SPECIAL EDUCATION TRUMPS ESL:
POLICY AS PRACTICE FOR ELS WITH DISABILITIES

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the educational practices surrounding English Learners (ELs) with disabilities, a unique population of learners who are not only acquiring English as a Second Language (ESL) but also have an institutionally identified disability. Possessing these characteristics, these learners are located at an intersection—the intersection of minority social categories and the intersection of two disciplines, special education and ESL. This intersection is the source of educational ambiguity; namely educators are left wondering how they can possibly target the heterogeneous learning needs of these students within the course of any given school day. Employing ethnographic methodology, this dissertation was designed as a vertical case study of two elementary schools within Pennsylvania. With over a year of observations, 40 interviews, and artifact collection, this dissertation draws on intersectionality for its theoretical underpinnings to investigate the educational practices of service provision for ELs with disabilities. More concretely, it examines how institutional factors and personnel's beliefs construct and even limit the opportunities ELs with disabilities are offered within their learning contexts. It argues that second language (L2) identities are erased during service delivery practices through specific institutional and ideological factors, so that in effect, *ELs* with disabilities become *learners* with disabilities. Further, this dissertation questions the de facto policy of eliminating ESL services for special education with the understanding that such practices fail to address the multidimensionality of these learners while simultaneously circumventing educational law.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is in loving memory of Rudy, who quietly lived outside the box, and Herb, who always had a twinkle in his eyes.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

The American school age population is growing more linguistically diverse. Currently, 4.4 million students in the United States are English Learners (ELs; National Center for Education Statistics, 2014) and these numbers are expected only to increase over the next years: By 2025 ELs are projected to be one-fourth of American students (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Significantly, this population of students is not homogeneous, representing a range of first languages (L1s), cultural backgrounds, educational experiences, and abilities. In fact, as of 2002 nearly 10% of ELs in the United States were also diagnosed with a disability (Zehler et al., 2003). If demographic trends continue as projected, ELs with disabilities also will constitute a sizeable share of American students. And yet, research is lagging behind demographic trends with very little attention given to this growing subset of students.

The significance of investigating ELs with disabilities does not just lie in numbers. This population has generated a robust body of commentaries and briefs in teacher and generalist audience press (see Bedore & Peña, 2008; Ford, 2012; Kushner, 2008; Liasidou, 2013; Rodriguez, 2009; Thurlow, Barrera, & Zamora-Durán, 2006; Villegas, 2012), suggesting that the nearly 25% of American public school educators who have at least one EL with a disability in their classrooms (Zehler et al., 2003) have a list of concerns when it comes to teaching these learners. In fact, these publications are riddled with critical questions about educational practices for ELs with disabilities: How should

school psychologists administer assessments to bilingual students?; Can teachers know whether it is language or disability that is delaying learning?; When and how should intensive interventions be put in place?; and How can schools be better equipped to educate these learners? These are just a few of the urgent mounting questions, and yet despite the growing concern amongst educators, researchers are just beginning to investigate these questions.

The discrepancy between educational commentaries and empirical research draws attention to the fact the educational community is in need of establishing best practices for ELs with disabilities. This lack of established best practices can be attributed to the narrow focus of nascent research which predominately has explored issues relating to referral rates to special education (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; Samson & Lesaux, 2009), the referral process (Klingner & Harry, 2006; Ortiz, et al., 2011), and specific literacy interventions for these learners which aim to improve student performance (Denton, Wexler, Vaughn, & Bryan, 2008; Kamps, et al., 2007). Surely, the bulk of these investigations have been significant in pursuing social justice for ELs with disabilities, ensuring ELs are not disproportionately represented in special education. Yet I argue as a matter of educational ethical practice, researchers and educators should not only care *how* ELs are referred to special education, but *what* that education is like for the learners once they are referred.

To my knowledge, no research has inquired about how educators are supposed to address the multiple learning needs of these learners. Specifically, it remains unknown to what extent and how educators provide instruction and services holistically that target the many complex and demanding needs of ELs with disabilities. With no foundational best

practices in place, these learners are susceptible to status quo approaches to their education—that is, established approaches for "either/or," *either* for learners with special needs *or* ELs. But, these learners are not "either/or": They are both. Further, I argue that this population of learners are particularly and profoundly vulnerable to inequitable educational practices because of their multiple minority statuses, and therefore, as a matter of social justice can no longer be neglected in research.

Purpose of the Study

This dissertation's purpose is threefold: (a) to deepen educators' and researchers' knowledge of service delivery practices for ELs with disabilities, (b) to draw attention to prevailing de facto policies in schools, and (c) to inform educational practices for these learners. With so much that is unknown about ELs with disabilities, this study first seeks to capture the institutional factors that inform how school personnel address the learning needs of ELs with disabilities through a vertical case study approach. One particular value of case study research is the close attention given to a specific context (Stake, 2006), so that actual practices can be captured. Another value of the case study, as Merriam (2009) posits, is that in education it is through case studies that "processes, problems, and programs, can be examined to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice" (p. 51). Taking up this understanding, I argue that we, as educators, cannot begin to solve educational problems for ELs with disabilities until we know the challenges that currently exist. The utility of case study research, and more specifically this vertical case study, is that it can function as a jumping off point for other empirical investigations—both quantitative and qualitative—of service delivery practices.

