, 1983) According to Lazar (1993), since the early 1980s “there has been an upsurge in interest in how literature can be used with the language learner.” (p. xii) In fact, he called this a “language-based approach to literature”. (p. 27) He said that the language-based approach can
take three forms: the use of literature for language practice, concentrating on a study of the literary text itself as a reflection of the culture, and the use of literature to introduce students to both language and literacy skills. He claims that this use of literature “provides an unintimidating way of bridging the gap between language study and the development of more literacy-based skills.” (Lazar, p. 28) It is this third use of literature which most closely describes my classroom.

Literature can be the vehicle to introduce and practice new language skills. It can expose students to a wide variety of styles and genres. When literature is read aloud, students can experience the color and flow of oral language. It is in literature that “the resources of the language are most fully and skillfully used.” (Sage, 1987)

A literature-based program for secondary ESL students can serve a number of important functions:

1. poor readers need the security of a familiar style and format that a long-term study can provide
2. students turned on to reading can become life-long learners
3. discussion of the issues presented in the novels promote higher-level thinking skills and an opportunity to use language in an authentic manner

4. the cultures of the students are often reflected in the novels, presented in a realistic setting, and given support and value

5. reading, writing, and speaking activities are integrated into the lesson from the context of the story, providing authentic tasks

6. literature provides a window into American culture -- helping these students understand how Americans live and think

Literature-based instruction can be used effectively at the secondary level to assist language minority students in their language and literacy development. Novels provide a format for introducing American culture, modeling good language usage, building background knowledge, and developing fluency. Students become proficient language users through authentic tasks involving authentic text. And most importantly, students actually enjoy reading! (Custodio and Sutton, 1998).

A literature-based curriculum introduces students to quality literature, not just disjointed stories and a series of vocabulary words. Reading complete pieces of literature, whether plays, short stories, novels, or poems, allows students to see literature the way it was written and meant to be read. It creates opportunities for inquiry and discussion. Literature can be used to acquaint students with the cultures and lifestyles of people around the world, as well
as the other students in their own class. Language development activities arise from the literature which integrate the four skill areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Since the classroom activities focus on the literature, the language activities are authentic, not contrived. Students are using the language to learn, not just learning about the language. Consequently, the affective filter is low because there is less stress upon language production correctness and more emphasis on comprehensibility.

Adolescent fiction, especially multicultural novels or historical fiction, builds background knowledge of both the world of the adolescent as well as assists in understanding how the culture developed to its current state. It assists the students in building scaffolds and schema of both how literature works, as well as society as a whole.

The study of literature can serve as a bridge to mainstream classes such as language arts and social studies by introducing the students to the vocabulary, skills, and content knowledge required for success in both areas. Through interdisciplinary activities which relate to the literature being studied, such as songs, games,
plays, murals, and group projects, students begin to see how various subject areas are interrelated.

Although the benefits are numerous, there are difficulties involved with the literature-based approach to ESL. Material selection is a time-consuming and costly process. Finding picture books and especially novels about some of the more recent immigrant groups is always difficult. For example, I could not find a good novel with either Somali or Albanian characters because they were a new culture group in the United States and little literature reflected their presence. I had to rely instead on picture books about the two countries and cultures, and on novels such as Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind by Staples because it dealt with the Moslem culture and religion and Zlata's Diary, the true story of a Macedonian girl in war-torn Yugoslavia. Other difficulties are discussed in Chapter Four of this study under the heading, Challenges to the Literature-based Approach, beginning on page 193.

Figure 2.1 depicts my vision of the value and impact of a literature-based curriculum in an ESL classroom. From a core curriculum based on authentic literature, i.e., material written for native speakers, come five main benefits:
1. Introduction to quality adolescent literature
2. Development of background knowledge on a variety of subjects
3. Authentic tasks associated with content-based instruction build language proficiency
4. Skills are practiced for mainstream classrooms
5. Interdisciplinary activities provide variety and build bridges to other subject areas
Builds self-esteem
Develops higher-level skills
Integrates language skills
Introduces quality literature
Low affective filter
Message vs. form
Content-based Instruction
Historical Knowledge
Scaffolds and schema
Authentic texts and tasks
Builds Background Knowledge
Cultural knowledge
Literature
Literature-based curriculum
Bridge to Mainstream Classes
Art
Geography
History
English/Language Arts
Reading
Drama
Music
Interdisciplinary

Figure 2.1 The Advantages to a Literature-based Curriculum
Source: Custodio and Sutton (1998)
Research supports the contention that language and literacy
development alone is not enough for student academic success
English language learners, especially at the secondary school level,
cannot afford the time involved to reach English proficiency before
concentrating on the subject-area curricula required in their
mainstream classrooms. Short (1994, p. 582), for example, stated
that
"traditional ESL programs that focus on language development
with little attention to subject-area curricula have not been
able to serve the current influx of language minority students
very well, especially at the secondary level. . . . Secondary
students, in particular, need instruction in content concepts and
academic tasks early in their educational experience.

She believes, with others, that ESL is best taught through content
(Short, 1994; Brinton, Snow and Wesche, 1989; Crandall, 1987;
Chamot and O’Malley, 1994).

In content-based ESL, “the language teacher’s primary role is
still to help students develop language competence; but their
secondary goals are to introduce terminology, content reading and
writing skills, and study skills; and to reinforce content area
information taught in other classes.” (Short, 1989) Subject matter such as science or social studies is taught at the linguistic level of the students, in a context-embedded environment (Cummins, 1980) of visual aids, realia, and "scaffolds." Scaffolds are step-by-step explanations of how to execute a new skill and serve as the support mechanism for the development of schema: “temporary supports for a student under construction.” (Kenfield, 1999) For example, a content-based science lesson would involve many visual aids, hands-on activities, graphs and charts, and limited new vocabulary. Crandall, Short, and others who advocate content-based ESL are concerned about the common practice of concentrating solely on English acquisition before students are placed in mainstream science, math, and social studies classes, a decision that costs students valuable academic time. They view content-based instruction as a means to help “bridge the gap” between the below-grade-level academic knowledge of some ELLs and that of their native English-speaking peers. The content-based instruction utilized in this study focused on American history and middle school language arts.
Content-based instruction "refers to the concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills." (Brinton, Snow and Wesche, 1989) The strategy of using adolescent literature, and especially historical fiction, fits this definition of "concurrent teaching."

Many language arts classrooms are now centering their instruction around the reading and discussion of trade books -- both fiction and nonfiction (Cullinan, 1989). Second language teachers can use the same techniques with English language learners. Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989) found several benefits of combining content-based language and literature study. They stated that through this process, students will be introduced to:

- knowledge of elements of the linguistic code--vocabulary, grammar, sentence and paragraph structure
- knowledge of discourse--conventions and organizational patterns of various genres
- interactive communication skills--speaking and listening activities based on reading
• academic language use—reading for specific purposes (oral and silent reading, critical reading, pleasure reading), types and styles of writing, authentic tasks
• related study skills—build background knowledge of and focus related activities to subject matter of text (e.g., oral reports, term papers, projects)

In an updated version of their 1989 text, Snow and Brinton (1997) stated that literature appears to have a more "universally appealing content" that requires "no special expertise or knowledge." They suggested that ESL teachers supplement their curriculum with "literature that is compatible with the unit's focus and with the wider themes suggested by the content" of whatever topic the curriculum covers (1997, p. 380).

Effectiveness of Content-based Instruction

The intent of content-based instruction is to increase the understanding of subject matter and simultaneously build language skills. Krashen stated that language is acquired "when we obtain comprehensible input in a low-anxiety situation, when we are
presented with interesting messages, and when we understand these messages.” (1985, p. 10) Content-based instruction employs these three criteria, combining the medium (English) with an interesting message (academic subject matter).

Krashen and Terrell (1983) also suggested that a second language is most successfully acquired when the conditions are similar to those present in first language acquisition: that is, when the focus of instruction is on meaning rather than on form and when there is sufficient opportunity to engage in meaningful use of that language in an anxiety-free environment. Although Krashen advocates “acquiring” a language naturally, most children further develop their native language proficiency in a formal educational environment. It is this researcher’s belief that much second language acquisition occurs in similar situations. In other words, literacy learning for language minority students occurs by immersing them into the functions and meaning of reading and writing, just as for language majority students. Krashen further (1993) argued that reading serves as a preparation for writing when students are given opportunities to read multiple texts and
resources about a topic before writing, thereby building a sufficient repertoire of concepts and vocabulary.

Content-based instruction fulfills all of these requirements. First of all, its emphasis is on academic skills such as nonfiction reading, summarizing, and authentic classroom tasks (Crandall, 1987 and Snow and Brinton, 1997). Students read about a topic from several genres, building experience with each. From a synthesis of the various perspectives, students produce oral and written discourse.

Secondly, content-based teaching emphasizes authentic textbooks and supplementary material. "Using content area material to help language minority students learn English has been shown to increase student motivation, provide more opportunities for students to acknowledge and explore their own prior knowledge on issues, and provide meaningful, contextualized language learning situations." (Crandall, 1987) Students are introduced to academic skills and literary tasks used by their native-speaking counterparts, such as essay writing and literary discussions, but with more extensive modeling and at a slower pace.
Thirdly, content-based teaching bridges learning to the mainstream classes. Students cover the same topics as their classmates, often with the same texts, and the isolation of the second language classroom is lessened. Multilevel groups can work together on a common theme and the differences of culture and linguistic ability is decreased. Students can 'practice' mainstream discourse types such as oral reports, academic reading and writing, outlining, research papers, oral discussions, etc., in a non-threatening atmosphere. When students attend mainstreamed classes, they are prepared for the type of activities required of them.

Combining the Literature-based and Content-based Approach

Our school combined the literature-based approach with a content-based approach to create a curriculum that would meet the academic needs of the students in my ESL program. The curriculum was based on multicultural historical novels so that students would learn about the history and culture of their new country (content-based social studies), while at the same time practicing the skills
needed for success in a mainstream language arts classroom (literature-based ESL). Through these novels, the students would discover the role various cultural groups have played in the development of this nation while vicariously experiencing life in America’s past. The students were also introduced to geography, economics, and politics as they related to the stories being studied.

Historical fiction is a rapidly growing genre in children’s and adolescent literature, and is increasingly used to support social studies education. Historical fiction places characters and situations that could have existed in the past into realistic settings. One study conducted in Utah showed that “using historical novels in a unified studies approach to social studies and reading instruction may enhance students’ learning in both content areas.” (Smith, Monson, and Dobson, 1992, p. 370) “Good literature and good social studies make a powerful classroom blend.” (Simpson, 1998, p. 189)

Since I had the same students for three years, I divided the curriculum into three sections and covered one third of the novels each year. Students read books which covered United States history from the age of discovery (1450-1600) to modern times. Listed below in Figure 2.2 are the titles of the books used in this
curriculum with the authors' last names and a brief description of the subject matter or time period covered in each novel.

Year One covered the voyages of Columbus to the Revolutionary War, Year Two focused on the nineteenth century from the pre-Civil War era to immigration and the Westward Expansion, and Year Three took the students from the Depression to the 1980s. The books ranged in difficulty from third to sixth grade reading levels. During the period of the study, the students were in Year Two of the curriculum.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th><strong>Author</strong></th>
<th><strong>Subject/Time period</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year One (1492-1782)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedro’s Journal</td>
<td>Conrad</td>
<td>Columbus voyage to America</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Lion to Guard Us</td>
<td>Bulla</td>
<td>Jamestown colony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign of the Beaver</td>
<td>Speare</td>
<td>Native Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War Comes to Willy Freeman</td>
<td>J. &amp; L. Collier</td>
<td>Revolutionary War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Two (1840-1890)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Runaway to Freedom</td>
<td>Smucker</td>
<td>Underground Railroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bull Run</td>
<td>Fleishmann</td>
<td>Civil War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah, Plain and Tall</td>
<td>MacLachlan</td>
<td>Pioneers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragon’s Gate</td>
<td>Yep</td>
<td>Chinese workers on transcontinental RR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Kids in Town</td>
<td>Bode</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Three (1930-1985)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</td>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>Depression/Civil Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number the Stars</td>
<td>Lowry</td>
<td>WWII and Denmark Jews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Impossible</td>
<td>Choi</td>
<td>Korean occupation in WWII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodbyes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Land I Lost</td>
<td>Nhoung</td>
<td>Vietnam village life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of the River</td>
<td>Crew</td>
<td>Cambodian refugees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.2

Historical Novels Used in this Literature-based Curriculum

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Summary

Reading is a critical skill for academic success, yet limited research is available on the intersection of language learning and literacy instruction for adolescents. (Garcia, 1999) Even less research is available on effective instructional strategies and techniques for students with limited prior education (August and Hakuta, 1997 and Lucas, 1997).

This study looked at a curriculum specifically designed for adolescent refugees which combined the literature-based approach with the techniques of content-based instruction from second language methodology. It followed one year in the implementation of this curriculum and described the instructional changes that had to be made as the population of the classroom shifted. The literary and linguistic needs of this new group of students required a revised curriculum and varied instructional techniques.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This longitudinal, qualitative study describes one year of instruction in an urban middle school ESL classroom, examining how the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of the students affected the implementation of the curriculum. The study was designed to investigate the following questions:

4. What academic, social, physical, and emotional needs did this specific population of students bring to the classroom that impacted and/or impeded their academic achievement?

5. What impact has the literature-based program that was designed specifically to meet the academic needs of these students had on their reading ability and interest?
6. What curricular and instructional decisions occurred during the one-year study of this particular class?

Research Design

Qualitative Studies

During the past decade, the call has increased for additional qualitative studies into the sociocultural context of second language learning and the effectiveness of various curricula and methods of instruction in second language classrooms (Nunan, 1992, Schachter and Gass, 1996, August and Hakuta, 1997, Garcia, 1999). Qualitative studies are sought because they are "naturalistic," with an emphasis on "observing, describing, interpreting, and understanding how events take place in the real world rather than in a controlled laboratory-like setting." (Lynch, 1998, p. 14)

Qualitative research in classrooms has been given many labels and can take many forms: ethnography, participant/observation, teacher as researcher, or action research. An ethnography is primarily a description, and it has its roots in anthropology and
sociology. David Nunan (1992) described an ethnography as “the study of the culture/characteristics of a group in real-world rather than laboratory settings.” He continued by stating that in an ethnography, the researcher “makes no attempt to isolate or manipulate the phenomena under investigation, and insights and generalizations emerge from close contact with the data rather than from a theory of language learning and use.” (p. 54) Ethnographies can include, but are not limited to, case studies, longitudinal studies, and descriptive analyses. This study qualifies as an ethnography because it describes a real world situation. As the teacher in the classroom during the study, there was daily “close contact with the data.” The setting and the subjects were not manipulated in any way; data was collected as events occurred naturally.

**Ethnography**

The use of ethnography is relatively new in the field of second language study, nevertheless it has received considerable attention. Chaudron in 1988 listed ethnography as one of four major methods of
research in second language acquisition. He characterized this approach as process-oriented, involving "considerable training, continuous record keeping, extensive participatory involvement of the researcher in the classroom, and careful interpretation of the usually multifaceted data" (p. 46). LeCompte and Goetz (1982) stated that ethnography is defined by four criteria:

- use of participant and non-participant observation
- a focus on natural settings
- use of the subjective views and belief system of the participants
- avoidance by the investigator of manipulation of study variables

Nunan (1992) argued that ethnography is valuable in second language research because "the context in which a behaviour occurs has a significant influence on that behaviour. It follows that if we want to find out about behaviour, we need to investigate it in the natural contexts in which it occurs, rather than in the experimental laboratory" (p. 53). The natural setting for this study was an ESL classroom in an urban public middle school. Students were not specifically selected to participate; this was their regularly assigned class and they would have been in this class regardless of whether a study was conducted or not.
As the participant/observer in this study, I was involved in continuous record keeping (e.g., field notes, student work, researcher logs, and document collection). Review and analysis of the data occurred frequently, in order to determine which data needed additional support or information. Since contact with students might be lost after the school year ended, details had to be gathered from the participants and interviews conducted as the year progressed.

Taking field notes and keeping research logs while teaching was difficult. I could not stop during a lesson or a crisis and write a reflective response to each situation. Samway (1994), in her TESOL Journal article entitled “But It’s Hard to Keep Fieldnotes While Also Teaching,” listed three possible methods for doing both simultaneously. She described her frustration, but noted that finding a workable system is possible. Trying to be an effective teacher while being a thorough investigator at times was not always possible, and when the two conflicted, she and I both focused on the teacher role.

I endeavored to journal and take fieldnotes on a daily basis. I set aside a regular time to reflect and respond, and I made sure that
my position as a teacher did not supercede my role as researcher. However, even with the difficulties inherent in writing an ethnography as a teacher/researcher, the benefits of the research far outweighed the problems involved.

**Participant/Observer**

Participant/observation is a specific type of ethnography in which the researcher is also a participant in the study to some degree. Spradley (1980), in his book on participant observation, described the observation process employed in this approach:

- Begin with a wide angle lens and observe everything.
- Shift slowly from an outsider to an insider position, trying to find the proper mix of rapport with objectivity.
- Develop and cultivate introspection. "Learn to use yourself as a research instrument" (p. 57). Although introspection may not seem objective, it is necessary to periodically reflect on your data, your own position, and your analysis of what you have seen so far in your study.
- Keep detailed records.
A teacher studying his/her own class would not qualify as a participant observer using this definition because a teacher/researcher does not start as an outsider and gradually move to the role of an insider. However, it was necessary to "develop and cultivate introspection." I attempted to take myself out of the teacher role whenever possible and view the class as an outsider in my desire to maintain a level of objectivity. I wanted to be a reflective practitioner.

One method of practice was that periodically I would discuss the data I had collected with other participants in the study as a form of member checking. I met regularly with my two bilingual assistants, my principal, my student teacher, and a cultural informant from the Somali community. I reviewed and organized the data collected on a regular basis (at least once a month) to refresh my mind as to what I had discovered so far. This enabled me to decide upon the direction for further data collection and determine areas upon which to concentrate in the future. Constant review forced me to remain in the more objective researcher role and to view the study from multiple perspectives.
A teacher studying his/her own class cannot totally separate the role of teacher completely from the role of researcher. However, it is the unique perspective and expertise of the teacher that adds validity and credibility to a teacher/researcher study. The teacher can see the classroom from both the perspective of the educational system and from the perspective as a member of the classroom. The teacher has knowledge of the students and the school that would take an outside researcher months or years to obtain. For example, access to student records is a necessary part of a teacher's position, and although the information obtained cannot be used without permission, it provides a teacher with an overall picture of both individual students and the classroom as a whole that an outsider would not have. This information also adds perspective and depth to students as family and educational history are revealed. This "teacher as researcher" model of research is related to classroom-based or action research, described below.
Classroom-based and Action Research

Classroom-based research is a broad term that is often used to encompass any type of teacher-initiated self-study. Hopkins, in *A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Research*, (1993), listed six principles for classroom research:

1. A teacher's primary job is to teach, and any research method should not interfere with or disrupt the teaching commitment.
2. The method of data collection must not be too demanding on the teacher's time.
3. The methodology employed must be reliable enough to allow teachers to formulate hypotheses confidently and develop strategies applicable to the classroom situation.
4. The research problem should be one to which the teacher is committed.
5. The teacher-researcher needs to pay close attention to the ethical procedures surrounding his/her work.
6. The teacher needs to share findings with colleagues around the school and elsewhere.

These principles apply to any teacher studying his/her own classroom. Some of the difficulties of data collection were discussed above. I found notecards kept in my pocket, daily logs, and
student folders worked best for me because I needed the organization. I have a tendency to do too many things at once, and I needed a set place and time for each activity and/or form to keep me on task.

The sixth point is one which I see as the most critical. Research to improve one classroom is important, but it is even more valuable if other educators can share in the findings. Schools will improve as teachers and researchers work together to discover and share best practices.

Action research has its roots in the Deakin University Action Research Group in Australia. Action research essentially involves a teacher looking at his/her own classroom and practice and evaluating the effectiveness of a particular program or curricula. It is problem-focused and involves selecting a specific situation, asking questions, collecting data, analyzing the data, reflecting, and ultimately adjusting instruction based on data (Wallace, 1998). Louis Smith (1994) expanded on this description of action research by stating that he feels action research is actually “a piece of teacher autobiography.”
Erickson, in the *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (1986, p. 157) stated that:

If classroom teaching in elementary and secondary schools is to come of age as a profession—if the role of teacher is not to be institutionally infantilized—then teachers need to take the adult responsibility of investigating their own practice systematically and critically, by methods that are appropriate to their practice.

Erickson argued that teachers reflecting on and analyzing their own classroom is not only practical, it is essential. He believes that qualitative studies in education are beneficial because they are fluid, intuitive, in-depth, and more suitable to studies involving human behavior. The emphasis on thick descriptions (Guba and Lincoln, 1989) provides both a broad and a deep view of the context and culture not available in quantitative studies.

Only a qualitative study, with its descriptive methodology, could have provided the data and detail necessary for this study. And only a teacher could have provided the emic view of an ESL classroom at a level not available to a short-term, outside observer. The subjectivity inherent in studying oneself is balanced by the value that subjectivity brings to the study, the inner perspective and reflection that only a practitioner can experience and express.
Data Collection Procedures

This qualitative study was longitudinal in that it covered one school year from September to June. Field notes were taken several times a week and student work samples (journal writings, essays, literature responses, and teacher-created assessment) were collected on a regular basis. Interviews with students were conducted periodically throughout the year, with a focus on what the students perceived as critical issues for immigrant students and their perceptions of the effectiveness of certain aspects of the curriculum. Interviews with other educational personnel associated with this class were also conducted; these included the Cambodian and Somali bilingual instructional assistants, a student-teacher from The Ohio State University, the ESL department supervisor, the building administrator, and the school nurse. Participants were chosen who had regular contact with the students and who could contribute a perspective different for the study.

Students and parents were informed of the purpose of the study and their participation was requested. (See Appendix J for a copy of the permission letter.) Only students who received parent
permission to participate were included in the data collection of work samples and student records. All participation in any part of the study was voluntary. As much as possible, classwork was conducted as normal. Videotaping of class was conducted periodically; but my students were familiar with this process, and, for the most part, it was not disruptive. The videotapes were used by me to review lessons and determine student response to various types of activities and texts. They reinforced my daily journals and field notes.

Individual student data on attendance, discipline, grades, and results of district and state assessments was collected for the purpose of analyzing trends and compiling group data. While examining these documents was a customary task performed as a classroom teacher on a regular basis, I had never used this data to find class totals or averages in the past. Seeing the information in numerical and then graph form lent a degree of power to the data. For example, the fact that 42 out of 84 students were in danger of failure at semester break was disturbing. I knew many students were not performing as expected, but to discover that 50% were in serious academic trouble was disheartening.
Student interviews were conducted on audiotape, during times when it did not interfere with class activity (e.g., homeroom, lunch, after school). Eighth grade students were selected because they had participated in the ESL program for three years and were the most familiar with its operation. They had almost completed the three-year curriculum and thus they could discuss its value to them.

A series of questions about the types of activities utilized in the class and the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of those activities was used as the basic format for one of the interviews. The questions and the format of the interview evolved based on the response of the students. For example, in the initial interviews I asked students to discuss some of the books which they had read in our class. Their answers were short and concentrated on the books we had recently completed. However, when I showed them a list of the books they had read, they began to also select books from previous years and their answers became more detailed. The results of these interviews are included in the data in Chapter Four.

All ninety ESL students were given a demographic survey to complete with questions about age, grade, native language and country, length of time in U.S., prior education, guardianship, and
education of parents. This data was compiled and organized into graphs and charts to help describe the setting of the classroom, the academic background of the students and the ability of their family to assist the students with their schoolwork.

Confidentiality was maintained on all data reporting by avoiding the use of real names, especially on student work samples and interview quotations. Student work samples, as well as audio- and videotapes, remained in the researcher's possession for analysis purposes only.