Building on the aforementioned foundational purpose, this dissertation has the objectives of informing educational practices and transforming assumed and unexamined educational policies. I argue that because this very population of learners is underresearched then logically the practices schools enact in service delivery are not built on empirical research. Through close examination of the learning environments of ELs with disabilities, this dissertation will focus on concrete implications for practice and policy.

By fulfilling these goals, this will be the first study of its kind to examine the educational context of ELs with disabilities as they are receiving special education, ESL services, and related services. In doing so, this dissertation will advance the knowledge of educators—both in American primary and secondary schools as well as in academia—in forming effective teaching approaches and methods of service delivery for ELs with disabilities to address all of their academic needs.

Research Questions

As a coalescence of the problem statement, purpose of study, and conceptual framework (see Chapter 2), the overarching research question, "How are ESL, special education, and related services provided to ELs with disabilities?," along with following subset of questions guided the inquiry and scope of this dissertation:

(a) For ELs with disabilities, to what extent is there confluence or conflict in providing ESL, special education, and related services?

(b) What local institutional factors influence service delivery practices and policies for ELs with disabilities?

(c) How does school culture influence the service delivery practices and policies relating to disability and Second language acquisition (SLA)?

Problematizing Terminology

Both the fields of special education and ESL have problematized terminology ascribed to students. A well-known practice within special education is to use *people first language* where the person precedes the disability category. For example, in people first language, an appropriate term would be *a student with autism* instead of *an autistic student*. Regarding the latter, the disability becomes the sole defining characteristic and quite possibly the student is dehumanized in the process. In the field of educational linguistics, debates have ensued regarding the most appropriate terminology to describe those who are learning English as an additional language. The field in general objects to the moniker *Limited English Proficient* (LEP), which is a federal and state term used to describe students acquiring English as an L2. Clearly, LEP is problematic: It defines a student by perceived deficits. The most common labels in the field instead are *English Learner (EL)* or *English Language Learner (ELL).* And yet, these are focused only on English, ignoring the L1s of the students and their fuller abilities as bilinguals (García, 2009). For this reason, *Emergent Bilingual* is gaining traction in ESL research (e.g., García, 2009; García & Kleifgen, 2010; García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2010; Koyama & Menken, 2013; Menken, 2013). However, even this term expresses incompleteness—the learner is not a whole, but rather “emergent,” because she does not have native or native-like proficiency in English (Allard, Flores, Kleyn, Malsbary, & Menken, 2014).

Knowing that no term is without its limitations, I have decided to utilize *EL*, accepting all of its conceptual restrictions but personally refuting the expressed partiality

that the term connotes. In discussing ELs who have also been identified with a disability, I have kept in the ethical tradition of using people first language. But, for some time I debated about the use of *special needs* versus *disability* paired with people first language (i.e., *student with special needs* vs. *student with disabilities*). In this manuscript I decided to use the term *ELs with disabilities* instead of *ELs with special needs*, because the former term is less restrictive, encompassing all impairments whether physical, cognitive, or emotional, whereas the latter term typically implies that these learners only have cognitive or learning-based impairments. Particularly, the broader term I assert more aptly describes the focal students in this study who represent a range of disabilities serviced both by special education and related services.

Definition of Terms

To facilitate clarity in understanding this interdisciplinary dissertation, critical terms spanning across disciplines are defined below:

Autism

Autism, frequently referred to as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is term for a spectrum of disorders that influence brain development often resulting in difficulties with speech production and social interaction and a pattern of repetitive behaviors.

Two-way bilingual education program

A two-way bilingual education program is a specific language program that delivers instruction in two languages with roughly half of the instruction occurring in both languages. Theoretically, the student population within this program should be evenly comprised of ELs and native English speakers. Through learning *in* two languages, all the

participating students are learning *about* these languages with the eventual goal of facilitating bilingualism.

English learners with disabilities

English learners (ELs) with disabilities are students who have been identified officially as acquiring English as an additional language and as having a disability.

English as a Second Language

English as a Second Language (ESL) is tailored language instruction for ELs that focuses on improving the students' proficiency in English.

Inclusion

In regards to special education, inclusion is an educational practice of having both students with and without disabilities learning together within the same classroom environment.

Individualized Education Program

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a formal plan and contract that outlines the educational needs that a student with a disability has and the supports that must be provided for a student with an identified disability by a school.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality as a theory explores how multiple minority identities are experienced by individuals and often result in overlapping forms of oppression, restricting access to opportunities.

Learning disability

Learning disability (LD) is a general term used to describe a number of neurologically based disorders in information processing.

Orthopedic impairment

This term describes a physical impairment that is caused by skeletal and/or muscular problems.

Positive Behavior Support

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) describes a system in which behaviors are managed through the elimination of a student's negative behaviors and the encouragement of continued positive behaviors.

Second Language Acquisition

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the process by which a second language learner experiences acquiring the language.

Service delivery/provision

This term refers to the practice of providing supports specific to the students' learning needs. This includes learning supports for ESL, special education, and related services.

Special education

Special education is services that are tailored to individualized educational needs of students with identified disabilities.

Speech or language impairment

A speech or language impairment (SLI) is a communication disorder that negatively influences a student's performance in school.

Related services

Related services are additional supports for students with disabilities often provided by specialists (e.g., speech pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, counselors, etc.) outside of special education contexts.

Dissertation Overview

This particular chapter features a statement of the problem along with the purpose, conceptual framework, and research questions that guide this dissertation. It also includes definitions of terms commonly referred to throughout the dissertation. Chapter 2 contains an overview of extant research on the population of ELs with disabilities in educational contexts and a description of research relating to service provision with particular emphasis on the educational mandates that necessitate service delivery for special education and ESL. Chapter 3 begins with a description of vertical case studies and a rationale of utilizing such methodology in educational research. Following this explication, the sites, participants, and data collection and analysis processes are delineated. Chapters 4 and 5 thematically explore the findings from the two schools with each chapter focusing on one of the sites. Chapter 6 is a coalescence of the findings from the previous two chapters as the cases are discussed together in connection to the theoretical framework. Chapter 7 discusses the implications of the results and the deriving conclusions and summarizes the limitations of this dissertation study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction to the Literature Review

This chapter contextualizes the dissertation study by first, presenting an overview of extant research on the population of ELs with disabilities. Although research on this population has been scarce, significant ethical issues have been raised—namely the matter of referral rates and (pre)referral practices for ELs with disabilities—and practical interventions have been evaluated for the purpose of improving these learners' academic performances. Second, this chapter explores the mandated policies driven by specific federal legislation for learners with disabilities and ELs as they juxtapose with the actual practices enacted in and dilemmas encountered by American schools. The chapter concludes by explicating the conceptual framework of intersectionality in its application to service delivery practices for ELs with disabilities.

ELs with Disabilities: Referral Patterns

A majority of the research that has been conducted on ELs with disabilities has focused on the referral rates of ELs with disabilities as well as the referral process for ELs who are suspected of having a disability. The underlying purpose of these studies is to promote and ensure educational equity for a vulnerable population of learners. Particularly, research and school communities are concerned with disproportionate representation of ELs in special education. According to De Valenzuela, Copeland, and Qi (2006), disproportionality in representation can take two forms—under- and

overrepresentation. Both are determined in comparison to the general student population, but in underrepresentation there is a lower number of a particular group of students in special education and in overrepresentation there is a higher number of a particular group receiving special education services. As identified and extensively explored by Donovan and Cross (2002), racial minority learners have been historically overrepresented in special education, and yet in a more recent study Travers, Tincani, and Krezmien (2013) found that for racial minorities there is also the risk of underrepresentation for autism quite possibly as a result of misidentification or delayed identification. Disproportionate representation of a particular group for special education services poses a threat to social justice within schools, as students who are in need of services are falling through the cracks (i.e., underrepresentation) or students in error are assigned an institutional label that then results in inappropriate services (i.e., overrepresentation).

For those who are linguistic minorities, disproportional representation has also occurred, yet with some distinct patterns of representations, according to grade level and disability category. For instance, in recent years scholars have found disproportional representation of ELs in special education by grade level. Specifically, Samson and Lesaux (2009) used a national data set representing over 20,000 students to investigate disproportionality of ELs in special education, finding that ELs were underrepresented in kindergarten and first grade, but contrastingly were overrepresented in special education in third grade across all disability categories. These findings suggest that there is a pattern of waiting to refer ELs to special education until they have had ostensibly sufficient time to progress academically. This inference is corroborated by Ortiz et al. (2011) who found

that ELs suspected of having a learning disability (LD) were mostly referred in second grade and then third grade, again suggesting that there is a notable shift in educators' expectations of ELs' language proficiency; that is, educators surmise that by second and third grade ELs' poor academic performance is attributed to the presence of a disability, and not English proficiency. Similarly, Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, and Higareda (2005) found that in urban Californian schools patterns of overrepresentation emerged according to grade level, as ELs were overrepresented in the secondary level in the disability categories of intellectual disability and LD. However, ELs were underrepresented in secondary grades in the disability category of speech or language impairment (SLI), suggesting that educators may assume that, for example, when a student pronounces a particular phoneme differently in English this is a manifestation of crosslinguistic transfer, not an SLI. Together, Samson and Lesaux (2009) and Artiles et al. (2005) indicate that age may be a factor influencing the proportionality of ELs' representation in special education. These studies corroborate the findings from Hibel and Jasper's (2012) recent study; educators delay referring ELs for special education services possibly for ELs to develop further in their second language (L2) proficiency.

Not only can grade level play an integral role in special education representation for ELs, but also as delineated in Artiles et al. (2005), patterns in disproportional representation can emerge according to disability category. Currently, under IDEA there are 14 disability categories: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment including blindness

(National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2012a). Research indicates that some disability categories exhibit evidence of EL disproportionality. For example, De Valenzuela, Copeland, and Qi (2006) in a study of one southwestern school district found that ELs were overrepresented in special education in the following disability categories: emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, LD, and SLI. However, they were underrepresented in the developmental disability category and proportionally presented in the category of other health impairment. This corroborates with the findings of Levinson et al. (2007), which revealed that ELs in Indiana were overrepresented in intellectual disability category and communication disorder. Yet despite these patterns of overrepresentation, Levinson et al. also found that in Indiana underrepresentation was more prevalent in the remaining disability categories.

Overall, disproportionality studies have been narrow in scope, focusing on select disability categories. According to Klingner et al. (2005), “Concern about disproportionate representation is focused on the ‘judgmental’ categories of special education—those disabilities usually identified after the child starts school and by school personnel rather than a medical professional” (p. 3). These include autism, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, LD, and SLI. Nevertheless, the current body of research that has been conducted on special education representation alludes to the importance of improving referral practices as a preventative measure against disproportionality.