Another method of data collection, conducted five times during the school year, was a time study. Five days were selected at random and during those days I would keep track of each time I was called away from teaching to assist elsewhere in the building. A colleague suggested that I collect this information because she noticed how often I was required to perform tasks outside of my standard teaching duties such as assist with enrolling students, intervene in disciplinary situations, and advocate for my students with other staff members. She felt that I needed to be able to show my administrator in total minutes how much time away from instruction I was being required to spend. I carried an index card in
my pocket each of these five days and wrote down what time I left the room and when I returned. The totals were then transferred into graph form in Figure 4.5.

Trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln (1989) identified several techniques that add credibility to qualitative research such as:

- prolonged engagement
- persistent observation
- peer debriefing
- negative case analysis
- progressive subjectivity
- member checking
- data triangulation

All of these techniques, with the exception of negative case analysis, were part of this study. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation were critical components of the study as nine months of data were collected. Guba and Lincoln (p. 56) stated that “credibility can be earned via one’s lived experiences in one’s
field." The lived experience of this researcher, being the ESL teacher at this site for ten years, gave the study a broader and deeper perspective than would have been possible with a researcher new to the situation. As the classroom teacher, I was present on a daily basis for one academic year (180 school days).

Peer debriefing and member checking occurred both in mid- and post-study interviews with both adult and student participants in the program. The principal, the bilingual assistants, and a preservice teacher who did her student teaching in this classroom were all consulted periodically (approximately twice a month) as the data was analyzed to determine their impression of the conclusions. Sometimes this involved discussion of shared experiences; at other times they reviewed the data collected and made personal comments. The bilingual assistants often acted as cultural informants as they gave possible explanations for student behavior or attitudes. This input helped to lessen subjectivity, providing peer input and insuring that more than just the researcher's perspective was being considered.
Data Triangulation

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, data triangulation was necessary to provide multiple perspectives. Interviews with people with various roles in the school and in my classroom were included: students, other faculty members, parents, administration, the school nurse, and community members with an interest in immigrant education. Students, parents, bilingual assistants, and community members acted as cultural informants, providing an insider look at the realities of being immigrants.

Documents were collected and analyzed to provide data on the academic, physical, emotional, and social needs of the students. Student work samples, district and state assessment results, and grade reports revealed academic progress. Information from the nurse was used to detail health concerns. Discipline reports revealed socialization difficulties. This mixture of quantitative data such as surveys and test scores with qualitative material such as interviews and descriptions helped to offer balance in the study.
Summary

This study was conducted using qualitative techniques in a teacher as researcher approach. Through the unique perspective as an insider in my own classroom, I had much more access to student input, staff comments, and parental concerns than a temporary researcher would have been granted. This perspective also afforded me the opportunity to reflect upon how curricular and instructional decisions were made throughout the course of the academic year. As the year progressed, and my student population shifted to a greater number of students with limited previous education, my field notes allowed me to follow the shift in student needs and match my curriculum to their needs.

This type of study forced me to periodically reflect upon and review my teaching techniques and basic classroom philosophy. I learned a great deal about my role as an ESL teacher as I reviewed the types of duties I was called upon to perform on a daily basis. I realized how the role of mentor and advocate was often as valuable to my students as was the role of educator.
Although all students come to school with needs beyond academics, ESL students, especially refugees, have unique needs not usually addressed by educational institutions. Ima and Rumbaut described the plight of refugee students in this manner:

What typically distinguished refugees from other immigrants are their motives for leaving and their persistent memories of the past, especially the acute sense of loss and trauma that often accompanies forced, unplanned, and sudden uprooting, and their inability to return to their homeland. The conditions of refugee exit and permanent resettlement in a country of asylum, sometimes after prolonged stays in transit camps, have long-term consequences for psychological adjustment that may be reflected in special acculturation and learning problems among school-age children. . . . The consequences of such traumas for refugee populations may thus include serious disruption of normal schooling, family life, and social support systems; emotional problems among both youth and parents, and a reduced readiness to devote time and effort to school. (1995, p. 182)
The needs of the L2 students in this study were grouped into four broad categories: academic, social, physical, and emotional. The academic needs of the majority of the students in this study were compounded by the language barrier. This was especially true of the Somali students who were entering a middle school environment with kindergarten level academic skills. Simply adjusting to regular attendance, school schedules, bus transportation, and issues such as lunch choices and physical education for girls became a daunting task. Many of these students also faced difficulties associated with cultural adjustment, family disruption, and low socio-economic status, contributing to their successes and failures in school.

Data Analysis of Student Needs

**Academic Needs**

Besides speaking little or no English, many of these [immigrant] students arrive at the school lacking basic literacy skills and much of the academic knowledge expected of high school [or middle school] students. Their arrival is frustrating for teachers who are trained to teach specialized content courses in English-speaking classrooms and
challenging for district administrators who do not know how best to serve them. Funding is increasingly limited, teachers who speak the students' native languages are difficult to find, and students require much more emotional and academic support than the school district has traditionally been equipped to provide. (Mace-Matluck, Alexander-Kasparik, and Queen, 1998)

The authors further listed seven challenges many secondary ESL students face (p. xiii - xiv):

1) a limited amount of time to acquire English and master academics before expected graduation

2) graduation tests that assume more English proficiency than these students possess

3) classes that require high proficiency levels of academic English

4) texts and classes that require sophisticated academic reading skills

5) limited native language support (such as bilingual classes) and few if any content classes taught at their level of English proficiency (sheltered classes) in most districts

6) problems with acceptance by American peers
7) college preparation courses and daunting entrance requirements such as ACT/SAT tests for students who desire post-secondary education

Six out of seven of these challenges are academic in nature and all except the final point (which is specifically aimed at the high school level) are faced by students at the middle school level. Second language students at the middle and high school level, especially newcomers with the least English proficiency, must acquire the academic language and skills necessary for school success as quickly as possible. Obviously, this responsibility cannot lie solely at the feet of the ESL teacher. Since mainstream content area teachers do not have the time to build the foundational skills many of these students lack, the job falls on the ESL teacher to "fill in the gaps" and introduce necessary academic information. The ESL class then becomes the place where specialized vocabulary is introduced, content area skills such as the use of timelines, graphs, and charts are practiced, reading comprehension of both fiction and nonfiction text is developed, and writing for specific purposes is experienced. Students are then more prepared for the academic rigor of secondary school.
Many students in this study were unprepared for the challenges of secondary school because of limited previous education or below grade level reading and math skills. One evidence that many students at this school were having academic difficulty was their low grades. At semester break, January 1999, teachers sent letters home notifying parents of the possible retention of any student who was failing two of four major subjects (English, math, social studies, and science). As the ESL teacher, I was given copies of these letters so that I could counsel the students, ask the bilingual assistants to contact the homes and explain the contents and implications of the letter, and attempt to assist the students to prevent this possible eventuality.

Of the 84 students in the ESL program at that time, half received these failure notices. Twenty-four of the forty-two students were Somali, eleven were Cambodian, two were from Albania, two from Sierra Leone, two from Vietnam, and one from Puerto Rico. Of these forty-two students, fourteen were eventually retained at the end of the school year. Three others were "placed" in the next grade because of previous retentions and one was placed
in high school because of her age. The remaining eighteen students were able to raise their grades sufficiently to be promoted to the next grade.

At the time of this study, students could be placed into the next grade level because of circumstances other than academic achievement such as age, a student could not be sixteen and in a middle school, and previous retentions, students could not be retained more than once in middle school. These policies were state rulings which have since been changed and students are no longer placed or "socially promoted." All students must now meet academic requirements to be promoted, regardless of age.

The decision to retain students was usually made by a committee of teachers who had worked closely with the student throughout the school year. Most of the time I was consulted as the ESL teacher to obtain my input on whether the child's language contributed to his/her academic difficulties. Teachers examined each individual case to determine the best placement for the child. Often it was difficult to decide how much the child's language or culture had contributed to his/her academic difficulties. District policy was that students were not to be retained solely based on
English proficiency. However, poor attendance, lack of concentration, and below average homework and test grades could contribute to poor grades and result in retention.

Only one of the fourteen students who was retained was a beginning level language learner. Her two content area teachers and I tried repeatedly to contact the parent and have the girl tested for possible learning problems, but the mother would not respond. We felt that she was significantly behind the other students in the amount of English and academic content she had acquired based on the length of time she had been in the country. After several months, she still could not open her locker, remember her schedule, or find her bus after school. It was a group decision that the child was not prepared for the next grade level, and that it was in her best interest to be retained.

The girl had epileptic seizures frequently (about once a month) and the school nurse suspected possible brain damage, but the mother often refused to come to the school when the seizures occurred. Contact was made with the family's social worker, home visits were made, and health services personnel alerted; but the family resisted every attempt to intervene. The girl eventually
stopped attending public school and family members reported that she had transferred to a private school.

A second indicator of academic distress of the students in this study was their poor passage rate on the state-wide competency exams. The state of Ohio requires all high school graduates to show proficiency in reading, writing, math, science, and citizenship as measured by standardized tests which are administered twice a year. Eighth grade students are also given one opportunity in the spring to take this Ninth Grade Proficiency Test. Whichever sections of this test they pass does not have to be taken again in high school. Of the 26 eighth-grade students in the program at the time of the test, four had English levels so low that there was no point in them taking the test, so they were "waived." Waived tests counted as a "failure" against the school and the district, but the students were spared five days of staring at a test they could not read. The other twenty-two took the tests with varying levels of success. (See Figure 4.1)

The pressure to do well on these state-wide examinations was felt by both the students and the teachers because failure to pass even one of the five parts before the end of grade twelve prevented
high school graduation. Wong (2000, p. 124) stated that "ESOL teachers are constantly pulled between the requirements to 'teach to the test' and the desire to prepare students for democratic citizenship, academic achievement, and a better future." Thus teachers must combine test preparation with life skills and school preparation through a curriculum that combines reading, writing, academic skills, and citizenship. Since the ability to read and comprehend English is a critical skill for all portions of these competency examinations, even the math test which is composed entirely of word problems, the students' reading skills must be primary focus of an ESL curriculum.

Listed below (Figure 4.1) are the results of 1999 spring administration of the Ninth Grade Proficiency Test to the eighth grade students in this study. The test is composed of five sections: reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. The table lists the total number of sections passed by each student along with their nationality.

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Table 4.1

Results of Eighth Grade Proficiency Tests, Spring 1999

Source: Ohio Ninth Grade Proficiency Test Results, Spring 1999

Of the two students who passed all five sections, the Puerto Rican girl had been in the United States most of her life (with brief visits to Puerto Rico) and the Chinese girl was a recent arrival (less than two years) with a grade level education in her country before emigration. All of the other students who passed any part of the test had been in the United States at least five years. No other recent arrivals (two years or less) were able to pass even one section.
One possible reason for the poor showing on the proficiency tests was the limited reading ability of the majority of the students. All LEP students are tested each spring to determine if they will continue to need ESL services. Fifty percent of the test is an assessment of the reading ability of the students, twenty-five percent of the score is based on oral proficiency (speaking and listening), and twenty-five percent on miscellaneous categories such as grammar and life skills. The students are rated by grade level proficiency in word recognition, oral reading, and reading comprehension. Word recognition consists of correctly pronouncing a list of words that increase in difficulty from kindergarten level to grade 10. The average word recognition score for the Level One students in this study, students with the least English proficiency, averaged below first grade -- from 0.6 for the sixth grades to 0.2 for the eighth graders. Obviously, students who could not even pronounce first grade words on the ESL test would not be able to comprehend a test written at a high school level. None of these students were able to test at the lowest scorable level (at least third grade) on either the oral reading or reading comprehension sections of the annual assessment.
Students with more English proficiency, Levels Two to Four, scored higher on the word recognition section of the district assessment test, but most still had difficulty with reading comprehension. Students were given short passages to read and were then asked to answer five questions about details in the story. The average word recognition score for these students was 4.6 for the sixth graders and 5.5 for both seventh and eighth graders. However, the reading comprehension scores for these students were only 3.0 for the sixth graders, 3.2 for the seventh graders and 3.7 for the eighth graders. These scores were consistently three to four years below expected grade levels.

Figure 4.2 shows the reading scores received by the students tested in the spring of the year being studied. Ten of the students were so new to the program (less than four months) that they were not tested. Four others were chronically absent (at least two to three days a week or more) and were not in attendance to test. Eight students were still considered non-readers and could not work even at the kindergarten level. They therefore had no score. Thirty-three
of the students tested below scorable levels on the oral reading and
the reading comprehension sections of the test, but completed the
word recognition sections.

Even students who placed at Level III or IV tested three to four
grade levels below their actual grade placement on the reading
comprehension section of the test. For example, of the nine students
in the eighth grade with the highest level of language proficiency
(Level III or IV as described in Figure 1.6), two were reading at the
third grade level in reading comprehension, three scored at the
fourth grade level, and four scored at the fifth grade level. The low
reading level of these students impacted their ability to comprehend
middle school textbooks as well as the Ninth Grade Proficiency
Tests, both of which assume a student's ability to read and work at
or near grade level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Word recog.</th>
<th>Oral reading</th>
<th>Reading comp.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sixth Grade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(total of 19 tested)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(7) Level I</td>
<td>.6 (K)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) Levels II - IV</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Seventh Grade</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(total of 21 tested)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Level I</td>
<td>.5 (K)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(14) Levels II - IV</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eighth Grade</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(total of 22 tested)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Level I</td>
<td>.2 (pre-K)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18) Levels I - IV</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2

Results of Annual Assessment of Reading Proficiency

(Note. * indicates tested below lowest scorable level of 2nd grade.)

Source: Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Essential Skills, Spring 1999)
In addition to limited reading skills, many of the students were also below grade level on math concepts. When the LEP population reached 80 (early November), the district decided to hire another ESL teacher. After being told that there were no ESL certified substitutes available, the principal and I decided to request a math teacher because of the limited math ability of the students. A substitute teacher was hired to work on math with the ESL students for the remainder of the school year. The students were given a math placement test to determine who would receive this extra service. The results of that pretest are listed below in Figure 4.3.

Sixty-two students were tested for possible placement in this transitional math program. Seventh and eighth grade students with a C or better average in math were not tested. The placement test consisted of five sections: addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and fractions. Students who scored less than 50% accuracy on three or more of the sections were considered for placement in the program. Nineteen students did not qualify out of the initial sixty-two, and six additional students were added after the
December testing as they enrolled and qualified. A total of fifty students eventually were served through this program.

Students were taken from science or social studies classes for additional ESL math instruction because there is no study hall at middle school level. It was a joint decision by the administration, the content area teachers, and myself to offer this extra math tutoring during academic class time. Figure 4.3 indicates the pretest math ability as determined by the Brigance Diagnostic Test of Essential Skills.

Figure 4.3  Math skills of ESL students tested for math tutoring
The academic needs of these students far outstripped the assistance they could receive in a regular school day or school program. In order to receive the additional math assistance, they were missing other academic subjects, putting them further behind. They needed extra academic assistance such as summer school and after school tutoring, but these programs required supplemental funding and would have been an added drain on already limited school district resources.

In addition, many of these students needed the support of special education programs due to various learning difficulties. Three students were in a developmentally handicapped program at the school and one of these students was diagnosed as having learning difficulties so severe that she was eventually placed in a TDH program (trainably developmentally handicapped) at another school. Two students were receiving services for learning disabilities and two for speech and hearing problems. During the school year, the school counselor met with the Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) to determine the best placement for three other ESL students. After trying various modifications, the team recommended psychological testing. One boy demonstrated
antisocial tendencies and frequently disrupted classes with what seemed to be uncontrolled bursts of temper. The IAT believed that the student would benefit from an SED (severe emotionally disturbed) class environment, but the parents would not agree to the necessary testing. Two other students were possibly either LD (learning disabled) or DH (developmentally handicapped) because they were having difficulty in all subject areas. Neither of these children were placed because of parental resistance; they refused to allow their children to be tested for special education services.

Even with parental support, placement of second language students in district special education programs was a difficult process. The school psychologist tried to rule out if the problem was language related. Making this determination was especially difficult during the first two years in the country when the child's English was the most limited. In addition, many psychological tests are culturally biased and may not adequately reflect the true ability of the child.

In addition, when students are placed in these support programs, the teachers are often not trained to deal with language minority children. They may not know how to promote English
language acquisition or how to help language minority children cope with cultural difficulties. The teachers in the special education programs in my school often requested advice and materials for their second language students, and the students continued to receive ESL services during their reading and language arts block.

Mainstream classroom teachers sometimes experienced the same difficulties as did the special education teachers. Most teachers were sensitive to the student who had newly arrived and had extremely limited English ability, but as the child developed proficiency in social language (BICS) the teacher often lost sympathy for the child's situation. I often heard comments such as, "Why is this student still in ESL? He or she can speak English very well. Are they just pretending they can't do my work?" I had to explain the difficulties students have in developing reading and writing proficiency and that the child's academic language (CALP) was still under construction. (Cummins, 1982)

Stereotyping, seeing all members of a language or cultural group as similar, was another problem faced by ESL students in mainstream classes. One of the most frequent examples of stereotyping that the students faced was the "Asian myth."
Teachers assumed that all Asians were model students, and exceptionally gifted in math and art. Even the teachers who seemed to be the most culturally sensitive assumed that all Asians would excel in these two areas. They would come to me in frustration when there were behavior problems or when work was not completed neatly and on time, and they would wonder why the parents were allowing such actions. This stereotype was discussed in the book, *The Asian American Education Experience*, edited by Nakanishi and Nishida (1995):

> There is a widely shared belief that Asian Americans not only have overcome the bondage of racial discrimination, but also have become a model minority worthy of emulation by other minorities. Asian Americans are said to be better educated, to be earning as much as any group, to be well assimilated, and to manifest low rates of social deviance. This contention seems firmly entrenched because it is allegedly supported by scientific, empirical evidence. (p. 95)

Another example of cultural insensitivity was that some teachers confused Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese students and their cultures, or they did not realize the differences between Ethiopian and Somali students. The students would come and report their frustration to me, but most would not express their feelings to the teachers involved.
Cultural differences, especially where gender or educational expectations were involved, also created classroom difficulties. For example, girls in many third world countries are not expected to receive a secondary or post-secondary education. The families of many of the girls in my classroom carried this belief to the United States. After school, most girls were expected to assist with cooking and cleaning. School work was not emphasized or encouraged. Often the girls would remain at home to take care of younger siblings and school attendance was not a priority. Many Cambodian and Laotian girls get married at the age of fourteen or fifteen, so by the time these girls were in the eighth grade, some had lost interest in school and attendance and grades dropped. Three of the five eighth grade girls from Southeast Asia stopped coming to school during the second semester.

Another example of this mindset were the recently arrived Somali students. My first Somali students were almost all boys. One day I was making home visits to the apartment complex where most of the students lived, and I was talking to the man who worked with the students after school in the community center. He began asking about several of the students. We discussed some of the boys
and then he asked about several girls. I told him that the names were not familiar to me. We could not figure out why so many of the girls in his program were not in school.

A few weeks later I was told by a member of the Somali community that the girls were being kept at home. He said that the parents did not feel that the girls needed an education. The situation eventually changed when the parents found out that they could get in trouble in the United States if they did not send all their children to school. Also, their welfare benefits were dependent upon proof of their children's school attendance. By the end of the school year, the female Somali population equaled the male at the research site.

While the academic needs of these second language students were the main focus for this study, unfortunately for many of these students, their social, physical, and emotional needs were so critical that they often overshadowed or short-circuited their academic needs. Those other needs are discussed below.
Social Needs

The social needs of immigrant adolescents are a combination of those of a “typical” immigrant combined with those of a “typical” adolescent. Since these are two periods of crisis and intense change, facing both at once can be incredibly overwhelming for a middle school ESL student. Young people are searching for their identity and often find it through a synthesis of parental impact and peer influence, but for a teenager from a culture which seems diametrically opposed to the culture of their new peers, navigating this transition can be confusing at best. Many see no way to reconcile the two groups and chose to ally themselves with one, essentially alienating the other.

Danling Fu (1995), in her case study of three Laotian teenagers, discussed this internal tug-of-war: “They cannot, nor do they want to, discard their past, but they need to find a way to survive as the selves they choose to be in the new environment.” (p. 33) She concluded that one of the consequences of this struggle was that her subjects became “marginal learners” who “tend to release their anger and resistance in rebellious ways.” (p. 41)
One of the reasons this rebellion occurs is that, as a newcomer who knows so little about American people and American culture, what the new arrival sees and hears of their new world comes through the filter of other young people who are alienated themselves. And for so many immigrant youth, their peers and role models come from the neighborhoods in which they are forced to live because of economic necessity -- peers that may have little regard for education, social rules, or the law. To counteract this influence, school may become the major socializing force in their lives.

The school is an institution within their new culture that plays a central role in their new lives. Just as they must learn how to integrate their own ways of thinking, talking, and behaving with the ways of their new culture in order to be successful, they must also learn new daily routines and functions, new roles and regulations, and new unwritten expectations and assumptions of the school system. (Lucas, 1997, p. 19)

One of the reasons school is so critical for these students is that many of the parents have little or no formal education. At times this results in parents who do not value education, especially for girls but occasionally for any child. More often, the parent sees a great need for a good education, but is unable to help their children with even rudimentary assignments. Reading material in any language is often sparse, and children seldom have the basics of
literacy before they begin school (e.g., letter recognition, directionality, spacing, sound-symbol relationship).

For many immigrant students, the idea of post-secondary vocational training or college seems unrealistic or unattainable because of the time and expense involved. Many of these students had no idea what would be required to prepare for further education aside from money and good grades. A few programs assisted students, such as Young Scholars at The Ohio State University and the Community College Career Preparation course sponsored by Columbus State, but no second language students at this school had been selected for these programs. Counselors often overlooked these students when recommending students for these programs and seldom consulted me on placement.

The two largest culture groups in this classroom setting were Somalis and Cambodians, two groups with traditionally low literacy rates. Somalia did not even have a written language until the early 1970s, and both of these cultures previously saw little value in educating women. The majority of my students were being raised in one-parent homes, usually by a female. The war in Somalia resulted in very few intact families, and the Southeast Asian and Hispanic
families were being devastated by divorce in their new "land of freedom." Mothers were often abandoned with a large number of children to raise alone. Consequently, very few adults were available to assist children with school work. This home situation also limited communication with parents because, even when school material was translated and sent home in the native language, it was often still unintelligible to the parent. The children became the translators of the school documents, often incorrectly translating the information to save punishment at home.

In a demographic survey of the entire class (Appendix H), students were asked questions about their home language and culture, the relationship and language proficiency of their guardians, and previous education of both the student and their guardians. Some of the data was used in Chapter One to describe the school and classroom setting and some is being presented here.

Students were asked what language they used for communication at home and seven out of ninety indicated that they used only English. However, the number of parents who spoke English at home was five out of ninety. The discrepancy came from
two Cambodian boys who spoke only English, both of whom were being raised by their grandparents. Both students understood basic social Khmer (the language of Cambodia), but their ability to speak it was limited because they had previously lived in homes where English was the primary language. They had moved in with their grandmothers within the last three years.

Every year, there are several students in this program who cannot communicate fluently with their parents or guardians because of the language gap in the home. Often the children grow up learning and/or preferring English, eventually losing the ability to converse in their native language with parents and grandparents beyond a basic level. They talk mainly with siblings and friends, sometimes using older siblings to translate more difficult conversations with adults. Many parents and even my own bilingual assistants expressed concern about this trend, but researchers have documented that some children growing up the United States where English is the dominant social language refuse to speak the less socially acceptable (in their eyes) home language. (Fillmore, 2000) Many parents were extremely distressed about this situation and viewed their children's language choices as indicators of a more
pervasive rejection of their native culture. Smith-Hefner (1988 and 1995) found a similar concern among Cambodian parents in Boston in her two studies. She stated that 95% of the parents in her study listed this as the primary reason they desired a bilingual education for their children.

Pang (1995, p. 168), in her study of Asian American children, commented that "many American-born students speak only English. They can be categorized as bicultural and they may look positively at ethnic membership and life in an environment that mixes both mainstream and traditional Asian values. . . [Others] refuse to speak their first language, and view their ethnic ties as obstacles to being accepted into the mainstream." Students in this study fell into both categories. Some strongly identified with their ethnic heritage while others seemed to ignore their native culture. I did not concentrate on this aspect of acculturation in this study, although I often tried to discuss with students why they choose one attitude or the other, and I tried to encourage in my students a respect for their home language as a valuable part of their heritage. In an effort to support this stance, my Cambodian assistant tried to teach Khmer during homeroom on two different occasions, and we both advocated
for our students to take evening or Saturday classes in their native language and cultures when available. (Such classes in Khmer and Somali were available periodically.) Few however took advantage of the opportunities, and the programs were always short-lived.