Though some studies have explored whether there is disproportional representation of ELs in special education, to date there has been a preponderance of discussion, speculating the potential causes of disproportional EL representation without

sufficient empirical research; however, one study investigating the causes of disproportionality was conducted by Klingner and Harry (2006). Through a qualitative study of educational and placement meetings for 19 academically struggling ELs, Klingner and Harry found that for a majority of the ELs no prereferral strategies, such as targeted interventions, were implemented for the students prior to evaluation. Moreover, the results revealed that there was a reliance on tests scores, which located the source of academic underachievement within *the learners* without considering whether the source of the ELs' underachievement could be located within *the learning environment*. ELs were referred on the basis of select evidence derived from testing. Ortiz et al. (2011) likewise found that for ELs suspected of having an LD referrals for special education services were derived from scant evidence. More specifically, for only 10 of 44 ELs studied was there sufficient evidence for the initial referral. Rather, learners were referred as a result of "general academic problems and/or language and literacy difficulties" (p. 322). Ortiz et al. argue that the implementation of the referral process as a whole was not evidence-based and could have led to erroneous special education referrals. Ultimately, these studies imply that referral to special education should not be a result of a single measure (i.e., diagnostic assessments administered by school psychologists) but rather a multimeasure approach that includes formative assessments and ecological evaluations—an examination of the learning environment. By doing so, educators avoid immediately locating "the learning problem" within the child and instead consider how the learning environment is influential in a student's academic performance.

ELs with Disabilities: (Pre)Referral Practices

In light of the educational equity that is jeopardized by special education disproportional representation, scholars (Orosco & Klingner, 2010; Ortiz et al., 2011) recommend a prereferral intervention model known as Response to Intervention (RtI) for ELs. Unlike the discrepancy system, wherein students are tested and referred to special education to then receive the supports they need, RtI "focuses on intervening early through a multitiered approach where each tier provides interventions of increasing intensity" (Esparza Brown & Doolittle, 2008, p. 66). When a student requires additional support—more than what is provided by the general education teacher—she will then receive targeted small group instruction aimed at her academic and even behavioral needs (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010). For ELs, culturally responsive pedagogy may also be one approach for targeted instruction (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010; Orosco & Klingner, 2010). Only after all feasible interventions and accommodations have been implemented will a student go through the referral process. One advantage of this model is that it is purportedly data-driven (Ortiz et al., 2011), allowing struggling learners to receive systematic and documented educational interventions, and thereby reducing disproportional representation in special education. For example, Kamps et al. (2007) investigated ELs and native English speakers in first and second grades at risk of failure due to reading difficulties. Through both direct and small group instruction within the RtI model, the experimental group of ELs made significant gains on several assessments, indicating that for ELs with reading difficulties direct instruction may be an effective intervention and necessary preceding step before any consideration of referral for special education.

Despite accolades from scholars, RtI presents challenges for practitioners; it necessitates that they provide tailored or differentiated instruction for learners' heterogeneous needs. Orosco and Klingner (2010) found that many teachers did not have the expertise derived from teacher education programs and professional development to differentiate instruction for ELs, in particular, when implementing RtI interventions, suggesting that the touted referral model can only be effective in preventing disproportional presentation if educators can properly differentiate instruction and provide accommodations to ELs.

ELs with Disabilities: Instructional Interventions and Tools

In addition to research on EL referral rates and practices, some scholars have focused on investigating specific interventions for ELs with various disabilities. Particularly, empirical research predominantly has examined the efficacy of literacy interventions; however, a few studies have investigated the role of L1 and L2 instruction in delivering interventions for ELs with disabilities. Recent literacy interventions include Denton et al. (2008), who conducted a study featuring small group direct instruction for English-proficient and EL students with severe difficulties in reading in special education and remedial reading classes. The results of the study revealed no statistical significant differences between the control and experimental groups in several critical aspects of reading proficiency, such as fluency, word recognition, and comprehension. From these results Denton et al. (2008) suggest that learners require more intense interventions than the daily 40-minute sessions provided in the experimental condition. Although Denton et al. (2008) found no significant gains from the direct instruction for reading, Viel-Ruma et al. (2010) found that writing skills could be improved through direct instruction for ELs

with LDs. Specifically, the results of the multiple-probe across participants design indicated that the three participating high school ELs increased correct word sequencing and sentence length in their writing from the baseline condition, where no interventions occurred.

Although some of the aforementioned studies on instructional interventions for ELs with disabilities indicate promising results, some intervention studies present a significant and problematic concern: sampling. For instance, some studies that examined the progress of ELs with disabilities following an intervention have samples of learners who may not actually be institutionally identified ELs (e.g., Solari & Gerber, 2008) but rather have parents that report speaking Spanish at home. The L1 of parents, however, does not necessarily determine EL status of their children. Consequently, in Solari and Gerber (2008) researchers did not control for EL status. Further, some studies involving interventions for ELs have focused on language learners who are “at risk” for various disabilities (e.g., Troia, 2004; Bernhard et al., 2006) as oppose to ELs with identified disabilities. The exact criteria for the “at risk” status may include factors relating to poverty in some cases or failing assessment scores in others. What theses studies underscore is the stark reality that empirical research on *actual* ELs with disabilities is quite scarce. Closer examination of literature reveals nebulous constructions of “EL” and “disability”—a practice that becomes even more problematic with the generalization of the findings: That is, scholars generalize the findings of their studies comprising learners who are not institutionally identified ELs nor institutionally diagnosed with a disability to the population of ELs with disabilities. This creates misconceptions about the dearth and

scope of research on EL with disabilities and further makes navigating the literature on ELs with disabilities a task for the discerning.

Extending beyond literacy interventions, the linguistic resources of teachers (i.e., their L1 and L2) can also be examined as instructional tools for ELs with disabilities. For instance, Paneque and Rodriguez (2009) in their qualitative study of bilingual Spanish-English special education teachers found that Spanish was used sparingly during instruction, whereas English dominated in the classroom, comprising 90% of the discourse. From these findings Paneque and Rodriguez argue that teacher education programs should both recruit prospective bilingual students and provide explicit instruction to educators regarding how they can utilize their L1 in the classroom as an instructional tool. Similarly, Paneque and Barbetta (2006) argue for the importance of utilizing the L1 in special education settings to build teacher efficacy. Specifically, in a questionnaire completed by 202 elementary special education teachers, Paneque and Barbetta found that teacher efficacy was predicated on the teacher's ability to use the learners' L1 as an instructional tool, especially when the learners were ELs with disabilities. These results indicated that teachers not only have a desire to communicate with their students in their L1 but also that they perceived themselves as more effective educators when they were able to interact with ELs with disabilities in English and the L1.

Educational Service Provision Policies

Service delivery literature for both ELs and learners with disabilities tends to have a bifurcated focus—the legal foundation for educational services and the realities of service delivery in educational contexts. For ELs and learners with disabilities alike educational laws often do not mesh with the practicalities of service provision in

American schools. More simply, what the government mandates may not in reality actually be implemented.

Special Education Law

A seminal law in special education is the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973,* as Section 504 of the statute protected students with disabilities against discrimination, declaring discriminatory educational practices on the basis of disability unlawful: “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, para. 1). But, the prohibition of denying education to children based on the presence or severity of a disability was just one facet of this cornerstone law; Section 504 also secured the implementation of services for students with disabilities at any school receiving monetary assistance from the federal government. This law moved past granting mere entry into the doors of American schools by mandating that the education children with disabilities receive be attuned to their needs.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) passed just two years after *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* in the U.S., ensures the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) of learners with disabilities. An individual level of accountability for IDEA occurs through Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), which specify the services a student with a disability must receive among other specific goals (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2012b). “Services” is broadly conceived as, “include[ing] supplementary aids and services that the child needs. It also

includes modifications (changes) to the program or supports for school personnel-such as training or professional development that will be provided to assist the child" (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). IEPs in special education and related services function as a binding contract, a promise of what the school will do for each particular student.

Former President George W. Bush signed *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) into effect in 2002 as a reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (1965). The primary purpose of this law was to ensure educational equity for students by creating a system of accountability to determine whether students are making academic progress. Students with disabilities are no exception: NCLB is particularly focused on the academic progress of students who are at risk, including students with disabilities, by prohibiting schools from hiding or ignoring the fact that these students are not making academic progress (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). For students with special needs, making academic progress certainly includes achieving the learning goals detailed in IEPs, but significantly such progress cannot occur without the services the students' learning needs require.

EL Education Law

For ESL and bilingual education, a cornerstone court case in the 1970s led to the official mandate for language support for ELs in the American education system. *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) was a legal consequence of the school system of San Francisco eschewing language support for its considerable population of L1 Chinese-speaking students. These students were in a "sink or swim" educational environment where they had to learn English without any support to gain access to the education being provided to them, and yet access to education could not be achieved without language support. This dilemma

resulted in the ruling that failure to provide ELs with language services "denies them a meaningful opportunity to participate in the public educational program" and therefore violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964 because their linguistic proficiencies were intimately connected to and inseparable from their national backgrounds (Office for Civil Rights, 2005a, para. 1). The court case itself did not delve into the specificity of *how* to provide language support; it focused on the matter of *why* support was a legal and ethical imperative.

Several years later *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981) established a measure of adequate services provided for ELs, building upon the foundation established by *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), as the latter case was insufficient in stipulating and evaluating the conditions for language support. This apparent loophole was brought to light through Texas the Raymondville Independent School District's practice of separating Latino ELs from other students in the name of ability grouping. The plaintiff, Castañeda, argued this education practice was undergirded by racial discrimination. The ruling for the plaintiff ostensibly compensated for the legal inadequacies in EL education by instituting the following criteria for ESL and bilingual education programs: (a) Is there a connection between language learning theory and the school's programs? (b) Is there feasibility to effectively implement the theory-based programs and practices with the amount of resources, including staff? and (c) Are there evaluative procedures in place to monitor and alter practices to increase effectiveness? (Office for Civil Rights, 2005b). These three-prong criteria identified in the Castañeda standards are used to evaluate the effectiveness of ESL and bilingual education programs.