Figure 4.4 shows the educational levels of the parents and guardians of these students. Only fifteen of the ninety students in the survey indicated that their primary guardian had at least a high school education or beyond, and twenty-two had one year of schooling or less. Parents with only an elementary school level of education could hardly be prepared to assist students with middle school homework assignments. Many parents also did not understand the necessity of advanced education in a technologically advanced society. The skills with which they were familiar were not the skills needed by their children for economic success. Therefore, students had to rely on friends and educational professionals to mentor and guide them through middle and high school. How to choose courses, decide upon a career, and make sound educational choices becomes part of the ESL curriculum. Parents helped when possible, but often needed training in order to fulfill their role in their child’s future.
The importance of the parent's previous education was evidenced by a study by Rumbaut and Ima (1988) in which they endeavored to determine the main predictors of reading success for refugee students. They studied almost 6000 language minority junior and senior students in San Diego Unified School District. Of these 6000, 239 were refugees. The researchers found that the three most significant predictors of success on the CTBS reading test were: (1) parent's education, (2) length of time in the United States, and (3) age of the student. They discovered that "the more educated the parent, the more time spent in the United States, and the younger the student, the greater the student's reading skills when all other variables were controlled." (Ima and Rumbaut, 1995, p. 191) They also found that students who were still considered LEP, that is who still qualified for ESL services, had parents with lower levels of education (at least two years less on the average) that those who no longer required ESL services.

The educational level of the parents of the Somali students was even lower that that of the ESL population as a whole. While the Somali culture values education highly, the families who settled on the west side of the city and whose children attended this school
were primarily from the Brawa tribe, fisherman and tradesmen from the Southeast coastal area of Somalia near Kenya. This tribe had less educational background and a lower level of literacy than the more educated families from the large cities such as Mogadishu.

See Figure 4.4 on the next page for data on the educational levels of the primary guardians of the students at this research site.
Years of education of primary guardian

- One year or less: 22
- Two to three: 4
- Four to six: 6
- High school: 11
- Some college: 4
- Child didn't know: 18

Figure 4.4
The data on the Somali population at this research site revealed an even lower educational average, 62% had one year or less of formal education, 8% had two to three years, 8% had four to six years, and 13% had at least a middle school education. None had gone to high school. Nine percent of the students did not know how much education their parents or guardians had received and could not respond to the question on the survey. One reason for this low level of previous education was that over one half of the students in the program lived with just their mother and women were traditionally not educated in Somalia.

Another reason is that Somalia did not have a written language until the middle 1970s with very little educational opportunities until that time. Before 1970, Somalia was a divided country, with each section held as a colony by a country in Europe. The area around Mogadishu, the capital, was controlled by Italy. The southern area near Kenya was held by England and the northern section now known as Djibouti was ruled by France. Schools were conducted in the language of the colonial power and education was offered to only a select few. Consequently, few adults had been able to receive even a primary education. (Personal conversation, Bashir-Ali, 2000)
August and Hakuta (1997) devoted an entire chapter in their research agenda book to the cognitive aspects of L2 education. They looked at several studies in which “apparently normal children” had problems with reading and they stated that “this group of normal but at-risk children is composed overwhelmingly of children from low-income homes where the parents have relatively little education and whose children who do not speak English.” (p. 58) They based this conclusion on several studies by Applebee et al. (1985, 1987, 1989) in which Hispanic children consistently scored an average of four years behind their English-speaking peers on reading tests in secondary school.

Nakanishi and Nishida (1995) focuses on the educational experiences of immigrants, specifically Asians. They also commented on the role that the parent’s education plays in their children’s academic success:

The level of parent’s premigration education is a factor that refugee parents themselves use as an explanation for variations in Southeast Asian student performance. Although discovering precisely how the educational background of refugee parents becomes translated into the English reading skills of their children is an area for future investigation, Heath’s work (1983) suggests that more educated parents provide a home learning environment that enhances their children’s prospects for academic success regardless of the language employed at home -- an observation that may apply to
Southeast Asian students as well. For those students whose parents have little formal schooling, intervention will require the presence of bilingual/bicultural professionals or paraprofessionals who can bridge the gap between the home and the school and who can assist the parents to promote their children’s success at school. (Ima and Rumbaut, 1995, p. 193)

The degree to which a parent’s level of education and literacy impacts their children is open to debate, but it undoubtedly plays a role. Ima and Rumbaut, in Nakanishi and Nishida’s book (1995), recognized the need for parental intervention. They suggested bilingual paraprofessionals who can contact the homes and assist parents in meeting the academic needs of the students. My school had two such people, a Somali man and a Cambodian woman. Both spent hours with parents helping them understand the value of education in the United States and how the parents are critical to academic success in this country. Families from both cultures expected the school to intervene and encourage students to succeed. Parents often told me and my assistants that their children were now in our hands and that we could do whatever we felt necessary to assist their children. The educational systems in their cultures considered the teacher to be a surrogate parent with equal rights. We had to explain to parents the different view of parental and teacher roles in the American school system.
The major conflict in educational views arose over discipline. Almost every parent would tell me that I had their permission to do whatever was necessary to force their child to obey. I was told many times that I was allowed to use physical punishment, if necessary. I had to explain, usually through an interpreter, that this type of action is not permitted in the American legal and educational systems, and that my power was limited regardless of their permission. The limits on the ability of the school and even the parent to control students was the area in which I received the most complaints from parents. They were extremely frustrated with America's emphasis on the rights of the child. Other researchers have had similar experiences and findings. For example, a study conducted in Boston among Cambodian parents found that their major frustration concerning their children was the lack of parental control because of the differing rules. One parent stated; "I gave my child to the teacher" They considered the teacher to be "second mothers and second fathers." However, "one factor that emerged as a significant and recurrent theme in discussions with Khmer parents regarding their children's education is the degree to which Khmer parents feel they can no longer control their children in this
country." I heard similar comments from Somali, Hispanic, Laotian, and Albanian parents. Most felt that it was the teacher's responsibility to force their child to perform well, and they did not understand the American emphasis on parent participation in school activities.

Lucas supported my findings in her statement that,

Unfortunately, there are many barriers to, and few supports for, the development of relationships between educators and immigrant families. Immigrants have different understandings of the roles of families in their children's education. They may not understand the impact that parents can have by participating in schooling in the United States or the various opportunities for participating. (1997, p. 134)

Other family and cultural differences also played a role in the social development of the LEP student. Learning to navigate the dichotomy of a bicultural life can be difficult, and for adolescents who are trying to find approval from their peers, it can be especially complicated.

When adolescent immigrant students leave their home countries and enter U. S. schools and culture, they experience linguistic and cultural displacement and disorientation. Language shock and culture shock, to varying degrees, interfere with their learning. They must use so much energy trying to maintain, adapt, and develop their identities in their new cultural and linguistic contexts that their concentration, efficiency, and in some cases motivation to learn in school are diminished. One of the best ways to support students through
this difficult period of adjustment is to cultivate personal relationships with them. (Lucas, 1997, p. 113)

The school, and especially the ESL teacher, play a critical role in the child's life at this time. The ESL class becomes a place of refuge and assistance. Many students look for excuses to run to this safe haven. The ESL teacher or bilingual paraprofessional serves as a liaison with the students and the rest of the school. Even when students gain oral proficiency, some continue to lack the confidence to navigate the social and cultural nuances of the school hierarchy alone.

The school staff often reacted in a similar manner. Instead of confronting the student directly with a request or problem, staff members would sometimes come to the ESL teacher for cultural clarification, advice, or assistance. This role of "UN ambassador" became very time-consuming and stole valuable instructional time, yet at times it seemed be as necessary to a child's well-being as literacy instruction. Until personal and social difficulties were resolved, students were not in a position for academic growth. Time needed to be available during the day for this activity, but with the large class load, this was impossible.
It was important that I was as familiar with the cultures and personal backgrounds of each child as possible. One of the reasons that some staff members consult me before making decisions was that they wanted to be sure they were acting in a proper manner with the child. They wanted to take into consideration the beliefs and situation of the child.

As the ESL teacher, I needed to be familiar with the home life of the child if possible, and this usually involved home visits. So many of these children have faced family traumas, many having lost at least one family member to war or disease. Even after resettling in the United States, the problems continue. Many families broke up after arriving as a result of cultural pressure. In most third world countries, the mother stays at home and takes care of the house and the children. In the United States, federal and state benefits required all adults to either attend ESL classes or work. Economic pressure further tore at the family as many adults worked more than one job to both support the family and also send money “back home.” The lure of easy money also lead some into addictive gambling habits, drug dealing, and welfare fraud. Children are often the
victims of these family upheavals, making them even more
dependent on the school for support.

The time spent as social worker and liaison took its toll on
time in class. I randomly selected five days during the school year
and kept track of how much time was spent on non-instructional
activities during each of those days. On only one day was the time
on task in the classroom more than the time spent on out-of-class
activities. Sometimes I was in the room but concentrating on other
tasks, and at other times I was either in the hall or in other parts of
the building. If not for my bilingual assistants, this portion of my
job would have been even more disruptive. They would take over the
class until my return.

Some of the situations causing this time away from
instruction included:

• parent conferences (the parents never came at the scheduled
time, so whenever they came, I or my bilingual assistants were
called to the office, disrupting class time)

• consultations with the nurse, counselor, or psychologist

• enrolling new students

• contacting social service agencies/meeting with social workers
• acting as an intermediary between teachers and students
• attending staff and team meetings (always scheduled during my class time because my preparation time was during the lunch time of the other academic teachers)

Figure 4.5 indicates the minutes spent on non-instructional activities during the five days of the time study. As the chart depicts, only one of the five days reflects the majority of class time actually spent on instruction. With students who were already significantly behind their native-speaking peers on reading, writing, and math skills, instructional time was critical.
Time Study of Typical Day

Total time in day

Day

- Time spent on out-of-class activities
- Time spent on in-class activities
The cultural resource role of the ESL teacher often went beyond the school day as well. To assist parents and family members who are unfamiliar with the culture, the ESL teacher sometimes acts as an unofficial liaison for the family as well. I have helped families work with a real estate agent to buy a home, taken children for job interviews, driver’s license examinations, and medical and dental appointments, and once I even helped a family select a casket and burial plot for their father. Navigating life in a new culture is complicated, and a guide can be invaluable. The ESL professional often becomes that guide.

Lucas (1998, p.116) concurred that ESL teachers help to "humanize the secondary school experience" and assist the students as they navigate the sociocultural, developmental, and institutional transitions in their lives. Altwerger and Ivener (1994) expanded on this role, believing that teachers have the responsibility of helping to build a student’s self-image.

Teachers who want all students, including those learning English as a second language, to participate fully in academic endeavors and eventually to lead productive and satisfying lives must establish a social and political classroom context that builds students’ feelings of self-worth and dignity.
Bilingual instructional assistants are also critical in this process for several reasons. They serve as a vital link between the school, the home, and the immigrant community. As part of the staff, they inform the education professionals of the cultural and social needs of these students. They act as liaisons for the student and the parent in a variety of situations, from food choices to discipline. They are role models to the students and to the community.

In my classroom, I had two bilingual assistants. One was a Cambodian woman who had worked in this capacity for ten years. She was studying to become a teacher and spent the majority of her time working with Level I and II students on reading skills. The other assistant was a young Somali man with limited experience in a classroom. However, his English proficiency was excellent and he had a willingness to assist wherever needed. His two major duties were developing the math skills of the students and assisting with discipline issues. His calm demeanor and his desire to treat everyone fairly created an atmosphere of trust. Both people were invaluable assets to the ESL program.
For this study, I interviewed both people, asking them to share their views of the role of the bilingual assistant in the school and in the ESL classroom. First, I asked each of them to describe their duties as an ESL bilingual assistant. Below are their responses:

Cambodian assistant:

I did much the same types of duties as a certified teacher. I worked with beginner students to develop English and reading skills. I acted as a translator for parents and I contacted families for many of the teachers in the building. I even worked in the community as a translator at the hospital, court, job fairs, and the district hearing office [for discipline hearings]. I often acted as a counselor to both the students and the parents. I helped girls with their behavior in the United States, such as how to act and dress, and how to take care of their health (especially girl stuff).

As for the parents, I helped them to understand the rules that they need to follow in raising kids here. I even helped them with how to clean their house, deal with children's services, manage their anger, make appointments, explain government welfare rules, and contacted community agencies for them such as Hilltop Civic Association, CRIS [Community Refugee and Immigration Service], and CMAA [Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association]. I've even done marriage counseling!

Somali assistant:

I work with students individually and in groups on math and English. I spend a lot of time on students who are behind in their classes. I translate for parents when they enroll their parents, at least one new student a week. I go with them
to the hearing office and court, the hospital, whatever. I also do home visits and community outreach.

I contact parents almost every day about something. Most of the parents respect me and what to help their students, probably 80% are really concerned and work with the school. The students who are in trouble the most are usually from the homes where they don’t want to work with me. They get angry when I call them and don’t want to hear bad things.

Next I asked each of them to list what they considered to be the most critical needs of the students with whom they worked.

Cambodian assistant:

The most critical need is how to adapt to a new culture while still holding on to the old one. In America, kids are too free. They don’t respect their parents and have no manners. I don’t want our Cambodian kids to lose their culture and traditions.

Because most of the parents don’t speak English well, and most of the kids don’t speak Khmer [the language of Cambodia] very well, there is community problem. At least half the students don’t use Khmer and refuse to speak it. The parents are so impressed with their children’s ability to speak English and they understand its value, so they don’t try to force them to speak Khmer. They don’t realize the value and importance of keeping the language.

A couple times I tried to have Khmer classes at school but the students lost interest and stopped coming. They didn’t think it was important. The community tried to offer classes also, but the kids were so bad that they stopped. At school, we at least had some books in Khmer, taught the students traditional dances for school programs, and emphasized the importance of the home culture. I hope it’s enough to keep some of the culture alive.
Somali assistant:

I see the most critical need for Somali kids to be taking education seriously. Also the need for home support. So many of the parents have no education themselves and they don't always realize how much their children need it. Also, without an education, they can't help the students with school work. They are afraid to come to school or admit there is a problem.

They also need good role models--other students and adults. They need to see people who are willing to work to have a better life. Where these kids live they see drugs and alcohol and crime. Not a good picture of America. Some of them want to live like that because they think it is easier than going to school.

ESL is really important for these students. Here they feel safe and important and welcome. It is a place they belong. They look up to the teacher and to me and that makes me feel good.

Finally, I asked both of them what problems they had experienced in the ESL classroom or the school. The Somali assistant said he had not seen any problems, but the Cambodian assistant commented:

At first, the Cambodian students resented the Somali students. Most of the [Cambodian] students had been in the U. S. since they were babies and some were even born here. They have been the major [immigrant] group at this school for a long time, and they felt angry and jealous when so many students from a new culture arrived. The new kids got all the attention. They disrupted the class because they had never been in school before and didn't understand how to act. They took time away from the other kids.

They dressed and acted differently. They couldn't speak English well and some fights and bad feelings occurred, but
it's better now. Now it's more like it was before, ESL vs. the rest of the school. That's not good either, but at least there is peace in this class most of the time.

In addition to the academic challenges and social frustrations these second language immigrant adolescents faced, other barriers affected their ability to find success. Many of those barriers were health related.

**Physical Needs**

Many of the immigrant and refugee students at this site were experiencing some type of health problem. These problems were due to a number of factors: traumatic experiences in their home country, poor living conditions in the refugee camps, a limited knowledge of basic health care, or the consequences of inadequate access to health services.

One of the first barriers many of these students faced, which often slowed down school entrance, was the state-required screening for tuberculosis. Before students could begin the enrollment process for the district, they had to have proof of negative results in the tuberculosis skin test. About 20% test positive on the TB test.
given by the county health department (Personal communication, K. Woodard, ESL Supervisor, August 1999.) This does not necessarily indicate active tuberculosis, but only that the patient has been exposed to the bacteria. Anyone with a positive test must then have a chest X-ray. If the X-ray is negative, the patient is placed on preventative medication, and if the X-ray is positive, treatment begins. Only after being cleared by the health department can the student apply for enrollment in the schools. The skin test process takes about four days, and the chest X-ray process may require up to a month. Parents and children expressed anger and frustration at this delay, but the health department was firm.

The emphasis on TB screening was prompted by the increase in tuberculosis around the world, especially in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. “In 1998, immigrants accounted for nearly 42 percent of the 18,361 cases reported nationwide, although they represented just over 10 percent of the population.” (The New York Times, January 3, 2000) Additional concern had been tied to the fact that a new strain of TB has appeared which is resistant to treatment. Health officials attribute this problem to the people who begin medical treatment but discontinue because of cost, misunderstanding of the necessity
to continue treatment, or transience. School nurses attempted to track students on preventative medication, but with as many as five schools and 3,000 students for some nurses this wasn't always possible.

Health officials for both the school and government agencies had a number of other concerns. The school nurse at my school listed several areas of concern: the ongoing struggle to get vaccination records and keep students up-to-date on various shot requirements, personal hygiene issues, unusual health concerns not experienced by non-immigrant students (such as TB), and the difficulty of communicating with both students and parents about the necessity for various screenings and health procedures such as vision, hearing, and dental examinations. (Personal communication, K. Carpenter, April 1999) At times the difficulty revolved around the language barrier, but at other times it was a matter of lack of understanding about the value and requirements of health care in the United States. The nurse was frustrated with the amount of record-keeping involved, the lack of health-related documents translated into the home languages, the limited follow-up care, and the
scarcity of trained healthcare professionals prepared to deal with the health care issues of immigrants.

These issues included the after-effects of the poor nutrition, unsanitary conditions, and contaminated water supplies associated with their refugee experiences which include concentration difficulties, contagious tropical diseases such as malaria and hepatitis B, and gastro-intestinal problems such as parasites. Other students come to school with problems directly related to their war-torn past such as physical scars, impaired hearing from a lack of antibiotics during childhood, and missing body parts. Also, most girls from Somalia had been circumcised as young girls and many physical problems resulted with the onset of puberty (severe menstrual cramps and restricted blood flow). Battling lice was a constant struggle because of the poor living conditions, and it often went undetected because of the Moslem head-covering for girls.

The school nurse at this school expressed frustration with the limited time she was allocated to deal with the myriad of health concerns she witnessed. She was assigned to four schools, three elementary and one middle school, with a total of almost 1800 students, 150 of whom were second language students. She stated
that these 10% of her students consumed about 40-50% of her time.
She requested a full-time placement at our middle school but was
denied by the school district because of the cost. She listed the
following problems being experienced by the 58 students she had
been able to screen as of March, 1999.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Problem Seen by School Nurse</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech/hearing difficulties</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(three students with severe hearing loss)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision referrals</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental referrals</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General hygiene</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digestive and eating disorders</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilepsy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lice</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete immunizations</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis preventative medicine follow-up</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals to community agencies</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For family counseling, grief counseling, follow-up care, and medication
(Children's Services, Children's Hospital, Catholic Social Services)

Figure 4.6 Healthcare needs of students as reported by school nurse
The nurse stated that assistance by outside agencies to help with record-keeping, transportation, and follow-up care would be invaluable to her and to the children. Translation of health-care related school documents would assist parents in recognizing areas of concern and finding assistance closer to their homes which offered bilingual interpreters and accepted medical assistance (Medicaid) insurance cards.

Several times throughout the year, it became necessary for the nurse, one of the bilingual assistants, or myself to take the students to receive health care. Usually this was for routine care such as sports physicals or dental appointments, but at times it involved emergency transportation in an ambulance. We would either assist until the parents arrived, or work with the parents after they came to understand what procedures were being recommended and what the family needed to do for follow-up treatment.

One area in which I worked closely with the nurse and the school counselor was in cases of suspected abuse and neglect. Each year situations would arise in which children would come to school with evidence of possible physical abuse which we would be
required to investigate. If either the Somali or Cambodian families were involved, the bilingual assistants would talk to the students and the school personnel. Sometimes, it was simply a case of mistaking a cultural practice for abuse. Actions such as pinching the face for a headache or coin-rubbing the back, a practice by southeast Asian parents of rubbing hot coins on the part of body experiencing pain or inflammation, would give the appearance of abuse. At other times, further investigation was indicated.

One family of children seemed to have only two or three sets of clothing which were never clean. The children often wore the same clothes several days in a row. My Cambodian assistant and I made a home visit to discuss the situation with the parents. My assistant knew the family well because the Cambodian community is relatively small and tight-knit. Since we had taught three older siblings in previous years, and one older daughter had married into the family of the assistant, we were able to discuss the family home life at a slightly more private depth than we could have if the circumstances were different. My assistant shared that the parents were reputed to be involved in a gambling circle on a regular basis and were seldom home. She bluntly told the parents, in Khmer, that
if the children were not properly taken care of by the standards of the United States, i.e., fed regularly, clothed warmly and cleanly, and not left home alone at a young age, that the government could get involved and possibly take the children out of the home. The visit made an impact for a few months, but later visits and eventually a complaint filed by the school nurse with Children's Services became necessary.

Situations such as this were indicative of the physical needs and health care issues of the students at this site which posed a barrier to academic success. Combined with social conflicts and school-related challenges, the emotional balance of the students sometimes suffered as a result of the forces present in their lives.

**Emotional Needs**

The emotional needs of these students was the third area which often short-circuited their ability to achieve academically. Many of these students had experienced the trauma of war up-close and personal. Family members had been lost or killed, return to their home country was not an option, years had been spent in
refugee camps or temporary shelters, and life had been disrupted in an irretrievable manner. Even after coming to the United States, the family often moved frequently and life was still unsettled.

In addition, the majority of the Somali students (approximately 80%) who came to my school came through one of the homeless shelter agencies in the county. They had lived in other cities around the nation and were moving to my city to rejoin relatives or fellow tribesmen. The families would come first to the homeless shelters because these agencies would assist them to find housing, schooling, and even employment. They were able to stay under the auspices of the shelter for up to six months until permanent housing was located. Consequently, the issues that homeless children face were added to the difficulties these students were already confronting. They often had no school supplies, a limited and often inappropriate wardrobe, and no transportation or telephone for emergencies.

Temporary housing was provided for a limit of three months and then the families were relocated into permanent housing. Just as students were beginning to adjust and assimilate into the school culture, they would be gone again. Students seemed reluctant to
form friendships and sometimes appeared embarrassed at their situation. They would not tell the other students where they lived, and did not want to talk about their situation.

As part of this study, I visited the largest homeless shelter in the area to interview one of the case workers. The visit to the shelter was disturbing. Although dressed in jeans and a sweatshirt, I was obviously out of place and the object of attention. Several families were standing around outside the building or sitting inside in the large meeting room. The noise was deafening and I had a difficult time explaining to the receptionist who I was and why I was there because she could not hear me. It was about 4:30 and the families were picked up at five to be distributed to neighborhood churches for the night.

The case worker I was scheduled to interview was from Africa (Togo) and felt a certain familiarity with the plight of the Somalis. Although she was not a refugee and had come to the United States as a student, she understood some of the cultural and linguistic barriers that the families were facing. This woman was working at the shelter to gain experience in order to set up a social service agency to help families in her home country.
When I first arrived at her door, the case worker was talking to a man about furniture she was arranging for him and his family to be used in his temporary housing. Apartments and hotel rooms were used by the shelter to house some larger families for up to three months. I could tell by the conversation that the man had limited English (she was using easy vocabulary words and lots of gestures). She asked the man if he had gone to work today and he said no. She warned him that if he did not go, his welfare benefits would be cut off. The case worker also told him that his wife was upset that he had not been working and instead was leaving her every day to be with his friends. She finally gave the man some vouchers for bedding and clothing at the shelter store and he left.

After he left she noticed that he had left his ID card and would not be able to use the vouchers. She was obviously frustrated and angry. She told me that she had seen him a couple days before in a pool hall when she was trying to track down another client. She expressed frustration also at the fact that many of the Somalis expected her to give them preferential treatment since she was a fellow African. She said six out of her case load of eight families were Somali.
The visit was helpful to me for several reasons. First of all, I was able to experience firsthand the after-school situation that many of my students were experiencing. It was obvious that homework would be almost impossible to complete in this raucous environment and that just coming to school each day would be a struggle. I also understood better the embarrassment that the students seemed to exhibit when their homelessness was mentioned, as well as the difficulties it presented such as no telephone, limited clothing, and no private transportation.

Another major emotional hurdle for the students at this site was the issue of self-esteem. Adolescence is typically the time for grappling with one’s self-image and the desire for peer approval. For students who are dealing with being different in so many ways from the dominant culture, this time period can be devastating. When LEP students, participating in a panel held during the Ohio TESOL conference, were asked what was their major challenge in adjusting to life in a new country, the answer overwhelmingly was the difficulty of making friends (Student culture panel, Ohio TESOL, October 25, 1999). Looking, talking, and dressing differently than the “norm” made this process even more difficult.
Fitting in was a crucial part of cultural adjustment and affected the comfort level of the students. When the principal was asked what he considered to be the major need of the LEP students in this building, he quickly responded with “building self-esteem.” (L. Loftus, personal conversation, October 24, 2000). He realized the value of emotional health, and reported that the ESL classroom provided a haven for students struggling with the myriad issues of adolescence and offered them a chance to “debrief” and feel comfortable.

Other emotional issues these students faced were not unique to refugee students, but compounded by cultural overtones. Generation gaps between teenagers and parents are universal, but with immigrant students the language and culture issues are even more divisive. Adolescents frequently desire to emulate their peers and adjust to the new culture much more quickly than their parents. Consequently, the children are forced to take on some of the responsibilities usually reserved for adults: contacting agencies and services, translating, banking, even working to support the family. School contacts are often filtered through the child, and parents are only told what the child wants the family to know.
Children new to the United States may see our focus on individual rights and freedoms as an opportunity for unrestrained action. Several parents came to me during the school year with concerns; they felt frustration at their inability to control their own children. The children had informed the parents that because America was a land of freedom, they could do whatever they wanted with impunity. When parents tried to discipline, the children would call the police or Children’s Services and complain. Since the parents spoke little English, the children were telling only their side of the story. At times the parents had used inappropriate methods to discipline according to American laws; at other times the children were exaggerating the problem. Regardless, the parents were frightened and allowed the children to manipulate them.

After several similar complaints from both Asian and African parents, I contacted Children’s Services, the police, and the juvenile courts. I asked them if they would be willing to send personnel to come to the school to talk to the parents, using school translators, about parental rights and responsibilities. The parents responded with a large turnout. The children also attended so that they would hear what each speaker had to say. As a result of this meeting, the
number of threats on the part of the children decreased and one parent who had been physically threatened at knife point filed charges on her son and had him placed in temporary custody of Children's Services. The preservice teacher who was doing her internship with me during the spring quarter of this school year stated that she felt this activity was extremely beneficial to the parents and the type of information and intervention that are critical for the schools to provide (Personal conversation, S. Panferov, May 1999). My doctoral advisor also attended the session and reported similar impressions of the activity (Personal communication, C. Hancock, November 2000).

One final emotional issue which had cultural roots and overtones was extremely difficult for me to deal with on a personal basis. A Laotian girl in the ESL program believed that she was a boy. According to the family, when this girl was a newborn baby, her mother had put a dress on her and she had gotten sick. The girl's aunt, one of my former students, reported that the mother believed that the reason for the reaction was that the baby was really a boy inside (perhaps from a previous life). From that time on, the family called this girl by a boy's name and dressed her and treated her like
a boy. I had been the teacher of three older family members in the years before this girl arrived in the sixth grade, so I was familiar with the situation before she arrived in middle school.

The first week of school I saw this girl in line with the boys of her class, heading for the boy’s bathroom, and I called the teacher aside and informed her that this student was not a boy. This event was the beginning of three years of controversy for this student. She refused to go into the girl’s restroom because she did not want other students to see her, so the vice principal allowed her to use the office facility. She also refused to dress for gym in the girl’s locker room and the teachers allowed her to use the coaches’ office instead. The counselor and I tried to get psychological counseling for the girl because she seemed so emotionally distraught, but the family refused to attend and the agency refused to treat her without the family.

At least once a week there was some problem in the school or the community involving this child. Once a police officer came to the school to talk to me about her. The student had been arrested over the weekend for a curfew violation and taken to the juvenile detention center. During a routine strip search, the guards
discovered that their “boy” was a girl. The detective was concerned for the child and expressed a desire to assist, but was not sure what he could do. I told him what the school had tried and gave him some background information on the girl and her family, but there was little he could do. The girl finally completed middle school with the support of many staff members, but with much concern on everyone’s part of what high school might bring for her.

The emotional needs of many of these students required a tremendous amount of time and was often emotionally draining for myself and the staff as well as the children. The students were very dependent on the teachers and staff for emotional support and assistance, yet at the same time they could be very demanding. Expert assistance was needed but not usually available to help teachers identify and deal with post-traumatic stress syndrome and to diffuse potentially violent situations. Teachers also needed advice on how to handle delicate cultural issues such as: early marriage, arranged marriages, and the limited value of education for girls in some of the cultures.

In addition, because of the neighborhoods in which these students live, they often faced many of the social issues that
confront other urban school children: gangs, poverty, alcoholism, crime, poor housing, low self-esteem, and unemployment. Parents and students needed information on the legal system and how it operated, especially immigration, the police, courts, and children's services. During the school year under study, two students were arrested and placed on probation for shoplifting, one student was removed from the home for threats to the parent, and one student was arrested for knifing another teenager five times in the back and resisting arrest. He was back in school three days later.

Most of these situations were not culture specific, but they were included for this study because they impacted the student's ability to attend regularly, remain on task, and perform well in school. Almost every situation that involved these children was brought to the ESL teacher's attention, and usually it was assumed that the ESL teacher would "deal with it." Part of this belief came from the bond that the students had with me in which they considered me to be an advocate, and part came from the relationship that I and my assistants had with the family and community. Students felt comfortable and safe in the ESL classroom and were more willing to share personal concerns and fears. They
would often talk to me or my assistants about situations they would not share with anyone else. Sometimes this was through journals, but usually through personal conversation.

During the year under study, several personal tragedies occurred. Two brothers lost their father to a long-term illness, one student lost his sister and two friends in a car accident in which two other classmates were almost killed, the mother of one student attempted suicide, and one girl watched her father fight a battle with terminal lung cancer. Two girls quit school and ran away from home and a former student was thrown out of her home when the father found out she was pregnant. She stayed with me for a week until she could reconcile with her family and move back home. The school attempted to provide grief counseling through an outside agency for these students and others, but no arrangements could be made.
Family difficulties

Some of the emotional issues the students in this study dealt with were related to their family, difficulties and conflicts involving family structure and stability. Some problems were short-term in nature while others eventually affected the students' interest in and ability to remain in school.

Most of the students in this classroom were refugees and had fled their native countries because of war. For the Southeast Asians, war was a distant memory or an event that had occurred in their parent's generation, but for the Albanian and Somali families it was a recent event. War and resettlement had a devastating impact on the Somali families in this study. Only three of the 47 Somali students in this study lived with both mother and father. Many had lost their father or mother (or both) during the civil war, and those who were able to escape to Kenya with an intact family often fell prey to social pressures that eventually broke up the family. One reason for family breakups was the Moslem tradition of permitting more than one wife. When families requested permission to be resettled in European or North American countries, they were
permitted to bring only one wife. Some of the children were then left with only a mother. Others had no parental guardian and were living with a sibling or other relative. Figure 4.7 graphically depicts the number and relationships of the people who were acting as guardians for the Somali students in this study.
Person responsible for Somali students

- Both parents: 5
- Father only: 8
- Mother only: 20
- Sibling: 3
- Uncle/Aunt: 7
- Grandparent: 2

0 4 8 12 16 20
Some students were not living with a family member and listed their primary guardian as an "aunt," but they were using this term loosely. Any older woman in Somali culture is called an aunt, and often these female guardians were not even relatives. Two students were living in this type of arrangement because their parents had paid a woman to claim to be the mother and take their children to the United States. After she arrived here, she decided that the problems were not worth the price and wanted to abandon the children. The school had to contact Children's Services and threaten legal action to protect the children.

Sometimes the students called these women “fake moms.” Two incidences of difficulties resulting from these “fake moms” occurred during the school year under study. One weekend two of my students got into a fight over a video game and during the scuffle, both broke an arm. They were taken to the emergency room by their respective families and their arms were set in soft casts. They were told to return in two weeks to receive a hard cast. The guardian of one of the boys refused to take him because she thought the visit would cost her money. The school nurse and I tried repeatedly to contact the “aunt,” but she never responded. (This was
before my Somali assistant had been hired in November.) Finally, the school nurse contacted Children’s Services because the child’s arm was going to have to be rebroken if a hard cast was not applied soon. Children’s Services convinced the guardian that the procedure was necessary and was not going to cost her money, and she then allowed me to take the boy to the orthopedist in her place.

A few days later another child was facing a crisis. A thirteen-year-old Somali girl came to me crying and telling me that her “aunt” was planning to force her to go to Kentucky to marry an older relative of the aunt. Later that day, the guardian arrived at the school to withdraw the girl. I asked the school secretary to stall the women in the office so that I could call Children’s Services from another room. While I was in the counselor’s office making my telephone call, the secretary came in to tell me that the case worker was here for the boy with the broken arm. I talked to this case worker and explained both situations. He was able to intervene and prevent the woman from withdrawing the girl by threatening legal action. The girl remained for the rest of the school year without incident.
These two extreme cases were examples of the difficulties many of the children in this study experienced with family and guardianship conflicts. Some were culturally related, but many others were typical issues faced by families in modern American society (divorce, grandparents rearing children, abandonment).

The break-up of families was not confined to the Somali students, although the percentages were higher with these students because of their recent war experiences. Many of the students in this study were also being raised by relatives other than parents and guardianship was often an issue. One boy from Sierra Leone was living with friends because his mother and siblings were trapped in Sierra Leone while the father and two sons were here. The boys had been taken from the country to avoid being drafted into the "army" by gangs who were kidnapping boys as young as twelve.

Three other students, two Cambodians and a Laotian, were being raised by grandparents or aunts because the mothers had abandoned them. My Cambodian assistant knew most of the families in the community and informed the school when family breakups occurred to enable the school to push for guardianship papers. Without proper documentation, the guardians could not receive
proper medical or welfare benefits. Three other students were involved in a situation in which the father of one girl moved in with the mother of two boys in the class. Conflicts between the students and academic difficulties followed for both sets of children.

**Socialization Difficulties**

Students from war-torn countries often suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome which manifests itself through various socialization difficulties: hyperactivity, ADHD, discipline problems, poor attendance, and poor concentration. (Mohamud, 1998)

This information was dramatically brought to my attention through a poster in the counselor’s office. It listed several warning signs of potentially violent behavior compiled by a treatment facility for troubled youth. I was struck by the number of these signs that I had seen manifested in my students during the school year. I am not a trained counselor, but I recognized the need for many of my students to receive professional guidance to deal with whatever issues were resulting in these violent manifestations.
Warning signs of potentially violent behavior

- preoccupation with violence
- violent threats
- access to weapons
- use of violence as a problem-solving technique when frustrated
- difficulty with verbal articulation or expression
- overactive or impulsive behaviors
- extreme mood swings
- academic failure
- low self-esteem or feelings of losing control
- depression or an attitude that "no one can help me."
- alienation, rebelliousness and a lack of social bonding with society

Figure 4.8 Warning signs of potentially violent behavior

Source: The Buckeye Ranch, a residential treatment facility for children with severe behavior problems, 1998. (Appendix G)
Many of the immigrant youth in my class exhibited a number of these behaviors, and as a result the students were often placed in either in-school and out-of-school suspension. There were over 320 days of suspension given to this group of students in one year, an increase of over 200% from the year before. Almost every day there was at least one and usually more of my students placed in "PEAK," the in-school suspension program. Even more disturbing were the number of behaviors that were sufficiently violent to warrant expulsion, the removal from school for up to one semester.

Three students were expelled for possession of a weapon, two of which were used in an attack on fellow ESL students and one which an ESL student claimed to have as protection from an ESL classmate. One student was expelled for a violent physical attack on another student during my class (he was repeatedly banging this younger child's head against a concrete wall), one threatened to blow up the school, and two were expelled for threatening ESL staff members (my Somali assistant and the ESL math teacher). These acts resulted in a total of seven expulsions in one school year. I have been teaching for almost thirty years and I have averaged one expulsion every other year, never before have I had seven in one year.
I felt overwhelmed with frustration at this 1400% increase in expulsions. I believe that a statistic such as this warrants further study. What could be causing this amount and degree of violent behavior? What could schools do to help students find methods to resolve issues in a more socially accepted manner?

**Attendance problems**

Another social issue that affected academic performance was the poor attendance rate of some of the students. Two students stopped coming to school by semester break, and one more by spring vacation. All three were eighth grade Asian girls, and two of the parents seemed unconcerned with this behavior. One Vietnamese girl had run away from home and the father tried to work with the school to find the girl and return her to the family. She had claimed child abuse in the past and had run away before. She was often spotted in the neighborhood by the other students, but she never returned home or to school.

Both of the other two girls were Cambodian. It is very common for Cambodian and Laotian girls to get engaged and married during
their ninth grade year (around fifteen years of age), so parents do not push school attendance as girls approach this marriageable age. One of these girls was from the family discussed above in which the parents were eventually reported to Children's Services for neglect. Repeated contacts to the home were ignored and in May the girl was involved in a fatal car accident. She joined two other middle school girls and three high school boys who were cutting school and accompanied them on a joy ride. Three of the teenagers died instantly and my student was the only one who did not have to be life-flighted to intensive care. She came to see me later and we talked about how if she had been in school, this would have been avoided. She agreed, and promised to return to school, but never followed through on her promise.

The other girl quit coming to school because her mother had attempted suicide several times, and the daughter was afraid to leave the apartment. The counselor said she was manning a "suicide watch." Soon after school was out in the summer, the mother died in a suspicious one-car accident. The girl had been an honor roll student and a basketball star, but ended up barely passing eighth grade.
Problems and difficulties such as those listed in the four categories above impacted almost every student in this program. For too many of the students, they were experiencing obstacles to academic success in more than one area. It was those difficulties which caused the focus of this study to expand from the original design (a study of the literature-based curriculum) to its ultimate three-pronged focus. The revised study looked at how the curriculum and the daily instructional decisions were impacted by the number and type of needs exhibited by the changing students population.

Data Analysis of Program Design and Effectiveness

The second focus of this study was an analysis of the ESL curriculum being used with these students. As discussed previously, a literature-based approach was selected based on my own professional judgment that the students needed prolonged exposure to quality literature in an atmosphere emphasizing reading and writing. The curriculum in this study was developed over a period of several years as I slowly changed my focus from randomly selected
reading passages and grammar exercises to a series of specifically selected children's literature.

At first, I experimented with different types of literature such as fairy tales, realistic adolescent fiction, and biographies, and I watched to see which seemed to have the greatest appeal and impact. The students preferred the stories about teenagers and the biographies, yet they didn't seem to be able to relate to the lifestyles and attitudes of the main characters. I decided to find stories that more closely reflected the cultures and experiences of my students. Although my students enjoyed the stories of the American children such as *Dear Mr. Henshaw*, *Ramona Quimby, Age 8*, and *How to Eat Fried Worms*, they seemed to have little in common with them. I received the most positive feedback from two books which had southeast Asian characters and settings, *The Land I Lost* by Huynh Quang Nhuong and *Children of the River* by Linda Crew. Since the majority of my intermediate level students were from this part of the world, they could identify with the characters and the situations they were facing. The students also appreciated the background information on Vietnamese and Cambodian history and
culture that I supplied to accompany the text because very few had ever had the opportunity to study their own heritage.

The novel with the most appeal was *Children of the River* by Linda Crew. This book is the story of a Cambodian teenager who is forced to flee her homeland after the takeover by the Khmer Rouge. The difficulties she faces adjusting to the American school system and to American society in general, compounded by the usual problems of adolescence, created numerous opportunities for discussion. Because a large number of the school’s ESL population were from Cambodia, this novel presented unique opportunities to review that country’s history, geography, and current events. Students related to the characters in the novel and hotly debated their actions and decisions. A videotape of *The Killing Fields* was viewed and discussed. Poems were written, folk tales read, and outside speakers contacted. The unit culminated with a school-wide program put on by the ESL students demonstrating Cambodian fashion, customs and music.

These books led naturally to various language development activities. I stopped doing distinct grammar and speaking activities and focused all of our class time on novel-related tasks. We still
did reading, writing, listening, and speaking in class, but all came naturally from the context and content of the literature. We would read nonfiction trade books that related to the topics covered in the novels, do oral reports, discuss controversial elements, write original dramas, and reflect in daily journals. Vocabulary was introduced in the context of the story. Cultural and historical information was provided as needed, and extension activities that incorporated art, music, cooking, and games involved the students even further in the story. The more I used this literature-based approach, the more impressed I was with its applicability to the ESL classroom.

I wanted to harness this enthusiasm for literature and culture in a curriculum that would have a logical progression through the three year period that I taught these students. The ESL curriculum at the middle school level in my district emphasizes language development in conjunction with an introduction to American history and culture, so I decided to use historical fiction as a vehicle to explore the required information. I created a curriculum based on a series of novels that spanned events from the voyages of
Christopher Columbus to the recent wave of immigration in the United States.

Each year, one third of American history was covered through four to five novels. Supplementary materials such as biographies, nonfiction trade and textbooks, drama, poetry, and multimedia presentations gave students experience using a variety of text formats. All classroom activities stemmed from the literature being read.

The use of historical fiction had many advantages for this age group. Students were learning social studies content in a language rich environment. They were introduced to award-winning literature such as *Sign of the Beaver* by Elizabeth George Speare and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor. Oral and written language skills were developed in an integrated atmosphere. These novels were perfect for interdisciplinary activities. Map studies, timelines, art projects, music, displays, and outside reading were used to augment the usual language arts curriculum.

Historical fiction helped students experience the past vicariously, encouraging the ability to feel what life was like in another place and time. It developed a sense of the role various
cultures have played in US history. It incorporated many disciplines in an interesting and informative format, and it served as a bridge to mainstream language arts and social studies classes.

The use of historical fiction stories required significant schema building, both through historical background knowledge and also familiarity with fictional text. I began the program with books that were on the third grade reading level. The books were easy enough that we could concentrate on content instead of vocabulary and syntax. Each of the later books built upon the knowledge of American history developed from previous titles. The stories progressed linearly across American history, and the need to provide extended background knowledge for each time period was lessened. There is also a value in reading familiar subject matter, i.e., reading books by the same author, on the same topic, or in the same genre. This concept, termed “narrow reading” by Krashen (1985), claims that second language learners need the comfort of familiarity to increase comprehension. When the student is aware of the style or the format of the text, they can attend more quickly to the deeper meaning.
Whenever possible, I attempted to include novels that reflected the cultures of the students such as Dragon’s Gate by Laurence Yep, which depicts the plight of the first Asian immigrants who were employed to build the transcontinental railroad. The use of multicultural novels such as this yielded several benefits. The cultures of the students in the classroom were presented realistically and given support and value. Religious and cultural differences could be discussed in a non-threatening atmosphere. The problems that immigrant students face assimilating into American society were portrayed in some of these novels (Dragon’s Gate and Children of the River), and possible solutions were discussed in class.

Being a member of a new minority culture can present major assimilation problems. Fitting into a new environment without giving up one’s native heritage and culture can create internal conflict. Too little assimilation can lead to difficulty at school, but too much can cause problems at home. When students are able to read about other adolescents facing similar situations, they often are able to transfer some of the solutions the characters use to solve problems into their own lives.
In an effort to determine the effectiveness of this program, I interviewed a number of the eighth grade students who had completed the three year curriculum, reading the entire series of historical fiction books. I also surveyed the intermediate and advanced students on their reading preferences and their satisfaction with the program.

I surveyed forty-one students to determine their reading interests and habits (See Appendix M). The group was roughly divided equally between boys (15) and girls (13). Twenty-four were Asian, three Hispanic, and one African. They spanned all three grade levels and ranged in language proficiency from Level II (high beginner) to Level IV (advanced).

Sixty percent said that they considered themselves good readers, although all are reading below grade level or they would not qualify for ESL services. Seventy-three percent stated that they visit the library regularly. When asked how many books they read for pleasure last year, two had read none, eighteen had read from one to four, and eight had read more than eight. I was surprised at this high number because I rarely saw the students with books other than required texts.
Finally, I asked questions about their reading preferences of genres, characters, culture, etc. and I asked them what criteria they used to make book selections. The results to those questions are listed in Figure 4.9. The students had no preference of fiction over nonfiction, cultures similar to their own, and main characters of the same gender. I was surprised at each of these responses because they had seemed to indicate otherwise in classroom discussions. I was also surprised that the students selected the future as their favorite setting because none of the students read the science fiction books available in the classroom library and did not watch futuristic shows on television. Their response to the final questions was predictable however. I had seen the students select books for independent reading based on cover and author on a consistent basis. The survey revealed some surprising results and influenced my selection of titles for our classroom library.
Question 1: Which type of book do you prefer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Stories</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scary</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True Stories</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Fiction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 2. Do you prefer fiction to nonfiction?
Yes 8 No 8 Don't Care 25

Question 3. Do you prefer stories about the same culture as your own?
Yes 10 No 8 Don't Care 23

Question 4. Do you prefer stories in which the main character is the same sex that you are?
Yes 15 No 0 Don't Care 26

Question 5. Which setting do you prefer to read about?
Past 13
Now 13
Future 15

Question 6. When you select a book, which of these is most likely to influence you?
An author you have read before 11
A book recommended by a friend 6
A book recommended by a teacher 5
Interesting cover 10
Interesting title 9

Figure 4.9 Results of Reading Interest Survey
Source: Student Reading Interest Survey, Fall 1998
Later during the year, I distributed a different survey to the intermediate and advanced level students that focused on the reading strategies that these thirty-seven students used to assist them when they read (See Appendix N). One of the questions on that survey asked how many students could read in their native language, and only eight of the thirty-seven who responded said yes. One determiner of L2 reading success is first language literacy (Krashen and Biber, 1988, Collier, 1989, and Cummins, 1989). Very few of the students in this study had that critical basis for literacy development because they did not have first language literacy.

Twenty students in this second survey said they could sound out new words and twenty-eight said they used context to help with new vocabulary. Two-thirds of the students claimed to use visualization and prediction when they read, techniques critical to reading success. When I asked what class activity helped them the most to understand a book, they overwhelmingly selected viewing the video version (83%). I suspect this was partly because they grew up in the multimedia age and also because their oral skills were much stronger than their reading and writing abilities.
When the students were asked what they considered to be the characteristics of a good reader, they responded with comments such as:

- No mistakes
- Can sound out words
- Knows hard words
- Someone who likes to read
- Someone who reads at home, school, and the bathroom
- Someone who reads and learns at the same time
- No repetitions
- Reads fast

Some of their responses mirrored those of experts in the field and others did not. Most lists of the strategies that good readers employ include: rapid decoding, large vocabulary, phonemic awareness, a knowledge of text and its features, and the ability to use a variety of strategies to comprehend the text (Goodman, 1973, Stanovich, 1991, Weaver, 1994). On the other hand, poor readers concentrate on decoding and often struggle word by word through a text. They fail to adjust for the differences in text structure and many cannot see the “big picture” or understand the gist of the message. The students seemed to agree with the experts on the qualities that good readers exhibit. Finally, I asked the students if they felt that ESL had helped them with their reading speed and skill.
and every student answered that they felt that their experiences in ESL had been positive and that their reading ability had improved.

To determine if the program had actually assisted the students to become better readers, I compared their reading comprehension ability in the spring of their sixth grade year with that of their scores at the end of the eighth grade year. I had ten students for whom I had test results for all three years (sixth, seventh, and eighth) and their reading comprehension gains are reflected in the table (Figure 4.10) and bar graph (Figure 4.11) below.