Although controversial, accountability for services for ELs increased with the authorization of NCLB, as tied to this law are discrete funds allocated for the academic progress of specific populations within schools. Title III is one such targeted funding, distributed to schools to provide additional supports for ELs—supplemental to the programs already in place—so that ELs, too, will not be left behind, despite their proficiency in English. The specific uses of Title III funds have caused much debate and confusion (Zehr, 2008), but these funds are supplemental, intended to enhance the programs mandated by *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) that should already be implemented. Schools can use Title III funds to improve the quality of resources and opportunities available to ELs and school personnel through, for instance, initiatives to foster increased involvement of ELs' parents, professional development for teachers, and after school and weekend programs for ELs (Zehr, 2008).

Service Delivery Realities for Students with Disabilities

Inclusive of the aforementioned special education laws (i.e., Rehabilitation Act of 1973, IDEA, and NCLB), service delivery for learners with disabilities, as Talley and Schrag (1999) identify, is also grounded in other significant education ligation, such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (1971), *Felix v. Waihee* (1993), each lending support for the integration of service delivery for students with disabilities. Despite the litigious imperative of providing integrated services, there are complexities and even impossibilities of achieving confluence in service delivery for students with disabilities (Carlson & O'Reilly, 1996; Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010). For instance, Carlson and O'Reilly (1996) posit how Title I funding and special education

funding can result in competing, not holistic service provision. From a human resource perspective, Friend et al. (2010) argue that although coteaching is relied upon to facilitate integration of student populations and instructional approaches, teachers lack the necessary preparation and knowledge to effectively complete this challenging task. Significantly, however, the aforementioned literature consists of theoretical discussion of service delivery without data-driven evidence.

Also significant in the literature about the realities school face in delivering services to students with disabilities is the degree to which the accommodations specified in IEPs are actually being provided and the potential litigation that can ensue if they are not. In fact, the threat of legal proceedings, such as due process hearings, has created a heavy burden for teachers and administrators (Conroy, Yell, & Katsiyannis, 2008; Frankl, 2005; Mueller, 2009). Under the provisions of IDEA, parents of students with disabilities can pursue necessary action if they believe their child is not receiving the services specified in the IEP. Parents' options are threefold: formal complaints, mediation, and due process hearings (Mueller, 2009). Due process hearings occur in court and involve deliberations, presentation of evidence, and a legal resolution and, in Mueller's (2009) words, in due process hearings "districts and parents experience conflict that results in an extremely emotional and financially draining strategy for resolution" (p. 60).

With the looming threat of parents pursuing legal action, schools must diligently adhere to providing the services and accommodations delineated in IEPs. Margolis (1998) warns that diligently providing education services for students with disabilities, promoting positive relationships with parents, and avoiding ligation is not for the faint of heart; it "require[s] hard work and long hours by skilled, optimistic professionals" (p.

258). Further, Frankl (2005) argues that the IEP system is categorically "unworkable," citing that IEPs cause the following detrimental conditions within schools: (a) increased workload for special education coordinators who manage IEP paperwork, (b) widened discrepancies between general education teachers' and special education teachers' perceived professional roles, (c) narrowed view of academic progress (i.e., academic progress is only viewed in terms of IEP goals, not overall learning), and (d) restricted teaching practices. Clearly, although IDEA ensures that students with disabilities receive individualized educational services, the legal pressure confronting schools creates a tangible burden, one borne primarily by special education teachers and coordinators.

Service Delivery Realities for ELs

In considering the educational services of ELs as they are implemented, literature tends to focus on the program models for ELs, specifically their programmatic features and consequences. Pull-out services for ELs, during which an ESL teacher instructs ELs in a separate class, typically occurs during language arts. The focus of pull-out instruction is intently on the English language, not content. Consequently, the pull-out model of ESL presents a dilemma: Although ELs are getting enriched knowledge about the English language, during that same exact time they are missing the valuable content taught within the general education classroom (Baker, 2001; Clegg, 1996; de Mejía, 2002). Further, some posit that separating ELs from their peers during instruction is a vestige of segregation and therefore presents a host of ethical complications (Baker, 2001; Clegg, 1996; de Mejía, 2002).

Remedying the problem of separating students who are different—in this case linguistically—from one another, the push-in model has become a common form of L2

support. In this program model the ESL teacher enters into the general education classroom to provide support to ELs while they are learning content, creating opportunity for linguistic scaffolding in the presence of content and the opportunity for teachers to practice coteaching. Ideally, more would be gained from the push-in model than lost; however, the current constraints teachers face on a daily basis make the coteaching ESL push-in requires insuperable. Friend (2008) identifies a number of logistical and relational matters significant to coteaching, including coplanning time, negotiation of roles within the classroom, and development of trust and communication for an effective "marriage." Much of the literature on coteaching underscores quite emphatically that effective coteaching is inseparable from designated, consistent shared planning (Dove & Honigsfield, 2010; McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010; Peercy & Martin-Beltrán, 2010). In fact, from their study of effective coteaching partnerships, Peercy and Martin-Beltrán (2010) aver the importance of "administrators creat[ing] opportunities for teachers to interact beyond the classroom in order to protect and support important spaces for collaboration" (p. 670). Effective coteaching hinges on the ability to coplan and exchange ideas consistently and purposefully.