The table shows the amount of increase per student and the average reading comprehension growth. The bar graph demonstrates in visual form the same data, without the numerical average.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>6th grade reading comp.</th>
<th>8th grade reading comp.</th>
<th>grade level increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average increase 3.1 years

Figure 4.10

Reading Comprehension Gains of Eighth Grade ESL Students Using Literature-based Curriculum for Three Years

Source: Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Essential Skills, Spring Assessment Scores, 1997 and 1999
Reading ability by grade level

Reading Comprehension Gains of Eighth Grade Students

Student Two
Student Three
Student Four
Student Five
Student Six
Student Seven
Student Eight
Student Nine
Student Ten

Reading comprehension in sixth grade
Reading comprehension in eighth grade

0 2 4 6 8 10 12
Based on this annual district assessment, these students gained an average of 3.1 years of reading comprehension in two years (spring of sixth grade to spring of eighth grade). The two students who tested kindergarten level in sixth grade were new arrivals, from Mexico and China who were non-readers in English. One possible explanation for their rapid progress (gains of four to six years in just two school years) was that they had a grade-level education in their native countries and were able to use those first language skills to assist in the development of reading skills in English. Three students gained four years of reading comprehension skill in two years, and one gained six.

At the end of sixth grade, no students was reading at the middle school level (grades six to eight), but by the end of grade eight six of the ten students were within the middle school range. The only two students who continued to test at third grade level or below were identified as learning disabled and were receiving services for reading difficulties. Three students had gained only one grade level in the two years, two had gained three years, three had gained four years, and one had gained six.
A final type of evaluation which I conducted was an interview combined with a grounded survey (See Appendix O). I interviewed all eighth grade students who were Level II or above (intermediate or advanced English proficiency level) and asked them about their impressions of the curriculum and the ESL program in general. I wanted to know if the students felt that the curriculum of the ESL program had been beneficial and informative. I felt that the best way to study this was to talk to the ten eighth grade students who had completed the three-year series of novels. I asked the students if they preferred learning about history through novels or textbooks and eighty percent selected novels. They listed some of the advantages to the curriculum used in ESL as being that they "learned how [their] ancestors lived and how life is different today," "how to fit into school as a foreigner," "how hard it is during a war," and they "learned about people who do good things."

From the first three interviews, I decided that the most effective method to determine the students' opinions of the effectiveness of the types of instructional activities in which they had participated during their time in the program. In the first three interviews, I asked the students to comment on the activities and
select those they felt were the most and the least useful for them. They had a difficult time recalling and categorizing the various activities. However, when I compiled a list of novels and a list of the types of activities they had performed, they became much more verbal and descriptive. I selected thirteen of the activities which had been utilized the most often in class to reinforce the reading passages and to provide extension activities. Students were asked to rate the effectiveness of each activity in reinforcing their reading skills on a scale of one to five, one being the least beneficial. The results are listed below (Figure 4.12) in order of highest to lowest preference:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy/Activity</th>
<th>Mean score (scale of 1 to 5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Periodic explanation by teacher</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictation</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz with advance warning</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving background knowledge</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary activities</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View video about passage</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequencing main points</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write sentences/paragraphs</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preview activities</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking notes on passage</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art activities</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossword puzzle/wordsearch</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz without advance warning</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.12

Results of Reading Strategies/Activities Preference Scale

(in order of highest to lowest preference)

Source: Self-reporting preference scale, Spring 1999
The choice of teacher explanation as the most effective was not a surprise as reading comprehension was a challenge for these students, and even when we stopped every few paragraphs to discuss a passage, many still struggled to follow the story. However, I was surprised at the choice of dictation as a meaningful activity for reading comprehension. This was not an activity which occurred often, maybe once or twice each nine weeks, because the students had so much difficulty being able to listen to and write sentences dictated to them. I felt that it was such a frustrating exercise that I did not subject the students to the activity often. I expected this to receive the lowest rating, not second highest. I suspect that the students realized this as a short-coming of theirs and wanted the additional practice.

Their third choice, having advanced warning that a quiz would occur after a reading experience, could cause them to be more attentive as they read and would therefore assist comprehension. This also was not a frequent event, possibly once every other week. I thought if it were too common, it would lose its effectiveness. It appears that I was wrong. On the other hand, the idea of a "pop quiz," which many teachers use on a frequent basis, was rated by the
students as the least effective. These students preferred to know when the test was coming in order to be prepared.

The fact that the students saw little value in crossword puzzles and word searches was somewhat amusing, because they are used so frequently in many middle school classes. I think if used less often, they would have more value to the students. I intend to share these results with other secondary teachers; perhaps they could replicate the survey and see if the results hold true for native speakers as well. Comparing the results would be interesting.

The survey was valuable and I felt that the Likert scale format gave me a clearer picture of the students' preferences and opinions than I was obtaining through the structured interview alone. I probably will continue to use most of the activities just for variety despite the student feedback; however, I will definitely concentrate on the activities they felt to be the most successful and spend less time on the less effective ones. Also, this survey alerted me to which types of activities would be the most effective when introducing critical material.

Too much of any activity loses its impact and novelty. Students at middle school age are easily bored and need variety.
ESL is often the venue in which students are introduced to the types of skills and exercises in which they will be required to participate in mainstreamed classes such as science, social studies, and regular language arts. They need a chance to experience and experiment with each of these activities in the less stressful atmosphere of the ESL environment.

Overall, I felt that a literature-based curriculum was beneficial for all students in this program. Even the newest arrivals preferred reading "real books" to grammar exercises and short, contrived passages. However, as with any curriculum, variety was critical. We did not read stories every day. Grammar, spelling, journal and essay writing, nonfiction reading, research and report writing, and discussions occurred on a regular basis. But as much as possible, the activities revolved around and referred to the current topic and novel. It was the day-to-day decisions of how to best cover the necessary topics and skills with students who are performing at a variety of linguistic and academic levels that will be discussed in the next section.
Challenges to this Literature-based Curriculum

Most of the students in my program the first eight years at this school were Level II to IV students, intermediate to advanced English proficiency level learners, who were scheduled into ESL for their language arts and reading block (90 minutes a day). Their average reading level was fourth grade and most were proficient English speakers. Reading comprehension and writing proficiency were the major emphases of the course. These are the students labeled “transitional” in a study by Saunders et al., (1999). Saunders and his colleagues studied a district with 18 transitional classes and found four strategies that worked with these students: build student's background knowledge, draw on student’s personal experience, promote extended discourse through writing and discussion, and assist students in the pre-reading stage of a passage. (p. 4) The students in the Saunders’ study were similar to the students mentioned above; they had a solid educational background and near grade level skills. It was the students with neither who presented the greatest challenge in my classroom.
In the eight years before this study, there had only been one or two beginning level students in each class period. An experienced bilingual teacher's assistant worked with me to assist these students for the first few months on basic language and social skills. Although she was Cambodian and many of the new students were from other language backgrounds, her experience in working with new arrivals overcame the language barrier. She worked in one section of the room at the same time that the other, more advanced language learners, were receiving whole group instruction. These beginning level language students read picture books and easy chapter books that corresponded to the theme being covered by the class in general. Some activities each week would involve the entire class such as art, drama, videos, etc. Within a semester, these students would be integrated into the regular ESL class and be able to participate in most classroom activities. All of these students had some education in their native countries came with basic literacy and math skills. Our challenge was how to prevent them from losing valuable instructional time in their content classes while assisting them with the acquisition of English. We provided support for content classes as much as possible for all the
students during homeroom and at the end of each class period. This arrangement worked well for eight years.

A major challenge arose in my classroom organization and my curriculum when I was faced with a sudden influx of students who had little or no previous education. This population shift had began during the previous school year, but the major growth occurred during the time period of this study. The students we had received in the past had limited English, but because they had a near grade level education in their own language, and the transition to the American school system was relatively short. The students needed to learn the new procedures, acquire the necessary social language (BICS), and find a "buddy" student to navigate the new school-cultural waters. This process usually took a year or less. However, this new group of students had an entire gamut of difficulties to face unlike those of previous new arrivals.

Since most had never been in school before, everything was new. From riding the bus in the morning to fire drills, each experience brought new challenges. Students who had fought for food in a refugee camp had to patiently wait their turn in the lunch line. The aggressive traits needed for survival now resulted in
detentions and suspensions. Sitting quietly for hours a day must have seemed like torture. Mace-Matluck et al. (1998) commented on this challenge in their book on immigrant students with limited prior schooling:

Another often overlooked challenge for immigrant students and their teachers lies in assumptions about classroom behaviors. For many immigrant students, the experience of entering a school in the United States involves confronting new behavioral expectations. For instance, they must sit at a desk and concentrate for long periods of time, hold a pencil or pen, raise their hand when they want to speak, ask permission to leave the classroom, and interact with a diverse group of students who may not share their linguistic or cultural background. (p. 28)

ESL became more than a language class for these students. Many students had to learn how to use a pencil and basic handwriting skills. Elementary school basics such as the alphabet, shapes, and the sound-symbol relationship suddenly became the focus. New materials had to be ordered that taught basic reading and math skills as levels never required before. The beginning level ESL class swelled from two or three students at a time to fifteen or more per period, joining the fifteen intermediate to advanced students already in attendance. The roster expanded from twelve to fifteen students in the room to over thirty. One of the biggest challenges I began facing was how to teach two separate classes simultaneously.
Two new staff members were hired to assist me by Christmas break, the substitute math teacher mentioned earlier and a Somali bilingual assistant. Two teacher desks and ten more student desks were added and the noise level increased as the space decreased. The teacher's lounge next door was converted into a math class for the students with the lowest math skills and the substitute and the Somali assistant held class there. My Cambodian assistant worked primarily with the beginner students because that was her area of expertise and she did not feel competent to teach the adolescent novels. I worked closely with her as much as possible and we planned the lessons jointly. She was taking classes to become a teacher and had ten years experience with middle school ESL students. I felt very comfortable allowing her to work with these students, aside from the fact that I knew she was being paid much less than a teacher and was performing duties not expected or even permitted by a teaching assistant. However, we knew we had few alternatives and the students needed her expertise. I appreciated her attitude and her dedication, and I could not have survived the year without her. The students did not know that she was not a

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teacher, or that the Somali man was an assistant. I treated them as equals and expected the same from the students.

The more advanced students resented the arrival of the new students because of the time away from their lessons and the class disruption they caused. Time formerly devoted to homework assistance or extension activities was eaten up by attention to the more needy beginner students. Field trips and extra amenities such as our Friday lunches at McDonald's were gone. It was impossible to provide ninety students the same attention that forty-five had received.

I tried to divide my time between the groups, but both groups suffered. It was impossible to rearrange the schedules to group the students by levels, because that would mean placing all the beginners together in certain classes and that was unfair to the teachers. Dividing the students forced them to learn to speak English more quickly instead of relying on their peers. Also, the students were coming in one or two a week and the constant schedule changes would have been a nightmare.

My Cambodian assistant and I spent a considerable amount of time looking for appropriate materials for these students. In
addition to the time spent on their social needs discussed above, the creation of lessons that taught basic skills in a way that was not insulting to adolescents was very time-consuming. First and second grade readers, spellers, math books, and handwriting practice books were collected. Students had to be taught how to use scissors, glue, rulers, protractors, calculators, and computers.

We introduced these students to literature as soon as possible. We started with picture books and primary level chapter books. We found titles that correlated with the themes being covered by the intermediate and advanced students so that we could combine the two groups whenever possible. While the more proficient readers read a novel about the Underground Railroad, my assistant read the picture book *Follow the Drinking Gourd* to the beginner students. She followed this with *The Drinking Gourd* by Monjo, a second grade reading level book on the same theme. The students wrote simple one sentence summaries of each chapter, discussed the history of the slave trade, and looked at picture books and trade books on the same topic. Both groups created murals of their stories, read biographies of famous Americans during this time period and then presented the information to the entire class as oral reports,
watched the movie *Amistad* (Dreamworks, 1998), and jointly
developed a dramatic presentation of a slave escape. Some of the
students progressed from pre-primer level readers to second grade
readers in less than a year according to the district's spring
reassessment.

Although the classroom situation was difficult, I still felt
positive about the progress the students were making through the
use of literature. However, the progress came at a price. Obviously,
the classroom activities and teaching presentation for beginning
level students is different to what it is with more proficient
readers. Even easy reading books such as *The Drinking Gourd*
required extensive background and vocabulary introduction. Much
time was required to find texts that covered the correct time period
and were easy to read without being intellectually insulting to
adolescents. Even assessment became a challenge as students
struggled to express difficult concepts with limited vocabulary.
Most of the students’ grades were determined by a combination of
effort and attitude because to grade them on product alone seemed
unfair; these students had not chosen to be deprived of half or more
of their education. We attempted to meet the academic and
linguistic needs of the students with a curriculum that combined basic skills with interesting content and activities. As I follow the academic progress of these students into high school, I hope to discover if our efforts were successful.

Self-reflection on the Curricular and Instructional Decisions that Occurred While Implementing this Program

When I first decided to study my own class, my main interest was in describing the impact of a literature-based curriculum on students with limited literacy and academic skills, a transition program designed to prepare them for mainstream language arts and content classes. Extended opportunities to engage in language activities gave students practice in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in a variety of genres and for a myriad of purposes. During the three-year period that I spent with these students in middle school, I was able to watch their development from timid pre-adolescents to mature students ready for the challenge of high school. I wanted this study to concentrate on one year in their middle school experience and to record some the challenges and
barriers that these immigrant students faced during this critical period in their academic career.

I did not realize when I began this study that the focus would be impacted so dramatically by the population of students with which I would be interacting during the school year. The most difficult challenge I had faced in my nearly three decades of teaching came when a wave of frustrated adolescents arrived with the academic skills of preschoolers. The culture shock that both of us faced was tremendous.

I had taught students of countless nationalities and learning ability levels, but never so many with such critical needs. It hurt to see young men and women struggle to hold a pencil, write their name, and count on their fingers. It made me angry that so many of the years normally allocated to education had been stolen from them and that our educational system was so ill-equipped to deal with the situation. It was also frustrating to me that the time that I would normally have been able to dedicate to helping my many intermediate and advanced students achieve success was being usurped by the countless interruptions to deal with lunch tickets, bus fights, health problems, and gym clothes.
The faculty and staff were supportive, but they were equally overwhelmed. How can a student with kindergarten math skills survive in a pre-algebra class? Should girls who wear conservative Moslem clothes, never exposing their arms, legs, or hair, be required to dress for physical education? How do you fairly grade a student in science or American history who does not yet know the alphabet? I felt like a firemen, constantly putting out fires and trying to prevent new ones.

One of the techniques I used to survive the year was locating resources, both material and personnel, that would provide me with information or assistance. A fellow doctoral student who was from Somalia offered to come to the school and translate when necessary before the Somali bilingual assistant was hired. She was especially helpful with the girls and met with them several times to help them with cultural adjustment and health issues. She served as a cultural informant for me, explaining why the students acted and reacted as they did. Her assistance was invaluable.

Another valuable addition to the program was the student teacher who chose to fulfill her spring quarter teaching experience in my classroom. She observed periodically during fall and winter
quarter before she began her teaching in the spring. She was familiar with the situation and its challenges and could have chosen a different, less stressful, site; but she decided that her experiences at this school would better prepare her for working with a variety of immigrant students. Her presence allowed me more freedom to move between the beginner and the more advanced group. As she would work with one group, I could concentrate on the other while still being in the room to observe and support. We actually learned from each other as I observed her techniques of engagement and discipline and could observe both groups in a slightly more objective viewpoint than I had been able to do from the perspective as the "person in charge." It was a valuable experience for her as well because she was able to work with students from all language proficiency levels and several cultures.

After the quarter was completed, I interviewed this preservice teacher and asked her a few questions about the experience. These were her responses:

Question 1: Was working in an ESL classroom what you expected? Explain.
Response:

In some ways it was exactly as I had expected--helping students with reading and writing tasks and cajoling them into working on projects together. I, of course, wasn't expecting to help kids so much with "other" classes (like math) nor was I expecting the amount of interruptions and "real life" issues that permeate the classroom (lunch tickets, discipline, discipline, etc.).

Question 2: Were you adequately trained for your assignment?

Response:

I was officially "trained" for one week on how to discipline. No week could prepare someone to deal with the adolescent ups and downs of discipline. I didn't feel overwhelmed (not too terribly) because I had supportive adults around me and I could draw on past experiences (like being a camp counselor and drama, etc.). Content wise, I did feel adequately trained, though I would have liked even more training in adolescent lit. but that's not something covered in L2 teacher training.

Question 3: What did you gain from the experience?

Response:

A great respect for classroom teachers and an admiration for the complexity of issues that K12 teachers deal with.

Question 4: What was the most positive aspects of the experience?

Response:

Overwhelmingly the people--both the adults and most of the kids! I came into an unusual team-teaching situation and really enjoyed working with everyone. Had there been a less
supportive group of adults then this could have been a disaster, but I feel blessed to have worked with the adults I did. And, of course, the kids. I was able to step back and "remember" the joys of adolescence and re-appreciate that and the excitement that it brings.

Question 5: What was the most frustrating aspects of the experience?

Response:

I think it was the tie between discipline and the school interruptions during the day. Getting many of these kids to concentrate/focus was a feat in itself some days, let alone with the numerous starts and stops during a long block period.

Question 6: How did your experience help to prepare to become a better teacher? Did it?

Response:

Yes, I think this experience helped me in many ways. The two greatest were to gain an appreciation for the K12 teacher and to redirect my own [doctoral] research to exploring those issues that kids deal with both in and outside of the classroom in terms of literacy acquisition. Moreover, it opened up my teaching repertoire to a younger level that I would (believe it or not) enjoy going back to some day. [This person had experience as a college-level teacher.]

Question 7: What did you see as the most critical needs of the students?

Response:

Is there a word limit in these responses? Well, I think they need time and attention from caring adults who can help guide
them to see the importance of school. For some lucky kids, this role falls to their parents and they step up to the task. For others, the parents aren't there. Unfortunately, I don't know that the schools can really replace the parents. Without learning, focus, and self-discipline from parents, these kids are unable (and unwilling) to face the bigger literacy tasks that schools and jobs demand.

Question 8: Did you think the ESL program was helping to meet those needs?

Response:

I think the ESL Program meets these needs by bringing in highly qualified teachers and bilingual aide/role models. Obviously, teachers and aides help students with the academic needs, but without meeting the emotional needs (as parents above), the teachers have a difficult upstream swim.

Question 9: What could have been done in addition to help the students and/or their families?

Response:

Perhaps something to sensitize parents who don't yet realize the importance of schooling in America for the future of their children. Maybe a video or special workshop (like the workshop on appropriate discipline measures done with the juvenile judges) would help.

Question 10: In your opinion, what are the benefits, difficulties, and drawbacks to using the literature-based approach in a middle school ESL classroom?
Response:

The benefits are clearly a contextualized, extended reading experience that builds up the children's content knowledge in an area like social studies/history. The difficulties arise in losing their interest if the reading is too long, or with losing the children in the story if they miss school or school itself interrupts for assemblies and such. Short literature pieces are great . . . they expose the children to authentic reading and help build their self-esteem as readers.

I was especially struck with the observations about the critical nature of the parent component. How much more could I have done to involve and maybe even "train" parents in the valuable role they play in their child's education? When would I have found the time? What impact would this have made on the attitude and achievement of the students? Almost every parent expressed concerned about their children's progress, and undoubtedly would have participated to some extent in a program to increase their children's chance for a good future.

In addition to school personnel, I also spent time with community agencies who interacted with the families of my students. I have already discussed the contacts with Children's Services and the visit to the local homeless shelter. I wanted to discover what conditions the students were living under when they
first arrived, since many of my new students came through their facility. I had frequent contact with their case workers, and visited most of the families in their temporary living quarters. Going to the homes of the students and their families gave me invaluable insight into their lives, and sometime during the school year I tried to visit every family. I observed the after-school tutoring and the sports programs offered by the local recreational center and the community center where I discussed areas of possible assistance for some of the students with the employees.

During school, I spent a considerable amount of time acting as a liaison for my students, as indicated in the time study on page 138. I knew that for them to receive the maximum positive treatment, it was necessary that I establish a network of school personnel who were willing to help the students in whatever capacity possible. I realized that "my students" were putting an extra strain on the school so I went out of my way to make sure the strain was lessened whenever possible. Obviously, these students were equally a part of the school as all the other students, but I felt a special level of responsibility toward the students in my program. I believed that if I made someone else's job easier one day, they
would make mine or my students easier the next. With that mindset, I helped the secretary enroll the students, worked with the nurse on immunizations and health referrals, assisted the counselor with testing, walked students to the bus when necessary, and met with the principal regularly on discipline and security issues and kept him updated on the overall status of the program. No job was too small if it would prevent larger problems later. I needed the support of the staff and I felt that only by working together would we be able to meet these students needs.

All of these actions were made with one goal in mind: to help meet the needs of my students. I did not believe that focusing solely on their academic requirements would adequately prepare them for either school or life. Obviously as an ESL teacher, my main focus had to be on improving their English proficiency. However, when I saw situations and difficulties that constituted roadblocks to personal or group success, I had to act. It was these personal actions and interactions that had the greatest impact on myself and my instruction.

I believe that teaching is more than imparting knowledge, what Friere (1993) referred to as the “banking” approach to teaching. The
role of any teacher, and especially an English as a Second Language teacher, goes beyond academics. Teachers are one of the major socialization agents in society, and for students who are entering a new and different society, we often act as guides and interpreters. Friedlander (1991) says that programs for immigrant students such as ESL “offer students a comprehensive array of academic and support services tailored to their special needs.” These services act at orientation components that provide “safety and security for exploration and uncertainty in the initial adjustment period, and address extra-academic concerns and needs that can interfere with adjustment and success in school.” (Lucas, 1997, p.153) It was upon these “extra-academic concerns and needs” that so much of this study concentrated.

Summary

This one-year study of a middle school ESL classroom had a three-pronged focus: the students, the teacher, and the curriculum. An in-depth description of the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of the immigrant students in this study revealed
many areas of difficulty which they must face and overcome. It also described the role the teacher plays in the lives of these students: advocate, cultural interpreter, and mentor. And finally, the study described a curriculum specifically created to assist refugee and immigrant students adapt to their new country and prepare for the academic requirements of their mainstream courses as well as their future.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY FINDINGS, PEDAGOGICAL AND CURRICULAR IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

Research studies are conducted for a purpose. Quantitative studies are conducted, following proven techniques, to discover if a hypothesis can be confirmed. The purposes of qualitative studies are more varied. Some researchers want to describe an event, a group, or a phenomenon. Others seem to have a political or social agenda which they wish to support with descriptive or historical data. While the methods and techniques may vary, each researcher has some subject about which he or she feels passionately enough to
spend the time necessary to conduct an extensive study. It is the profession of teaching which evokes that passion in this researcher.

Teaching is much more than simply presenting new information. The teacher can be one of the most important adults in a child's life, and for second language students, the ESL teacher often plays that crucial role. This study enabled me to open the door of one ESL classroom and allowed the reader to enter the world of secondary immigrant students. It revealed the types of problems and difficulties these students face on a regular basis, some of which may impede academic success. It showed some major considerations that must be taken into account when selecting teaching materials and designing a curriculum for this population, as well as the related instructional decisions.

In this chapter, the findings of this study are reviewed and related to the field of second language teaching and research. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the pedagogical and curricular implications of the study and offers recommendations for further research.
Summary Answers to Initial Research Questions

This study began with three guiding research questions. Each question is discussed separately below.

The first question was: What needs does this specific population of students bring to the middle school classroom which impact and/or impede learning?

The needs represented by the students in this classroom were divided into four broad categories and discussed separately in the text: academic, social, physical, and emotional. The study found that many of the students were experiencing academic difficulties as evidenced by poor grades, a high retention rate, low passage rates on the state-mandated graduation examination, and a below grade level ability in reading and mathematics. Even the students who had a strong educational background such as the Cambodians and the Hispanics were struggling in their content area classes such as social studies and science. Much of the middle school curriculum is based on independent reading and writing. The students in this study were found to be, on the average, three to four years below grade level on reading comprehension skills.
For many students, math skills were also significantly below grade level, with over half the program qualifying for extra math assistance due to math skills below third grade level. Even with half of their academic day (three out of six class periods) devoted to instruction at their academic level, one half were still in danger of retention at semester break and fourteen were eventually forced to repeat their grade.