Quite significantly, services for ELs can also occur through the supports of a general education teacher, not just an ESL teacher. Unfortunately, although many general education teachers are charged with providing support to the ELs within their classrooms, they are often grossly underprepared for the endeavor (Hansen-Thomas & Caragnetto, 2010; Meskill, 2005) and in some cases may not view teaching about language—or the speakers of other languages—within the scope of their professional role (Hamann & Reeves, 2013; Polat & Mahalingappa, 2013; Reeves, 2009; Yoon, 2008). For example, in

Pennsylvania it was not until 2011 that all pre-service teachers seeking a bachelor's degree were required to complete a three-credit course on teaching ELs (Certification of Professional Personnel, 2007). With a vast majority of in-service teachers graduating prior to 2014, professional development becomes the de facto and important channel for developing teachers' knowledge of effective scaffolding and differentiation for ELs (Hamann & Reeves, 2013). Yet professional development opportunities, in the words of Hansen-Thomas and Caragnetto (2010), are often "quick and dirty," not providing teachers with sufficient approaches and knowledge of EL education, and moreover, professional development tends to lag far behind demographic trends (Meskill, 2005). Another roadblock in the general education classroom for ELs is the lack of opportunity for and existing practicing of collaborations between ESL and general education teachers (Hamann & Reeves, 2013; Peercy, 2011; Peercy & Martin-Beltrán, 2010).

The models identified thus far are English-only, but in L2 education bilingual programs can also be utilized to provide both L1 and L2 support for ELs. In the context of the United States, bilingual education as a model for supporting EL students has been hotly debated and politically polarizing, as chronicled in academic and popular press (see Krashen, 2004). Despite evidence demonstrating that "strong forms" of bilingual education, which incorporate the L1 throughout schooling to develop students' bilingualism and biliteracy more fully (Baker, 2006), yield higher academic outcomes for ELs (Alanís, 2000; Collier & Thomas, 1997, 2001; Umansky & Reardon, 2014), these programs have been barred from such states as California, Arizona, and Massachusetts through Proposition 227, Proposition 203, and Question 2, respectively. The rendering of effective programs as illegal compounded by pervasive misconceptions about bilingual

education (e.g., The presence of the L1 during instruction prevents ELs from acquiring English.) complicates service provision for ELs through models that utilize two languages.

Although the difficult reality of providing L2 services for ELs has been documented, very little is known about service delivery for ELs with disabilities in particular; in fact, only one government sponsored survey of public schools (i.e., Zehler et al., 2003) was conducted comparing services for ELs and ELs with disabilities. The data from the survey revealed several roadblocks that schools face when delivery services to ELs with disabilities, including the lack of methods for sharing educational data across departments. That is, there were no mechanisms in place to share data on an EL's performance on language assessments, for instance, with special education teachers. Further, the participating educators in Zehler et al. (2003) indicated that there was an absence of institutional structures for collaboration with their colleagues who also teach the same ELs with disabilities; planning and consulting occurred unofficially according to the volition of the teachers. These findings suggest that communication among educators regarding their shared students is contingent upon the discretion of teachers, and with the time demands many teachers face on a daily basis, it would be no surprise to learn that collaboration between educators is rendered impossible.

Conceptual Framework

ELs with disabilities are located at an intersection in terms of disciplines (i.e., special education and ESL) and social categories. They are students with disabilities and they are acquiring English as an additional language, representing two minority groups—minority status based on ability and primary language. The established paucity of

research on ELs with disabilities suggests that these learners are either problematically being ignored altogether or subsumed into the larger EL and/or special needs populations in empirical investigation. Attending to the latter, neither ELs nor students with disabilities are monolithic, and there is danger in conceptualizing—whether in research or educational practice—these groups as homogenous. Further, and significantly, ELs with disabilities are distinct from both learners with disabilities *and* ELs, yet current educational practice would suggest otherwise. The experiences of ELs with disabilities are not identical to ELs *or* students with disabilities because these groups of learners are not identical. Crenshaw (1991) identified this exact dilemma for individuals who are located at such an intersection: “The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite—that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences” (p. 1242). Crenshaw’s (1989) argument about identity politics was first conceptualized in reference to African American women. Crenshaw asserted that African American women have distinctly unique experiences from both African American males *and* Caucasian women, because their race and gender interact together to form their experiences.

Based on this premise, Crenshaw (1989) conceptualized *intersectionality*, how individuals who represent multiple minority social categories are affected—more specifically marginalized—by the intersection of these very social categories. The significance of intersectionality lies in its examination of concrete outcomes for these individuals:

> Categorical attributes are often used for construction of inclusionary/exclusionary boundaries that differentiate between self and other, determining what is "normal" and what is not, who is entitled to certain resources and who is not. In this way the interlinking grids of differential positionings in terms of class, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, ability, stage in life cycle, and other social divisions, tend to create in specific historical situations, hierarchies of differential access to a variety of resources—economic, political, and cultural. (Yuval-Davis, 2009, pp. 50-51)

In short, social categories matter to individuals' experiences because they are tied to life opportunities.

Intersectional research has been widely used in the discipline of women's studies and has tended to focus on the intersection of "the big three": race, gender, and socioeconomic status (Anthias, 2012). However, it has application to individuals who represent other minority social categories (Crenshaw, 1991), such as sexual orientation, religious affiliation, disability (Anthias, 2012), citizen status (Nuñez, 2014), and, I contend, first language (L1).