I saw the daily frustration of students who struggled with class assignments that were beyond their ability to successfully complete. I watched as they vented their frustration through personal conversations, through withdrawal from class activities or from school, and through socially unacceptable behaviors. They would often blame others when work was not completed, pretend they had not understood the directions, or attempt to draw attention away from their academic performance through classroom disruptions. I had worked with learning disabled children before becoming an ESL teacher, and I saw many similarities in the reactions of both groups of students to academic challenges. Many of these students worked conscientiously in my classroom without a problem, but then exhibited some of the behaviors listed above when
confronted with assignments above their ability in other classrooms. The school staff was often equally frustrated because they felt inadequately prepared to work with students who were so far below grade level, and they often did not have the time or the proper resources to adjust their instruction.

In addition to the academic needs of these students, the study found a number of social needs which negatively impacted academic achievement. These included cultural adjustment difficulties, parents with limited educational experiences and therefore limited literacy, a lack of understanding by both the parents and the students of the need for advanced education in American society, communication gaps between children and adults, and a low number of intact nuclear families. Some of these hurdles to academic success, such as cultural adjustment and the value of education in a technological society, were addressed to a limited extent by the curriculum and by activities in the classroom or the school. However, other conditions such as limited parental education and literacy were beyond the venue of the school. Parental involvement in school activities was encouraged, and bilingual personnel were funded by the school district, but overcoming cultural views of the
role of the school and finding ways that parents could assist their students with class assignments required resources the school did not possess.

Physical problems were also prevalent and at times interfered with students' attendance and their ability remain on task. Sometimes they were the result of prior war or refugee experiences, sometimes a result of cultural misunderstandings, and sometimes they were naturally-occurring events. The study listed the types of health-related issues noted by the school nurse and discussed some of the causes. The most common conditions reported by the nurse were poor family follow-up to referrals for hearing, vision, and dental care (sometimes requiring personal visits from social workers or Children's Services), non-compliance to medical treatment for tuberculosis, recurrent cases of head lice, incomplete immunizations, and time-consuming referrals and follow-ups to outside healthcare or social agencies.

The mental health or emotional needs of these students were often as numerous as the physical problems, and many were related to the social and academic difficulties described above. The adolescent years are times of emotional adjustment and growth for
any teenager. Compounding these universal experiences are the linguistic, cultural, and social barriers faced by many immigrants. Students moved frequently due to economics, while parents looked for better jobs or cheaper housing, or simply to avoid overdue bills or rent. In addition, a number of Somali students attended this school as a result of their temporary residence in the local homeless shelter. Many of these students had attended a number of schools in their short academic careers. Cultural and linguistic adjustment was thus compounded by interrupted schooling.

Another emotional problem these students faced was a generation gap with older family members who feared the loss of cultural and linguistic heritage. The difficulty of navigating two social and cultural systems, often which seemed mutually exclusive in the eyes of the adolescent, sometimes led to frustration and at times alienation. Parents feared loss of control and respect while children felt forced to choose between peers and family. Both parents and students were struggling to discover how best to relate to and survive in their new surroundings.

Many of the emotional struggles these students faced centered around the affect their past and present situations had on the family
structure. Loss of family members due to war, economics, or social pressures impacted a large number of students in this study. While adults struggled to adjust to their new surroundings, children faced social and emotional difficulties with limited family support. School personnel are inadequately trained and do not have the resources or the time to properly assist either the child or the family. Outside agencies are not sufficiently linked to educational institutions to provide the necessary support.

Any one of these areas of student need was sufficient to impact student learning, but for a large number of students in this study, a combination of forces was evident. A much more extensive study would have been required to determine how much each individual child was being impacted by these difficulties. However, this researcher sensed the level of frustration and the lack of coping skills evidenced by a large number of students in this class. The frustration was felt as well by the ESL staff and the building personnel as each individual endeavored to assist in whatever way possible to make school a place of success and hope for these students.
The second research question of this study was: What impact has the literature-based program designed specifically to meet the academic needs of these immigrant students had on their reading and academic achievement?

To look at this impact, interviews with students who had completed the three-year curriculum were conducted. Students were asked to describe the value they felt the program had on their knowledge of American history and on their reading ability. Most students reported that the literature-based curriculum had increased their interest in books and their ability to read, as well as their background knowledge of American history and culture. One evidence of this improvement was the 1999 annual assessment of the students' reading comprehension skills. Reading ability levels of students entering in the program were compared to levels of students preparing to exit middle school. This assessment revealed an average increase of 3.1 years in grade level reading over a two-year time period. (See Figure 4.10)

Surveys were conducted of the reading interest and preferences of the students, the types of strategies the students used to construct meaning from texts, and the activities which they
felt were the most beneficial to their understanding of reading passages. One survey revealed that some intermediate and advanced level ESL students still had difficulties decoding (17 of 37), but most (28 of 37) could use context to assist with new vocabulary words. Two-thirds were able to use visualization or prediction to assist in comprehension. When students were asked to rate classroom activities on a preference scale, the students selected these activities as being the most beneficial: periodic explanation by the teacher while reading, dictations, quizzes with advanced warning, and receiving background knowledge before reading.

Overall, the program seemed to meet the needs of the intermediate and advanced students. However, the impact of the curriculum created for the new arrivals was less easy to judge. Less time was available to determine it's usefulness, and the students were less able to make judgments due to limited exposure to education and limited ability to express themselves in English. Even with extensive use of picture books and supplementary materials, students lacked the background knowledge of both text and American history to receive maximum benefit from the curriculum. An inordinate amount of time was spent locating
appropriate material at the reading and content knowledge level of the students.

However, the benefits justified the time expenditure. These students needed to be into print as soon as possible because all of their academic courses demanded at least a rudimentary knowledge of text structure such as how to use a table of contents, a glossary, how to scan for information, and how to summarize. This curriculum combined basic skills such as letter recognition, sound-symbol recognition, handwriting practice in both print and cursive, basic sight word recognition, and sentence development. As many activities as possible were related to trade books, and independent reading was encouraged. I believe that the curriculum developed for these students was critical to their educational foundation, but it was not enough. There was not enough time, in my day or in one school year, to make up for six to eight years of lost education.

In the opinion of the researcher, the best academic placement for these students would have been in an all-day Newcomer Program. However, at the time of the study, no such program was available. This type of program could have eased their transition into secondary school and better prepared the students for the rigors of
middle and high school life by providing instruction at their educational and linguistic level without forcing the children to endure content classes in science, social studies, and math for which they were not prepared, through no fault of their own.

The third research question was: What curricular and instructional decisions occurred systematically during the one-year study of this particular class?

This study revealed the types and numbers of decisions that an ESL teacher must make during a school year. With a classroom of various language levels and educational backgrounds, curricular decisions must be fluid and flexible. The materials and methods that worked with the intermediate and advanced level students were totally inappropriate for the beginners. Even the curriculum that had been used in previous years for students who had come to this class with a grade level education in their native countries did not work with students who had little or no previous formal education. Students with limited prior schooling needed extensive background knowledge introduced and basic academic skills developed. Although the students had mature minds and bodies, with a myriad of life
experiences to be drawn upon, the types of activities which they were required to practice such as handwriting practice were elementary level. The students did not receive the type of intensive instruction they needed because of the constraints of time, physical space, appropriate instructional material, and limited trained personnel. The frustration level of both the students and the staff was extremely high, and frequent curricular and instructional adjustments were necessary.

Curricular decisions often had to be made on an individual basis because the academic needs of the students were so varied. Some students had basic reading and writing skills while others had none. Dividing the class into two groups, beginning and intermediate-advanced, at times was not sufficient. Some of the students with the least skills had to have individual tutoring, but with no extra space and a reliance on volunteers, this program had limited success. And the time required to deal with the social and emotional issues in the class made this arrangement even less successful.

The role of the ESL professionals in the lives of the students and in the organization and operation of the school was apparent
throughout the study. The teacher and the bilingual assistants were the main source of cultural information for many of the students and their families, serving as a link between the child and the formal structure of the school. Their roles were similar to that of a cultural informant in a qualitative research study, in which a member of the target culture explains actions and beliefs to the researcher. The bilingual assistants served in that capacity for the ESL teacher, the school, and for the parents; and the ESL teacher filled that role between the students and the staff. The bilingual assistants spent time with the students and explained which behaviors were acceptable and which were not, interpreted school rules, emphasized the value of education in American society, and encouraged students to respect both their families as well as their native cultures.

The ESL teacher was the main link between the students and school personnel such as the secretaries, the nurse, the counselor, the administration, and the faculty. The teacher served as a liaison and buffer, an interpreter between the social English of the student and the academic jargon of the school. For example, each spring when eighth graders enrolled in high school, I accompanied the
students to the session to assist with course selection and career choice. Students that I knew were interested in college were encouraged to participate in the CCCP class specifically designed for students who were the first in their family to attend college. High school ESL class was not on the printed schedule and I had to be sure students added the class manually or they would be placed in regular English with no assistance. I also helped them to interpret the scheduling forms to determine which were courses were required and how many electives were permitted.

Although it was the impression of this researcher that the curriculum developed for the academic needs of these students, even the beginners, met their basic academic needs related to reading and writing ability and knowledge of American culture, there was not enough time or training to deal with the other difficulties these students faced. Teachers cannot simultaneously work on academic development while attending to social, emotional and health issues. The task was overwhelming. Outside assistance from both the academic community and social agencies must be obtained in order for classroom teachers of any subject, including ESL, to be able to concentrate their efforts on academic achievement.
Pedagogical and Curricular Implications for Educational Professionals

It is the desire of this researcher that the study act as a forum to describe the world of the English as a Second Language student and to inform education professionals of the types of challenges faced by adolescent immigrants. While this study focuses on one particular ESL program with one unique set of students, the description and analysis of this group can contribute to the understanding of similar populations. Cultural adjustments, academic frustrations due to below grade level reading skills, and limited parental involvement were listed as challenges faced by almost every group of limited English proficient students in almost every study investigated for this project (August and Hakuta, 1997; Lucas, 1997; Fu, 1995; and Mace-Matluck et al., 1999). The difficulties faced by these students could help educators to rethink the types of educational and social services needed by similar groups of students.
While it is not the goal of qualitative research to generalize as is possible to do with quantitative studies, it is possible to transfer some of what one sees from one set of data to another related group (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). As educators reflect on the picture of this ESL classroom, they may be influenced to look more closely at the culture and home life of their individual language minority students when making educational decisions.

Particular implications of this study are listed below in three broad and sometimes overlapping categories: the students, the school, and curricular and instructional decisions. What affects the students should affect the teacher when instructional decisions are made.

Student implications

The cultural, religious, and linguistic differences of the language minority students in this study impacted almost every area of the school, not just the academic classrooms. Examples of impacted areas were:

- bus assignment and discipline
- physical education dress codes and activity options
• music selection and performance
• cafeteria menu selection
• religious holiday observation
• counseling groups offered
• library book selections
• enrollment procedures / flexibility
• discipline options
• health care availability
• personnel selection
• alternative grading options
• parental and community involvement

To have discussed each of these items in detail would have taken much more time than was available to adequately cover in this study. However, the difficulties that the students experienced outside of the ESL classroom often impacted the instruction within due to the time required by the ESL staff for intervention in various non-ESL school situations.

Also, this study revealed that while ESL students may have certain characteristics in common, (e.g., need for specialized instruction in reading and writing, limited background knowledge in some content areas, and culture gaps), they may also have much diversity within the group. This particular study was comprised of students from ten countries and four levels of language proficiency who varied in their amount of previous formal schooling, amount of parental support for education, ability to compete academically in
mathematics or reading, post-secondary goals, and willingness to take risks. It was these variables which demanded curricular and instructional alterations as the population and problems changed.

**School implications**

This study focused on one individual school and how it endeavored to establish a program which would meet the needs of its students. Each ESL class has a unique blend of academic and social needs and a unique personality. It is only by looking at each class individually and discovering those needs and personality that the students will have their needs met. However, it is not possible for one person to meet all the needs of any group. It must be the responsibility of the entire school to educate linguistically diverse students, not rest that responsibility solely with the ESL teacher.

Another implications for schools from this study is how the amount of time spent acting as liaison for students affects the amount of time available for instruction. Second language students are placed in an ESL program because they need additional, intensive instruction in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. When so
much of this critical class time is spent on non-instructional activities, the students fall even farther behind. Schools and school systems must provide the support personnel to deal with the social and health issues and leave the ESL teacher time to devote to academic matters. Bilingual social workers and counselors should be available to assist families, perhaps even based in the school for ease of access. Health care workers could aide the school nurses with health screenings and health education. Additional staff development needs to be provided for administrators, faculty, bus drivers and food service personnel to acquaint the staff with cultural differences and concerns. Parents need support in the form of documents in their own language, training in the American school and legal system, knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of parents, and above all respect for their heritage and culture.

Often the ESL teacher and the bilingual assistant are the only contact the parent has with the school. They act in the role of public relations person for the program and the students both in the school and the community. While this is valuable, there needs to be a greater participation of others from the school as well. The cultural and linguistic diversity of the students should be seen as a valuable
resource to be tapped in social studies, art, music, and physical education classes. This occurred to a limited extent in the school year being studied, but much more could have done.

Schools talk about diversity and inclusion, but too often minority language and cultural groups are still marginalized and ignored. For example, when student school assignments were being made for the next school year, several staff members inquired into the reason so many ESL students were placed in this school instead of their "home school." The disruption to the school by this large number of L2 students was resented by some who felt that it was unfair for their school to have this program when other neighboring schools did not.

It is vital that the teacher be familiar with the culture of the students. Because of the bond that often occurs between ESL teacher and student, it is natural that the ESL teacher is more intimately familiar with the details of the cultures and beliefs of the students, both to better relate with child and parent, and also to act as the cultural liaison for the staff. But all teachers should have a basic knowledge of the religious beliefs and practices of their students, their holidays, clothing styles and restrictions,
language, and a basic knowledge of the politics, history, geography, and educational system of their native countries. For example, it was important for the staff to know that the Somali students are Moslems who fast during the month of Ramadan and to avoid strenuous activity during gym class or lunch trips to McDonald's at that time as a reward. They also needed to know that the three boys from Sierra Leone were living together because other family members were trapped in their home country and could not escape. This type of knowledge prevented difficulties and built bridges with the students and their parents. Cultural and personal information such as that listed was disseminated by the ESL teacher to the school staff through written documents, in person, or at staff meetings.

Curricular and instructional decision implications

This study indicated that curricular decisions must be made with the knowledge of the student's abilities, goals, short- and long-term needs, and district policy. All teachers must adjust instruction based on these same criteria, but few classrooms have
the range of previous education, cultural diversity, and linguistic proficiency as that found in an ESL class. At times, some of the students were receiving individualized instruction while others were performing group work. In this one secondary ESL classroom, students' abilities ranged from preschool to near grade level in academic proficiency and their oral English ability varied from totally non-verbal to near-native level proficiency. Some students required constant monitoring and intense assistance and others needed only group instruction and occasional encouragement. Instruction had to be fluid and flexible as the situation demanded.

Materials had to be available for each proficiency level and in a variety of mediums: textbooks, audio and video tapes, software, reading material for various reading levels, and supplementary material such as visuals, manipulatives, and consumable supplies. Some of these materials were already in the classroom, some were furnished by the district as the need arose, and others were purchased by the ESL staff. Operating this ESL program was expensive but was seen as a long term commitment on the part of the school district. Evidence of this commitment was the placement of two additional staff members, a Somali bilingual assistant and a
math teacher, into the classroom in the middle of the school year. Converting a teacher's lounge to a math tutoring area was a joint decision by the administration and the building council (teachers selected by the staff to make building level decisions). The school realized that these students had special and unique needs and was willing to make sacrifices to help meet those needs.

Recommendations for Further Research

As a result of this study, certain questions were raised in the mind of the researcher which indicated that further research is needed on the following topics pertaining to immigrant education at the secondary level. These questions have been listed below in the corresponding categories used in the study.

Academic needs of immigrant students

8. What is the impact limited English proficiency has on the ability of ELLs to comprehend academic content material?
August and Hakuta state that "We need to know how early in the process of second-language acquisition speakers can profit from participation in challenging pedagogical conversations and whether simple modifications of the language used can speed that access." (1997, p. 73) Approaches such as content-based ESL and sheltered instruction, two programs that modify classroom language, need to be studied further to determine effectiveness.

7. What is the effect of sheltered instruction for secondary students?

This question relates to number one in that much early content instruction especially designed for ELLs occurs in a sheltered course. Studies on its effectiveness would assist with program development and curriculum design. How effective is specialized instruction such as that received in the math class created for the students in this study? Would sheltered classes in social studies and science have been less stressful and a better use of instructional time than the mainstreamed grade level courses given at this site?
3. What is the best placement and programming for students with interrupted education?

The Mace-Matluck et al. study (1998) which focused on five students with limited formal schooling was an excellent beginning, but more needs to be done on the most effective programs for adolescent immigrants who have gaps in their education. How can school systems condense thirteen years of education into four to seven? Joy Kreeft Payton and Donna Christian of the Center of Applied Linguistics list four factors which contribute to the poor academic performance of these students:

- A school structure that does not easily facilitate the movement from program to program or school to college or work,
- An instructional program that does not adequately involve ELLs
- Few program or curricular alternatives for students with low literacy skills and limited academic backgrounds
- A shortage of trained staff to deal with this specific population (Walqui, 2000, p. xv)

A similar list needs to be compiled of factors which contribute to their success.
What can be done about the high dropout rate among Hispanics and Southeast Asians?

Studies of why the dropout rate is greater with certain groups of students may help educators find more effective programs for dealing with these at-risk populations. In this study, three girls stopped attending during their eighth grade year, and two of the boys who were expelled for violent behavior refused to attend a specialized discipline school, choosing to stay home. None of these students were 16 years of age and old enough to legally "drop-out," so they were not considered as part of the district statistics. Yet they were no longer attending school and unlikely to return. Studies of the reasons students leave school early and what could be done to slow this process would be invaluable.

The impact of high-stakes testing on the education of limited English proficient students should look at the impact of these tests on the self-esteem of LEP students, the impact on their dropout rate, and the impact on curricular decisions in the individual classroom and across the nation.
• Studies of the best placement and instruction for ELLs with special education needs is critical for those students who require additional support beyond language development.

During the school year in which this study took place, three students were recommended to be tested for possible placement in a special education program. None of these students received this testing because of parental refusal. What could the school system have done to overcome the perceived social stigma associated with a child who is different? What type of training do special education teachers need to provide optimal instruction to culturally and linguistically diverse students? Limited studies have been conducted in this critical area (Siegel and Halog, 1986; Chan, 1983).

• Additional studies need to be conducted on the attributes of effective secondary second language classrooms.

August and Hakuta (1997, p.192) argued for more studies that focus on long-term ESL students (students who remain in ESL throughout their education) and also for studies that concentrate on the limited
amount of time available to secondary immigrants to develop language proficiency. Both groups of students, beginning level ELLs and long-termers, were represented in this study. Can a "one curriculum fits all" program be effective for the academic needs of such divergent populations, or does instruction and curriculum have to be modified to meet the specific needs of the students being served? Who decides on and defines the attributes of an effective L2 classroom?

- More studies are needed on the effectiveness of Newcomer Programs for students with limited formal schooling.

Only two studies, Chang, (1990) and Friedlander (1991), have dealt exclusively with the development of these specialized transitional programs for adolescent immigrants. The Center for Applied Linguistics is in the process of compiling a list of such programs across the United States and defining the types of programs offered. Studies on the effectiveness of various configurations of services is needed as more such programs are created.
Social needs of immigrant adolescents

Studies that focus on the social needs of adolescent immigrants have been even fewer than those with an academic focus. Some of the areas of particular interest are listed below.

7. What are the effects of peer pressure on ELLs?

The students in this study often felt torn between acceptance by their peers and their new American culture and compliance with the cultural mores of their family and heritage. Cultural adjustment and conflict was a constant theme of classroom discussion.

- What are some possible methods for decreasing cultural conflict in second language classrooms and in the school as a whole? How effective are programs of diversity and tolerance with adolescents and with school staff members?

The interview with the Cambodian bilingual assistant in this study revealed her concern over conflicts between cultural groups in this
classroom. She witnessed on a regular basis the tension and at times outright violence between students from various cultures. Three of the expulsions which occurred during the year being studied were the result of fights between students from different ethnic heritages. Two of the expulsions involved weapons and one was a physical attack by a large eighth grader against a smaller sixth grader. Studies on how to diffuse potentially dangerous situations and how to prevent them with education are needed.

- Studies have been conducted on the value of parental involvement in education (Hidalgo, 1995; Epstein, 1990), but what are the most effective ways to involve the parents of second language students in their children's education?

American schools place a major emphasis on parental involvement, but many of the immigrant parents in this study expressed the belief that it is the school's place to educate and that parents should trust teachers to do what is best. What can schools do to better involve the parents and what effect would this have on the progress of the children?
Physical needs of immigrant adolescents

- Of primary importance to health care professional and educators would be studies on the impact limited access to health care has on academic achievement of ELLs. These studies could include the barriers, both real and perceived, that prevent adequate access.

The August and Hakuta book (1997) lists areas of research which could improve the education of language minority children but does not mention the health care needs of these students. Students with an earache, a toothache, or poor vision cannot stay on task and fully participate in class activities. Students in the study were often unable to concentrate because of unresolved health concerns such as lost and unreplaced glasses, stomach disorders, unrefilled prescriptions, and infections. Others were temporarily excluded from school due to missing vaccinations or tuberculosis medication or because of recurrent lice infestations. Even though most students qualified for free medical treatment, the clinics were inconveniently located and few had translators available for parents.
Consequently, some issues were not resolved until threats were made by the school nurse or Children's Services to intervene. Studies could be conducted to reveal the impact such health-related problems have on student achievement. Other studies could focus on models for improving health care access to minority cultures and the effectiveness of such models.

**Emotional needs of immigrant adolescents**

Studies dealing with the emotional needs of adolescent immigrants should include:

6. Were some of the violent behaviors exhibited by the students in this study the result of post traumatic stress syndrome? What types of programs could help alleviate some of this anger and frustration?

- What impact could bilingual social workers and counselors have on the emotional health and academic achievement of language minority students?
This study revealed the myriad of emotional issues that one group of ELLs experienced in one school year. How many other issues were present in this class that were not so apparent, but possibly as serious? Could a trained counselor have assisted these children make a smoother cultural adjustment? What type of training would be necessary to work with students who are experiencing post traumatic stress disorder? Would such a program have impacted academic achievement and how much?

• Studies on the effectiveness of bilingual social workers could include a focus on such questions as: What are the challenges faced by bilingual social workers and counselors in working with linguistic minority families? Does working with these families require specialized training? What kind and how much? What cultural and linguistic barriers do they face and how can they be overcome?

• Additional studies are needed to look at how educational personnel could have better access to family and social services
and what part school districts should have in providing these services.

Family and social service agencies were present in the community of this study, but the interaction between these agencies and the school district was extremely limited. Usually, unless the parents contacted the school and informed the teacher or administrator of the activity of these agencies in the family life of the child, the school had no knowledge of the contact. How much more effective could such programs be through joint cooperation? These services are expensive, and discussions have been held in the school district to possibly house some social services in the school, but few such programs have been established. Models could be created and studied to determine cost and program effectiveness.

Studies conducted into each of these areas, the academic, social, physical, and emotional challenges faced by immigrant adolescents, could provide insight into the best practices for the education of linguistically diverse students at the secondary level. Educators, health care providers, and social service agencies would

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discover how best to serve their clients. The students and their families would be the ultimate beneficiaries of these improvements.

The literature-based ESL curriculum and immigrant adolescents

August and Hakuta (1997) have much to say about the cognitive aspects of language learning and the impact literacy has on language development. In fact, they stated that with older ELLS, "it is possible that literacy can be a major source of language learning." (p. 73) However, they felt that with "regard to reading instruction in a second language, there is remarkable little directly relevant research." (p. 59) Studies need to be conducted on the various types of literacy instruction for second language students, with an emphasis on their effectiveness with students from various cultures and/or previous levels of education.

In addition, other studies are needed which focus on the following related questions:

• What types of literature best appeals to ELLs?
• What criteria should teachers use in selecting reading material for ELLs?
• What is the effect of multicultural literature on increased student self-esteem and enhanced cultural sensitivity?
• What criteria should be used in selecting multicultural material for second language classrooms?

Some of these questions were addressed in this study. For example, the reading preference survey conducted with this class revealed which types of books were preferred by this group of students. Similar surveys could be conducted with a larger audience to determine the types of literature generally preferred by L2 adolescents. Similarly, this study listed the criteria utilized to determine the novels chosen for this curriculum. Surveys or interviews of other ESL teachers would reveal a more extensive and universal list of criteria.

Curricular and instructional decisions affecting immigrant adolescents
Some of the possible research topics suggested by this study relate to individual classroom instructional and curricular decisions, other topics concern English as a second language classrooms in general, while still others focus on the training second language teachers receive before entering the classroom. The study revealed that a classroom in which the literacy and English language proficiency levels of the students is in flux requires flexibility of curriculum and frequent changes in material and delivery. Studies of teacher curricular choices would help delineate criteria for these changes. Suggested areas for study include:

- How do teachers make curricular and material decisions for multilevel classes or for students with little or no previous formal education? On what basis are those decisions made?
- Should the focus for these students be oral proficiency first or oral proficiency combined with literacy instruction? Should the initial instruction occur in the native language first, should it be bilingual, or should it be English alone?
- Which curriculum and materials work best with these groups? On what basis is the effectiveness of the materials to be
determined? Who should select the materials and curriculum, the individual teacher, a committee, or the school district?

- How can teacher training instruction best prepare teachers to instruct multilevel classes, students with limited formal schooling, and adolescent immigrants?
- Do current second language methods courses adequately prepare teachers to be first-line literacy instructors for students with no literacy in their native language? What type of teacher preparation is needed for such classrooms?

Limitations

One of the strengths of this study, that is was conducted in a classroom by a participant of the program it describes, was also one of its limitations. Being a daily member of the class under study gave the research a unique and intimate perspective, but the act of conducting a study involved time normally reserved for classroom preparation. Being both a researcher and a teacher occasionally meant writing field notes and observations while instructing, collecting more student work and demographic data than ordinarily
would have been required, and juggling two full-time duties at the same time. However, the duties of researcher also created an opportunity for reflection upon the role of teacher beyond that normally pursued. It forced the researcher to see the classroom from the viewpoint of the student, the parent, the bilingual assistant, the student teacher, the administrator, and the school nurse. Each perspective added a depth of dimension to the study and also enabled the teacher to view the dynamics of the classroom as a composite of many divergent forces.

Ethnographies by their nature focus on one group of people, in one location, and at one time. Without the use of scientific methods such as random selection and statistical analysis, generalizations cannot be made to all similar populations. But trends can be viewed and questions raised which inspire further studies. Through qualitative studies, the story of one group of individuals can be told in detail and interest raised in the conditions under which they operate. It is the desire of this researcher to share one such story.
Conclusion

This study was designed to follow a group of adolescent immigrants through one school year, focusing on the main issues which impacted their academic achievement. The study grouped these issues in four broad categories: academic, social, physical, and emotional. Personal, family, and school situations were described which affected the students in each of these areas. School personnel were interviewed to determine their impression of the types and severity of difficulties faced by this particular population of secondary students. A curriculum which was specifically designed to assist second language students with critical reading, writing, and study skills was researched. The daily instructional decisions that were made in the implementation of the curriculum were also analyzed and reported.

With the largest wave of immigrants to the United States in one hundred years now entering our classrooms, this study described implications for educators nationwide. No longer is the "immigration problem" confined to the major port cities and the border states, as immigrant families settle wherever employment is
available. School districts across the US are struggling to create programs and environments that foster academic success for new arrivals. They are beginning to realize that the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of these students are often acute and require the combined resources of both the school and the community. Studies such as this will add to the body of knowledge educators need to make more informed decisions on the educational programs and social services best suited for these students.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: "Immigrants flock to Columbus" (Monday, August 30, 1999), Mansfield News Journal, p. B1.

Appendix B: "Columbus tops list of new destinations for recent refugees" (January 26, 2001), The Columbus Dispatch, p. C4.


Appendix D: Trittschuh, D. "Report cards are in . . . " (Thursday, April 12, 1999), Westside Messenger, p. 1


Appendix H: Hilltonia Middle School ESL Program Student Demographic Data, February, 1999.


Appendix J: Letter of Consent for Participation in Research Study, Protocol Number 00E0248


Appendix M: Reading Interest Survey, 1998

Appendix N: Reading Skills Survey, 1998

Appendix O: Grounded Survey on Reading Activity Preferences, 1999

Appendix P: Citations of Children's Literature Referenced in Text
APPENDIX A

"Immigrants Flock to Columbus"
Monday, August 30, 1999
Mansfield News Journal
p. B1
Immigrants flock to Columbus

COLUMBUS (AP) — A century
that began with immigrants flocking to Ohio's northeast is ending
with a migration to the state capital.

Led by thousands of Hispanics
and refugees from conflicts in
Africa, new arrivals are taking
advantage of low rents, low
unemployment and plenty of
work in central Ohio.

"Columbus is booming, bigger
and bigger," said Selcuk Tunc,
a Turkish immigrant who
arrived in 1994. "Wherever I go,
people ask me, 'Why Columbus?'
My answer is, 'Why not Columbus?'

Hispanics, mainly Mexicans,
made up the largest group of
recent immigrants in Columbus,
Linda Garcia, executive director
of the state Hispanic-Latino Com-
mission, estimates that the num-
er of Hispanics here — 15,000 in
the 1990 census— has since
grown.

"In my work I have encoun-
tered people who are moving
from states such as California,
New Mexico, New York because
they've heard of the jobs here," Garcia
said.

Garcia said the unemployment
rate is 19 percent, lowest of any big
Ohio city.

Other immigrants include
about 4,500 Ethiopians, 3,000 peo-
ple from Liberia — which gained
independence from Ethiopia in
1991 — 7,000 Southeast Asians
and 4,000 South Jews, accord-
ing to city estimates.

Jahun Makonnen, a social worker
from Ethiopia who settled in
Columbus in 1993, estimates about
100 Ethiopians a month are arriv-
ing from other U.S. cities or
directly from Ethiopia. Most of
these are fleeing renewed ten-
csions following border skirmishes
with Eritrea.

The same home share the
same goal she had upon her
departure. "To live peacefully,
which was America," Makonnen,
41, said.

Refugees from human rights
violations in Yugoslavia, a coun-
try on Africa's west coast, now
number at least 400 in Columbus.
That number is expected to
increase dramatically as the
refugees, mostly men, bring
their wives and children, said
Lori Enzler, city community rela-
tions coordinator.

Estimates of the number of
immigrants from Somalia run as
high as 6,000, up from less than
20 a decade ago.

Seid Saleh, an outreach work-
er for an immigrant services
agency, gave up on what he des-
cribed as the crime and overcrowd-
ing in Minneapolis and
moved to Columbus in February.

"There's a lot of job openings
here. Somalis people like to work,"
Saleh said, 41. "They hate
depending on welfare. They like
helping themselves and their fam-
ilies."

During the 18th century,
Columbus saw large numbers
of Germans who arrived as let-
ters following the European rev-
lutions of 1848.

But most immigrants coming
to Ohio today are not of
industrial powerhouse
Akron, Cleveland and
Youngstown.

The new wave of migration
of the late 1990s and early 2000s
— Europeans fleeing
the Atlantic and Eastern Bloc
remaining home — make
up the capital city, but
the Midwest, home to Ohio's
highest brains, is
not immune.

"Columbus was a political and
commercial city as opposed to an
industrial city," said Linda
Parks, of Ohio State University,
assistant professor of
geography.

Yet Columbus is also home to
Ohio's largest immigrant popu-
lation, which has grown in the past 20
decades.

The percentage of foreign-
born residents in Cleveland
nearly doubled from 7 percent in
1990 to 15 percent in 2000.

During the same period, the
percentage in Columbus grew
from 3 percent to 7 percent.

According to U.S. Census
figures, about 27,500
immigrants live in the city. That's
equivalent to more than
1,000 residents Columbus
is 0.7 percent of the state's
population.
APPENDIX B

"Columbus Tops List of Destinations for Recent Refugees"
Mary Mogan Edwards
The Columbus Dispatch
Monday, January 26, 2001
p. C4
Columbus tops list of new destinations for recent refugees

Grants available to start programs for immigrants

By Mary Magee Edwards
Dispatch Staff Reporter

People who keep track of immigration and refugee resettlement have noticed that central Ohio is getting plenty of each — and that attention could bring money to help the newcomers become part of the community.

Columbus tops a list of cities invited to apply for grant money from the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The city extended the invitation to 84 cities that, like Columbus, don't have a history of immigration but have begun to attract immigrants and refugees in recent years.

"Our premise is that the six major states already have some experience in meeting immigrants' and refugees' needs, said Ann Mason, director of the Immigrant Policy Project for the conference.

New immigration destinations, such as Columbus, are just beginning to discover what needs to be done to smooth the path of immigrants into society.

In Columbus, the city government and United Way of Central Ohio will work together to apply for the grant, United Way spokeswoman Sharan Keeney said, "We see this as a great opportunity."

The partners haven't worked out the specifics of their proposal, but city health officials are involved and access to health care is likely to figure in, said Mike Brown, spokesman for Mayor Michael B. Coleman.

"This is something we're dealing with already," Brown said, citing $71,000 set aside in the new budget for interpreters at city health clinics.

Under the three-year grant program, cities will be chosen. Each will get up to $75,000 this year and will use it to spend six months developing a plan to better serve immigrants and refugees.

In 2002 and 2003, grant winners could get up to $150,000 each year for programs such as setting up special schools for newcomers, creating outreach offices in local government providing English training or encouraging local banks to set up nontraditional services for refugees and immigrants.

Figures included with the grant invitation estimate that the Columbus metropolitan area has 60,000 foreign-born residents, or about 5 percent of the population. Of those who were born outside the United States, 65 percent arrived in the country in the past 10 years — the highest percentage of recent arrivals among all cities included in the invitation.

Columbus' newcomers are dominated by three groups: refugees from Somalia's civil war, Latin American immigrants and those from Asia.

Official estimates of Columbus' foreign-born population likely are low because those groups, especially undocumented immigrants, often don't participate and aren't counted in surveys.

For Columbus' thousands of Somalian refugees, learning English is at the top of the list of needs, said Nasir Iman, director of the Somali Community Center.

Along with English instruction, immigrants need training to develop their own supportive organizations and community leaders, said Erica Shell-Costa, who leads a Latino Outreach Committee of the United Way's Westland Area Family Violence Initiative.

The eligible cities all are outside the six states that have been immigration centers — California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York and Texas.
APPENDIX C

"The Somalis"
Jeff Long
Columbus Monthly
December, 2000
Fleeing a civil war in Africa, they have arrived by the thousands, settling on the northeast side, affecting schools, trying to learn the language. Columbus, it turns out, has become their capital-in-exile.

Jim Stowe, chief of the city's Community Relations Commission, is talking about the Somali population. Like pretty much everybody else two or three years ago, he didn't know a thing about Somalia, had no idea tens of thousands of Somali refugees would soon land in Columbus. Since then, he's had quite an education. Asked how so many refugees ended up here from a far-off country with as much in common with Columbus, Ohio, as the surface of Mars, he says, "Somalis are nomads, you know."

Indeed they are. Current anthropological wisdom says the first Somalis migrated with their herds from grazing land in Kenya toward the Indian Ocean to what is now southern Somalia. From there, seeking water and better grazing ground, ancestral Somalis spread north toward the Gulf of Aden, and east, toward present-day Ethiopia.

Somalis had settled on the entire Horn of Africa by 2000 B.C., scholars now believe, though "settled" isn't quite the right word. For the better part of 2,000 years, driving their herds from pasture to pasture with the seasons has been life for most Somalis. "A normal Somali boy would get up in the morning, milk the camels, take them to the pasture and spend the whole day there," says Fatima Bibi, a Somali native who's been in Columbus a year. "Somalis are nomads," she says. "I would say 70, 75 percent are nomad by background."

Still, this does not begin to explain how a city that very recently had only a small handful of Somali immigrants—fewer than 50 four years ago—now has one Somali who's been in Columbus
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The violence is deadly, and the central place occupied by Islam in Somalin society has been further reinforced by its appeal to the Somali event through its religion and culture. This growth of Islam has led to a significant rise in the number of Muslims in Somalia. However, this growth has also been accompanied by increased tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims. The government has taken steps to accommodate the needs of Muslims, but the situation remains sensitive.

Says Kei Waddell, director of Columbus Somalia's ESL program, in which nearly half of the 2,000 students are Somali, "It's overwhelming because they are coming in so quickly."

From the airport that room Somaliland, "It's true, people actually live by the handouts."

With a Somali Somali Community Organization in Columbus, makes historic step bringing together the Somali friends and creating a Somali community in Columbus. Somali in Ohio over the past couple years. Columbus may yet become Somalia's capital outside, the New York for the 18th in the 19th century.

"In the last ten years and two years in Kenya, says Somalia interpreter Sandi Smith, who has moved to Columbus with his family, "I have never been to Somalia before and I am not sure how it is going to be like."

"I live in Toronto, Canada and the climate is not the same."

Columbus. Columbus is a city known for its cultural diversity. The city is home to a large Somali community, which is the largest in the United States.

The Somali Community Association has been working to bring Somali culture and language to Columbus. The city of Columbus has the largest Somali community in the United States.
The Somali Community Association of America (SCAA) is a non-profit organization that serves the Somali community in the United States. The SCAA provides various services and programs to assist Somali refugees and immigrants in adapting to life in the United States. The organization works to preserve and promote the Somali culture and heritage, and to advocate for the rights of Somalis and their families. The SCAA also provides resources and support to Somali businesses, artists, and community leaders.

The SCAA is based in Columbus, Ohio, and has chapters in other cities across the United States. The organization is dedicated to empowering Somali communities and fostering inclusive and diverse societies. The SCAA is committed to addressing the unique challenges faced by Somali refugees and immigrants, and to promoting their full participation in American society.

The SCAA provides a range of services and programs, including cultural and language classes, health and social services, and job training and placement assistance. The organization also sponsors cultural and community events, and provides opportunities for Somalis to showcase their talent and artistic expression. The SCAA is a valuable resource for Somali communities, and plays an important role in promoting cultural understanding and social inclusion.
"Again, it's the language, the culture," Bibi says—different speech, different dress, different custom, such as the modesty Islam requires of women—致使 them to so much of the American way of life.

In 1995, violence broke out at the Capital Park apartment complex on Agler Road after an American youth stabbed a Somali girl in the head of a Somali girl. "Sanmen came to argue the issue."

There were other minor incidents, distressing, to say the least, to Somali immigrants.

One would not readily leave such a culture for a rich American city like Columbus, where materialism reigns supreme. Don't know much about mosques, but have you been to a hotel?

"Even though strange forces have pulled them out of their country, Somali people still want to keep their religion and their culture," says Idris Warsame, who works with the Somali and East Africa Development and Economic Coordinator SEADEC program, which has a contract with Franklin County to aid Somali immigrants.

"In America they end up in low-income neighborhoods that are violent, where kids are not cared for in a proper way, so the parents worry," Warsame says.

No strangers to violence and tragedy in their own country, the Somali community here seemed shocked when the guilt of life in an American city hit home. In September '95, a Somali teen was shot to death during a stabbing, and earlier this year two Somali boys drowned in the Scioto. They'd never been to the river before, one boy's mother said.
Bill says, "There are a lot of drugs around, violence, predatory, kids get tangled, they are going hand-to-hand. Parents worry that their children will start to simulate what they see around them."

But more disheartening, says Bill, is the climate in the U.S. for Somali refugees. "It took us three years to get to the United States, and then we had to be in a refugee camp for a year."

The biggest challenge is language. "If you don't speak English, it's really hard to get a job."

"Even more disillusioning," Bill says, "is that there are a lot of Somalis who have been here for a long time and have no papers."

"We think these people are from Africa, we thought they would be the first to help us. It's disappointing," says Warsame.

"Everyone," says Warsame, "is black. The language is different, the religion is different, we don't use the same tools. They don't understand the idea of a Christian community. When they don't have religion, there's maybe a reluctance to blend together. There's some tension that has to be released in the community."

The trouble at Crystal Park brought the Community Relations Commission to the forefront. "This was the first time, really, that we became aware of the sheer number of Somalis in Columbus. The numbers were not overwhelming. We realized they had to come to terms," says Brown.

"The Community Relations Commission's role is to assist the community, to help them make decisions, to get on top of it." Brown says. "We sort of remain the coordinators for efforts to assist Somalis."

"We brought together social service agencies that were already serving the Somali community, like the IRC and Jewish Family Services, and groups which could help further, like United Way, the Urban League and the Community Refugee and Immigration Services. We put together community meetings where we tried to identify their [Somali], perspective on what their needs were." Brown says. "We helped establish the Somali Community Association."

"Bringing the most pressing needs was the biggest challenge, and it's really hard to get anywhere. It's hard to get the Somali Community Association to stick with it for a year to be a one-stop multi-agency kid shop."

Educated Somalis may find themselves in jobs below their abilities, says Husein. "I know a guy who was a banker in Somalia, but he has very little English-he's having a difficult time even looking for a job."

Younger Somalis have trouble with the minimum qualifications for the lower-paying entry-level jobs even in Columbus's wider-open job market. "Let's say you go to McDonald's for a job, they want to know what experience you have, they want to know where you've been working, some places want to do a background check," Husein says. "Young Somalis may have spent the past few years in a refugee camp and have never worked anywhere. What do they say on a background check?"

"Many Somalis have been placed successfully in warehouse jobs that require little in the way of language skills. Husein says. SEASC Director Russell Wolcott, who worked in Somalia for a number of years, says it's been good luck placing Somalis in warehouse jobs at Seasco, which produces and sells furniture, he says.

"The market is really a major issue." Wolcott says, "We have a contract with the government to do a lot of work, and we need to make sure that we're able to get all the Somalis who are able to get there."

"We've been trying to find a way to make sure that we get the people who are able to get there."

Even Somalis who find shelter and a job soon learn, as Andy Kaufman's immigrant character on "Taxi" used to say, "America's a tough town."

"They come to America thinking it's paradise," Bill says. "They see America and they love it. But then you come..."
APPENDIX D

"Report Cards are in . . ."
Dan Trittschuh
Westside Messenger
Thursday, April 12, 1999
Report cards are in... 

Hilliard performs well; 
South-Western is sketchy; 
Columbus at rock bottom 

By Dan Trlitschelh 
Westside Editor 

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) released results last week on the performance of all school districts in the state. Ohio law requires each Ohio school district to receive a performance accountability rating based on 10 performance standards beginning in the year 2000. These 10 standards are minimum performance goals for public education in the state. 

The 10 performance standards were based on school district performance in the areas of: 4th grade proficiency tests, 8th grade proficiency tests, 12th grade proficiency tests, student attendance and graduation rates. 

In Hilliard City Schools, student performance was above the state minimum standards in 13 of the 18 performance areas. According to ODE standards, Hilliard is an example of a district which displays "Continuous Improvement." 

In South-Western City Schools, student performance was above the state minimum standards in only 6 of the 18 performance areas. This gives the district an "Academic Watch" rating with ODE. 

In Columbus Public Schools, student performance was above the state minimum standards in only 4 of the 18 performance areas, and received the rating of "Academic Emergency" by ODE. 

Statewide, Ohio school districts marked a combined average of 19 of 10 on the performance standards. 

Scores of 17 and above are deemed to be "Effective" by ODE; 10-16 is considered to show "Continuous Improvement;" scores of 6-9 indicate a district an "Academic Watch;" and districts scoring at 5 or below are considered to be an "Academic Emergency." 

Of 49 school districts in Central Ohio (including Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway and Union counties), only one school district – Granville – received an "Effective" rating from ODE. Granville students met the minimum standards of achievement in 17 of the 18 performance areas. 

Columbus Public Schools fared the poorest of all 49 Central Ohio districts. No other Central Ohio district received an "Academic Emergency" rating from ODE. 

Out of the 49 Central Ohio School Districts, 37 districts received a "Continuous Improvement" (10-16 score) rating and 15 received an "Academic Watch" (6-9) rating. 

The top five performing school districts in Franklin County included: Beavercreek, Dublin, Granville Heights and Upper Arlington, all with a score of 16; and New Albany/Plain Local with a score of 15. 

A breakdown of revenue sources for Hilliard, Columbus and South-Western City Schools is as follows: Hilliard receives 60.1 percent of its annual local revenue from local taxes, 30.6 percent from the State of Ohio, and 1.3 percent from the federal government; South-Western receives 51.1 percent of its annual total revenue from local taxes, 25.3 percent from the State of Ohio, and 6.8 percent from the federal government; Columbus Public Schools receives 54.4 percent of its total annual revenue from local taxes, 36.4 percent from the State of Ohio, and 9.1 percent from the federal government.
APPENDIX E

Columbus City School District
Ohio Department of Education
Columbus City School District
Franklin County

Dear Parents and Community Members:

This report card encourages you to become more involved in your schools' improvement efforts. While it cannot tell the whole story, it provides a good starting point to learn how your schools are performing.

Educators, parents, community leaders, and students are working together to achieve excellence in our schools. We are Raising the Bar — by setting high expectations; Closing the Gap — by ensuring that every student has the opportunity to succeed; and Accepting No Excuses — by taking responsibility for improving all of our schools for all of our children.

Thank you for joining us in our commitment to make Ohio's schools among the best in the nation by 2003. It is a challenging goal — and one we must achieve for the sake of our children.

SusanTermel Martha W. White
Superintendent of Public Instruction President, State Board of Education

What to do with this information:

✓ Share your thoughts about the report card with your superintendent, local school board members, principals, and teachers.
✓ Ask district and school staff for information about what's being done to improve performance — and ask how you can help those efforts.
✓ Discuss the results with other parents in your community.
✓ Review the results with your children — so they see how their performance fits into the "big picture" — and support and encourage them to succeed.

Inside you will find information about how well your schools are doing — where they are succeeding and where there is room for improvement.
HOW WELL DID YOUR DISTRICT PERFORM?

Ohio law calls for each Ohio school district to receive a performance accountability rating based on 27 performance standards beginning in the year 2000. These 27 standards are minimum performance goals for public education in our state.

Your District's 1993-99 Results At a Glance

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Writing</td>
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</tr>
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<td>18. Reading</td>
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<td>Grade 12 Proficiency Tests</td>
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<td>22. Mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Reading</td>
<td>65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Writing</td>
<td>60%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Science*</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
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<td>26. Student Attendance Rate</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<td>27. Graduation Rate</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Your District Met 5 of the 27 State Standards.

* The Ohio Board of Education reported that 11 districts met fewer than 5 of the 27 standards; 2 districts met 5-12 standards; 14 districts met 13-23 standards, and 7 districts met 24-27 standards.
One important measure of a district's performance is how students perform on Ohio's Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests, which students must pass in order to receive a high school diploma. The charts on this page show the percentage of ninth-grade students in your district who passed each test, as well as those who passed all required tests.

Your district's passing rate is compared to "similar districts" and to the overall state average. Similar districts were identified based on (1) size; (2) poverty level; (3) family income, education levels and professions; (4) factors related to urban or rural location; and (5) district property tax wealth. For a list of the districts in your similar district group, see the note below.

**Percentage of Students Passing Each Test**

1998-99 School Year

- **Math**
  - Your District: 65%
  - Similar Districts: 67%
  - State Average: 72%

- **Reading**
  - Your District: 58%
  - Similar Districts: 61%
  - State Average: 66%

- **Science**
  - Your District: 53%
  - Similar Districts: 56%
  - State Average: 63%

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**WANT MORE INFORMATION?**

Columbus City School District (Franklin County)

To obtain your own child's individual performance results, contact your local school district office at (614) 355-5000. District officials also will be able to provide you with more detailed information about your district's overall results (including report cards for individual schools within the district), strategies for improving performance, your district's policy on parental involvement including specific ways in which you can become involved.

*For more information, including your district's similar district group, visit the Ohio Department of Education's web site (http://www.ode.state.oh.us/) or call toll-free (877) 772-4777.
STATE PROFICIENCY TESTS — DISTRICT RESULTS

Performance tests are given each year to Ohio students in grades 4, 6, 9 and 12 to test their knowledge and skills in core subject areas. Students have multiple opportunities between grades 8 and 12 to pass Ohio's Ninth Grade Proficiency Tests, which are a requirement for graduation.

### 1998-99 Performance Results and Comparisons

Minimum state performance standards have been established by law. These columns show how your district performed against the state standards, and in comparison to similar districts and to the state average. For similar districts, the average passing rate and the highest passing rate in the group are provided. Similar districts were identified based on size, poverty level, income, education levels and professions, testing results, urban or rural location, and property tax wealth. For a list of the districts in your similar district group, call (614) 792-7771.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO PASSED THE TESTS</th>
<th>Minimum State Standard</th>
<th>Your District Results</th>
<th>Similar Districts Average</th>
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<th>State Average</th>
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### QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- How many of the state's minimum performance standards did your district meet?
- How is your district doing compared to other districts with similar characteristics?
- What efforts are under way to improve areas where results are not satisfactory — or where the district is not improving?
- How can you help your child do well in school — and how can the school support your efforts at home?
YOUR DISTRICT'S 3-YEAR PERFORMANCE RESULTS

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO PASSED THE TESTS

This page shows your district's results on state proficiency tests for each of the last three years. This information can help you see whether performance in these areas is improving or declining over time.

The bar charts at the top of the page illustrate the results for two of the most critical tests—fourth and ninth grade. The results at the bottom provide the passage rate for each of the other proficiency tests for those same years including a trend arrow which highlights overall progress.

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<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Tests</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Tests</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking at the performance results of different groups of students provides a more complete picture of your district's overall performance. You may obtain performance results for a specific gender or ethnic group by visiting the Ohio Department of Education's website (http://www.ode.state.oh.us) or by calling (377) 772-7771.

### A CLOSER LOOK AT 1998–99 PERFORMANCE RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4th Grade Tests</th>
<th>6th Grade Tests</th>
<th>9th Grade Tests</th>
<th>12th Grade Tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizenship</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9th Grade Tests (10th Grade Students)</th>
<th><strong>Science</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mathematics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Science</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12th Grade Tests</th>
<th><strong>Mathematics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Science</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mathematics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Science</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN YOUR COMMUNITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Are most students in your district required to take the tests? Are most students actually taking the tests? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Are students with disabilities participating and performing at satisfactory levels?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes only students who actually took the tests.*
School environment directly impacts learning, test scores and achievement. Students who attend school everyday—and who learn in a safe and orderly setting—are more likely to do better than students who do not. Visit the department's website (http://www.ode.state.or.us) to find out more about your district's safe, drug-free schools program including indicators such as the number of physical fights occurring on school grounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum State Performance Standard</th>
<th>Your District's Results</th>
<th>Similar Districts Average of Group</th>
<th>State Average</th>
<th>District's Students With Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Attendance Rate (%)</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Suspended (%)</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Length of Suspensions (Days)</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade Promoted to 5th Grade (%)</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade Promoted to 6th Grade (%)</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduation Rate (%)</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
<td>93.6%</td>
<td>93.6%</td>
<td>93.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates With State Honors Diploma (%)</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career-Technical Placement Rate (%)</td>
<td>95.9%</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questions to Discuss in Your Community**

- How does your district ensure a safe, disciplined, and drug-free learning environment?
- How do the promotion rates at grades 4 and 6 compare to the passing rates on the 4th grade and 6th grade proficiency tests?
- What other indicators of academic performance—such as students taking Advanced Placement classes, enrollment in gifted, arts or foreign language programs and college entrance exam results—are available for your district?
DISTRICT PROFILE (1998-99 DATA)

GENERAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Your District</th>
<th>Similar Districts</th>
<th>State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>65,362</td>
<td>32,373</td>
<td>32,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities (%)</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in the District Less Than Half the Year (%)</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in the Same School Less Than Half the Year (%)</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged Students (%)</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$24,021</td>
<td>$23,882</td>
<td>$23,272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students from families receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.

TEACHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Your District</th>
<th>Similar Districts</th>
<th>State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of Students Per Teacher</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Teachers Certified in Their Teaching Area (%)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Courses (All) Taught by Teachers with Appropriate Certification (%)</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>97.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Courses (Core) Taught by Teachers with Appropriate Certification (%)</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>96.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Attendance Rate (%)</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Classroom circumference isheld equally for all teachers.

REVENUE SOURCES PER PUPIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Your District</th>
<th>Similar Districts</th>
<th>State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Funds</td>
<td>$4,227</td>
<td>$4,511</td>
<td>$4,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Funds</td>
<td>$2,258</td>
<td>$2,412</td>
<td>$2,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Funds</td>
<td>$474</td>
<td>$772</td>
<td>$277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANNUAL SPENDING PER PUPIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Your District</th>
<th>Similar Districts</th>
<th>State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction (such as teacher salaries and classroom materials)</td>
<td>$4,221</td>
<td>$3,167</td>
<td>$3,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Operations (such as utilities, maintenance, and repairs)</td>
<td>$1,320</td>
<td>$1,469</td>
<td>$1,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration (such as administrators and office staff salaries and office supplies)</td>
<td>$553</td>
<td>$594</td>
<td>$777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel Support (such as furnaces, air conditioners, and other supporting utilities)</td>
<td>$241</td>
<td>$788</td>
<td>$714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Support (such as teacher training and college courses)</td>
<td>$378</td>
<td>$245</td>
<td>$183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Annual Spending Per Pupil</td>
<td>$7,421</td>
<td>$7,640</td>
<td>$8,042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

✓ How are economic factors that might impact your district's performance results being addressed?
✓ What effect do teacher qualifications and attendance have on student learning?
✓ How is your district spending its money compared to other districts and the state as a whole?
✓ Does the district's overall performance represent a good return on the community's investment?

*NA = Not Available *NR = Not Reported in the District *NC = Not Calculated for fewer than 10 students
APPENDIX F

"More on Gainsharing"
The CEA Voice
October 16, 2000
More on Gainsharing

The Gainsharing Committee looked closely at other factors that affect our diverse school system. This is another attempt to look at the issue of equity. It was agreed that five factors have major impacts upon our schools: 1. The percentage of free and reduced lunch students 2. The mobility rate 3. The number of special education students 4. The number of ESL students, and 5. The experience level of the faculty.

This is a basic list of factors, but it is a starting point. The committee set out to design a way in which the factors could be included in gainsharing planning. Every teacher at every school who is working on the gainsharing goals will qualify for one full share. At this point, the impact of the five factors above listed will be calculated. Each one will count as 20 percent of a full share. On the first four (free and reduced lunch, mobility rate, number of special education students, number of ESL students), it will be determined if each school is above the district-wide average on each factor. In the case of the fifth factor (experience level of the staff), it will be calculated if the school is below the city average. As a result, it will be determined how all five affect each school. A school may qualify for up to two shares per staff member depending on the number of factors affecting the school. If, for example, three factors are present, then the school would qualify for 1.6 shares per teacher. Of course, the overriding issue remains the achievement of the three established goals for each site. This is a beginning attempt to look at equity. At the end of the year, the impact will be closely reviewed.
APPENDIX G

"Summary of Needs" Report
ESL Task Force Findings
Dr. Delores Morgan
Deputy Superintendent of Columbus Public Schools
May, 1999
Summary of Needs

The Columbus Public Schools and the ESL department are facing a tremendous challenge as a result of the number of refugee students who have entered the school system during the past year. The educational process has been compromised for a number of reasons which include the following:

Academic
- Many of the students had never been in school before entering the U.S.
- Many of the students are not literate in their native language and do not understand the concept of print.
- Crowded classes often inhibit teachers' ability to control behavior and give appropriate feedback when trying to teach.
- Most of the students are unprepared to take the proficiency test which has a negative impact on school and district scores and teacher attitudes toward the students.

Cultural
- Students need time to make cultural adjustments.
- Many staff members do not understand the significance of respecting the culture's practices of students.

Medical
- Students need to complete their series of basic immunizations and need to be screened for exposure to tuberculosis.
- Students have many medical problems which have been untreated and need follow-up.
- Students have many hearing and vision problems which need medical follow-up.
- Some of the students are suffering from trauma from the war (post-traumatic stress disorder)
- The language barrier, limited transportation, lack of telephones, and cultural differences make follow-up of these medical problems difficult and time consuming.

Transportation
- Many of the students do not know how to ride the bus
- Buses are crowded.
- An unacceptable number of suspensions and expulsions have occurred because of incidents involving behavior on the bus.

Assessment/Registration
- Many students are registering at schools without having their English levels assessed by the ESL department.
- Currently there is a three week wait for assessment by the ESL department.
APPENDIX H

Hiltonia Middle School ESL Program
Student Demographic Data
February, 1999
HILLTONIA MIDDLE SCHOOL ESL PROGRAM
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA
FEBRUARY 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Sixth (17)</th>
<th>Seventh (23)</th>
<th>Eighth (25)</th>
<th>Total (75 out of 84)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native Country</td>
<td>Cambodia 8</td>
<td>Cambodia 8</td>
<td>Cambodia 9</td>
<td>Cambodia 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somalia 7</td>
<td>Somalia 11</td>
<td>Somalia 10</td>
<td>Somalia 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mexico 1</td>
<td>Sierra Leona 2</td>
<td>Sierra Leona 3</td>
<td>Vietnam 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sierra Leona 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Puerto Rico 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vietnam 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Puerto Rico 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laos 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Laos 1</td>
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<td>Albania 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Albania 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>China 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parent's Language at home
- All communication in home language: 67
- Bilingual in home language and English: 5
- Bilingual in two languages, not English: 3

Child's language at home
- English only: 7
- Bilingual in English and home language: 15
- Only use home language: 45

Years in United States
- (1 - 2): 30
- (3 - 5): 5
- (more than 6): 9
- (all): 21

Years of education
- (1 - 2): 30
- (3 - 4): 5
- (5 - 6): 1
- (all): 26

Live with?
- mother and father: 30
- mother only: 20
- father only: 6
- sister/brother: 1
- aunt/uncle: 6
- grandparent: 1

Years of education of guardian
- (0 - 1): 21
- (2 - 3): 4
- (4 - 6): 5
- (HS): 11
- (College): 4

Books read per month
- (0): 13
- (1): 22
- (2): 15
- (3 or more): 14
HILLTONIA MIDDLE SCHOOL ESL PROGRAM
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA
FEBRUARY 1999

Magazines read per month
(0) 16 (1) 12 (2) 13 (3 or more) 20

Trips to the library per month
(0) 13 (1) 11 (2) 12 (3 or more) 23

Favorite type of book
Scary 21 mystery 5 romance 8
true 12 funny 14 biography 3
sports 14 historical fiction 8

Reading scores according to spring assessment (2/99)
New instructional proficiency levels of students:
Level One (non-readers or limited readers, poor oral skills) 18
Level Two (beginning readers, more proficient; orally) 10
Level Three (reading below grade level, orally near prof.) 16
Level Four (reading near to grade level, orally prof.) 14
Level Five (Mainstreamed usually, some retained for
specific reasons) 5

Scores by grade and proficiency level according to Brigance Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Word Recognition</th>
<th>Oral Reading</th>
<th>Reading Comprehension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Level</td>
<td>(1) (2-4) (all)</td>
<td>(1) (2-4) (all)</td>
<td>(1) (2-4) (all)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>.5 4.5 2.9</td>
<td>.55 2.5 2.15</td>
<td>1.71 3.6 2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>1.4 5.4 3.65</td>
<td>.71 4.1 2.74</td>
<td>1.43 3.0 2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth</td>
<td>1.5 5.4 4.3</td>
<td>.53 3.6 3.65</td>
<td>.65 3.73 2.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total no. of students who are testing non-readers (primer or below) 8
Total no. of students who are testing below ability to score
(below third grade on reading comprehension section of
Brigance Inventory, scored at grade two on chart above) 31

Math Score averages on Brigance Inventory (11/98)
Addition 13.09/24
Subtraction 10.03/24
Multiplication 3.15/24
Division 2.30/24
Decimals 1.00/16

301
APPENDIX I

Hilltonia Middle School
Ohio Department of Education
The purpose of this report card is to provide you with information about how well your local school is doing — where it is succeeding and where there is room for improvement. While it cannot tell you everything about your school's performance, the report card is a good starting point for discussions with teachers, administrators and school board members in your community.

Few factors have greater impact on student performance than parent and community involvement. For that reason, the State Board of Education and Ohio Department of Education encourage you to contact school officials for more information — and to find out how you can become more involved in efforts to improve the overall performance of your school.

What To Do With This Information

- Talk with school staff about questions or concerns you have.
- Ask what's being done to improve performance — and how you can help with those efforts.
- Discuss the report card with other parents in your community.
- Review the school's results with your children — so they see how they fit into the "big picture."

**SCHOOL PROFILE (1997-98 DATA)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your School</th>
<th>State Average for Middle Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students per Enrolled</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in the School Last Graduating Class</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-Student Ratio (F:M)</td>
<td>95.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINANCES SPENT PER Pupil (1997-98)**

- $325 on student activities
- $675 on building operations
- $100 on transportation
- $625 on instruction
- $3,140 on instructional support services
- $3,336 on auxiliary services
- $5,568 on instructional materials

This report covers only some of the aspects of your school's performance. See reverse side for performance details.

303
Your School's Performance Results

Proficiency tests are given every year to Ohio students in grades 4, 6, 9 and 12 to test their knowledge and skills in core subject areas. All test scores shown below have been adjusted to reflect higher performance standards that will be in effect by the year 2000. All results are for the 1997-98 school year, unless otherwise noted.

State Proficiency Tests

Performance Standards are minimum state performance goals established by the Ohio General Assembly. Your school's performance results are shown in comparison to the overall district average and the overall state average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Tests</th>
<th>Performance Standards</th>
<th>Your School's Results</th>
<th>Overall District Average</th>
<th>State Average</th>
<th>1997-98 Results</th>
<th>1996-97 Results</th>
<th>1995-96 Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade Tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Tests</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 6th Grade Tests |
| Language Arts | NR | 32% | 38% | 35% | NR | 2% | NR |
| Mathematics | NR | 31% | 36% | 35% | NR | 2% | NR |
| Reading | NR | 26% | 28% | 27% | NR | 2% | NR |
| Writing | NR | 70% | 67% | 70% | NR | 2% | NR |
| Science | NR | 17% | 23% | 19% | NR | 2% | NR |
| All Tests | NR | 54% | 56% | 56% | NR | 2% | NR |

Other Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Standards</th>
<th>Your School's Results</th>
<th>Overall District Average</th>
<th>State Average</th>
<th>1997-98 Results</th>
<th>1996-97 Results</th>
<th>1995-96 Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3 Promoted to 4th Grade (%)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4 Promoted to 5th Grade (%)</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions to Discuss in Your Community

✓ Is your school achieving — or close to achieving — the state's minimum performance standards?
✓ How is your school doing compared to the overall district and state performance?
✓ Has your school's performance improved or declined over the last three years?
✓ What efforts are under way to improve areas where results are unsatisfactory or where the school is not improving?
✓ What is your school's attendance policy?
✓ How is attendance likely to affect learning and test scores?
✓ What efforts are under way to keep students in school?

To obtain your own child's individual performance results, or for more information about your school's performance, contact your school office at (614) 355-5937.

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APPENDIX J

Letter of Consent for participants in Research Study
Protocol Number 00EO248
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

I consent to allowing my child to participate in the research project entitled: An Ethnographic Study of a Literature-Based English as A Second Language Middle School Classroom. Mrs. Custodio has explained the purpose of this study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my child's participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Furthermore, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: __________________________

Signed: __________________________

(Parent or Guardian of __________________________)

Witness: __________________________
Brenda Custodio   Brenda K. Custodio
(Authorized representative of Dr. Charles Hancock, principal investigator)
Dear parent or guardian of ____________________________

During this school year, I will be studying my own English as a Second Language classroom as part of a project for my classes at The Ohio State University under the guidance of my adviser, Dr. Charles Hancock. I want to write a paper that describes what is taught in an ESL class and to find out if what I am teaching is helping my students make progress in English as well as with their other subjects. I also want to write about the difficulties students from other countries experience while attending American middle schools. The study will involve only normal class activity, and some interviews on audiotape. All participation in this study is voluntary and your child will participate only with your written permission. Participation in this study will not affect your child’s grades in any way, and they may withdraw from the study at any time without repercussion. I will be using some information such as grades and test scores of the class as a whole, but no individual names will be used. All information will be confidential.

If you will allow your student to participate in this study, please sign this consent form and return to me at Hiltonia Middle School. If you have any questions, you can call me at 365-5937, or you can contact Mrs. Hung for information in Khmer or Mr. Mohamed for information in Somali.

Brenda Castoia
APPENDIX K

"The Needs of Immigrant and Refugee Students"
Brenda Custodio
The Ohio TESOL Newsletter
Fall 2000
The Needs of Immigrant and Refugee Students
By Brenda Custodio, Columbus Public Schools

Columbus Public Schools was faced with an unprecedented influx of immigrants in the 1999-2000 school year. A majority of these students were coming from countries torn by civil wars that sometimes went on for a decade or so. As a consequence, these students had received little or no previous education. How to determine the specific academic and social needs of these students and then develop appropriate responses was the key question and the focus of a district-wide task force which met in the spring of 1999. Among the needs identified by staff and community individuals and organizations were the following:

- The need for a full-time supervisor in the district’s ESL program to coordinate efforts throughout the school district;
- Additional staff, both certified teachers and bilingual assistants, to reduce class size;
- Additional satellite units throughout the district to eliminate student overcrowding at certain schools;
- Design and implement a data management system to monitor progress of students;
- Explore ways to increase parent involvement;
- Provide a school nurse at the assessment center to provide initial health services to new students;
- Develop a program for new arrivals at the middle and high school level.

Each need was addressed by the district before the start of school year 1999-2000 and most were approved by the board of education and implemented. The data management system is still being developed and not yet operational.

The most dramatic change occurred with the creation of two “Welcome Centers” for adolescent immigrants. A middle and high school program was established to assist students with limited or interrupted educational background to develop their English skills and establish the basic skills necessary to succeed at grade level in math, science, and social studies. Sheltered content classes were taught with consideration for the linguistic and academic background of the students to prepare them for the transition to a regular academic school after one year in the Welcome Centers. Small class sizes (maximum of 20) and a bilingual assistant in each class contributed to a nurturing environment.

A new position of parent/community liaison was created to increase parent involvement in and knowledge of the workings of the school system. A series of parent meetings are being planned and will include such topics as discipline, homework assistance, and health concerns. A library has been established which will provide parents with materials in their native language to help teach their children about their native country and culture. English literacy material is also available for adults to study for the GED and TOEFL tests, prepare for the workplace, and increase language proficiency.

An informational video was prepared that introduces families to the city of Columbus and the school district. An explanation of the assessment and enrollment process, the ESL program, and the Welcome Centers is included in the video. The video is currently being translated into the eight major languages represented in Columbus City Schools (Somali, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Tigrinya, Amharic, Khmer, and Lao). Parents will be able to view the video while their children are being assessed for possible placement into the ESL program.

Brenda Custodio is the Coordinator for ESL Programs at Columbus Public Schools.
APPENDIX L

Warning Signs of Potentially Violent Behavior
The Buckeye Ranch
1998
Warning Signs of Potentially Violent Behavior

Warning signs are often evident with children or adolescents who express their feelings in a violent manner. While at times one of these signs alone may represent typical adolescent behavior, it is important to recognize that when several warning signs are present, or even one sign remains over an extended period of time, they should be taken seriously.

If many signs are evident together, or if violent threats are being made by a child or adolescent, seek professional help as soon as possible. Information on obtaining assessment or immediate professional help can be obtained by calling NetCare ACCESS at 276-CARE (2273).

If a child or teenager exhibit a noticeable change in character or daily behavior, it is recommended that professional advice, or possibly treatment, be sought. Violent individuals may have differing combinations of warning signs, or may possibly have a few but not all of these characteristics.

The list is extensive, but you should trust your instincts if you are concerned that a child or adolescent may be at risk for expressing themselves violently.

- Preoccupation with violence.
- Family history of violence, antisocial behavior or chemical dependency.
- Violent threats.
- Access to weapons.
- Use of violence as a problem-solving technique when frustrated.
- Personal use of drugs or other antisocial behaviors.
- Difficulty with verbal articulation or expression.
- Overactive or impulsive behaviors.
- Extreme mood swings.
- Change in appearance and personal hygiene.
- Academic failure.
- Change in peers.
- Discontinuation of extracurricular activities.
- Low self-esteem or feelings of losing control.
- Depression or an attitude that “no one can help me.”
- Alienation, rebelliousness and a lack of social bonding with society.

For additional information, call The Buckeye Ranch at 875-2371.
APPENDIX M

Reading Interest Survey
1998
NAME ___________________________  Grade _________

Sex: M F

Culture: Hispanic  Asian  African

Number of years in the United States: 0-2  2-4  4 or more

Please circle the response that most closely gives your opinion:

1. Do you consider yourself to be a good reader?  Yes  No
2. Do you go to the library at least once a month?  Yes  No
3. How many books did you read for pleasure in the last year?
   0  1-4  more than 4
4. What kind of book do you like to read the best?
   Romance  Adventure  True stories  Animal stories
   Scary  Science Fiction  Fantasy  Biography
5. What is the name of your favorite book?
6. Why did you like it?

7. When you select a book to read, what do you use to decide:
   The type of book:  Fiction  Non-fiction  Don't care
   The main character:  Boy  Girl  Don't care
   The main culture:  White  Asian  African-American
   African  Native American  Hispanic  Don't care
   The setting:  Modern times  In the past  In the future
When you select a book, which of these is more likely to influence you:
   An author I have read before
   A book recommended by a friend
   A book recommended by a teacher
   An interesting title
   An interesting cover
APPENDIX N

Reading Skills Survey
1998
READING SURVEY
for
The Ohio State University

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS EITHER YES OR NO

1. I like to read
2. I consider myself a good reader
3. I can read in my native language
4. When I see a new word, I can usually sound it out
5. When I see a new word, I try to figure out what it means by the words around it
6. I read at home for fun
7. I go to the library regularly
8. I buy books or magazines that interest me
9. I usually understand what I read for class assignments
10. I usually understand the directions on a test
11. I have trouble understanding word problems in math
12. I can picture characters and events from a story in my head
13. When I read, I try to figure out what will happen next
14. It helps me to read aloud
15. I prefer to read silently
16. I learn more if I see a movie than if I read a book
APPENDIX O

Grounded Survey on Reading Activity Preferences
1999
Reading Strategies Preference Scale

Think about the activities we use before, during, and after we read. On the scale below, indicate how much you think these activities help you. (a 1 is very little and a 5 is a lot)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Helps a little</th>
<th>Helps a lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary activities</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art activities</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write sentences and paragraphs</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodic explanation by teacher</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossword puzzles and wordsearches</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz with advance warning</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz with no advance warning</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictations</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking notes on reading</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving background knowledge</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequencing</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preview</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View videos</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does it help you more to see a video before, during, or after we have read the book?

Which of the above activities (or others that we use) helps you the most?

Which of the above activities (or others that we use) helps you the least?

Which type of reading helps you the most (circle one)?
- students reading
- teacher reading
- audio tape
- silent reading

Which type of reading helps you the least (circle one)?
- students reading
- teacher reading
- audio tape
- silent reading

Name the book that we have read that you enjoyed the most.

Name the book that we have read which you enjoy the least.
BOOKS WE HAVE READ IN ESL CLASS AT HILLTONIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

Number the Stars

Year of Impossible Goodbyes

The Land I Lost

Children of the River

Pedro’s Journey

A Lion to Guard Us

War Comes to Willy Freeman

Sign of the Beaver

Bull Run

Sarah, Plain and Tall

Dragon’s Gate
APPENDIX P

Citations of Children's Literature Referenced in Text
Citations of Children’s Literature Referenced in Text


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