Despite intersectionality's potential application to a wide range of individuals across diverse contexts, one of the well-noted limitations of intersectionality is that to date intersectional research has predominately focused on individuals' experiences while largely ignoring contextual factors that influence their experiences (Anthias, 2012; Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013; Nuñez, 2014). Anthias (2012) recently enhanced intersectionality as an analytic lens by conceptualizing layers of analysis that extend beyond the individual's experience to macro-level factors. Further, Anthias underscores the significance of expanding intersectional analysis by positing that a wider lens encapsulates context, including space and time, power structures, and established hierarchies. For this dissertation, I will employ Anthias' broader conceptualization of

intersectionality to move beyond matters of identity construction to examine macro-level factors and their subsequent influence on ELs with disabilities.

Anthias (2012) proposed three embedded layers of analysis: (a) social category, (b) arenas of influence, and (c) historicity (Figure 1). In the first layer, *social category,* the investigator like many other intersectional researchers, examines an individual's embodied social categories and their interaction with each other (e.g., how the social categories of race, gender, and socioeconomic status interact). Further, Crenshaw emphasizes, the importance of "introduce[ing] questions of how power gravitates around some social categories and creates them and how it polices others" (Guidroz & Berger, 2009, p. 74) in analysis of enmeshed social categories. One key consideration in intersectional analysis at this level is avoiding a fragmented view of individuals where their multiple minority categories become additive—female plus racial minority—and instead investigating how these social categories form an interconnected whole (Yuval-Davis, 2009). Moreover, an additional concern in intersectional analysis is essentializing, or making generalizations about the people who embody particular social categories, because by doing so, differences become "flattened." Essentializing, therefore, violates the very concept of intersectionality, as individuals' experiences are again subsumed by larger social groups. Applied to this dissertation, the layer of social category allows for rich investigation of how disability and L1 interact together to create a unique experience and how ELs with disabilities are (or not) subsumed into either social category they represent.

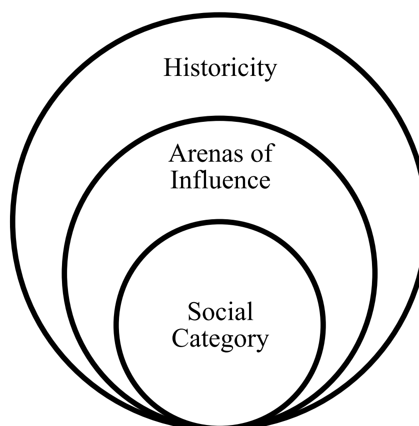

Figure 1. Anthias' Levels of Analysis.

The second layer of analysis Anthias (2012) calls *arenas of influence*, which can be simply understood as the contexts that create inequalities between social categories. Delving deeper, Anthias identifies the four contexts for inequalities as organizational, representational, intersubjective, and experiential. Organizational analysis examines how individuals are organized within a given institutional context while representational inquiries tend to the discourse surrounding individuals and their intersectional identities. Analyses can also focus on intersubjectivity, how individuals and groups interact with one another, and experiential or the exploration of how individuals attempt to construct a self-narrative about their lived experiences. With this dissertation study focusing on the institutional practices surrounding ELs with disabilities' learning, the former two contexts will serve as framework for analyzing the arenas of influence for these learners; that is, I will examine how ELs with disabilities are organized within their schools (i.e., organizational analysis) and what discursive practices are produced by school personnel about these learners (i.e., representational analysis).

Finally, the third layer of analysis is *historicity*, which according to Anthias (2009), focuses on space and time, acknowledging that social categories interact and arenas of influence persist within larger temporal and spatial contexts. That is, “This type of analysis focuses on broader interlocking systems of economic, legal, political, media, and social power and classification evolve over time in specific places, as well as social movements to challenge these systems” (Nuñez, 2014, p. 89). In connection to this dissertation, I will examine the influence of 21st century (i.e., time) educational laws in the United States (i.e., space) and their influence on educational contexts as well as the ELs with disabilities therein.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Case Study Research

For this dissertation I conducted an ethnographic vertical case study. Recently conceptualized by Vavrus and Bartlett (2013), a vertical case study is "a multi-sited, qualitative case study that traces the linkages among local, national, and international forces and institutions that together shape and are shaped by education in a particular locale" (pp. 11-12). Before delving further into the specific characteristics of vertical case study research, I first will explicate its methodological core—the case study.

Case studies examine a unit or phenomenon (e.g., a person, a place, an event, etc.) above all else and are useful in research for examining the complexities of the phenomenon and its interplay with a range of contextual factors (Merriam, 2009). Further, as Merriam posits, in education it is through case studies that "processes, problems, and programs can be examined to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice. Case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, evaluating programs, and informing policy" (p. 51). Ethnographic methodology, too, has utility for investigating educational practices and policies (Levinson & Sutton, 2001; Menken & García, 2010). In particular, ethnographic research captures policies that are produced and implemented by those with power (Levinson & Sutton, 2001). Menken and García (2010), however, challenge the top-down understanding of policy research by arguing that educators, too, are policy makers. With this understanding, case study research is befitting for the focus of this dissertation—

service delivery policies and practices for ELs with disabilities. Yet case study research is not without its limitations; a case study most commonly focuses extensively on a singular site in its relation to the phenomenon, leading to a narrow fragmented perspective, one that emphasizes the micro (Marcus, 1995).

Comparative case studies or multisite case studies, however, address the limitation of this narrow focus by examining the phenomenon across multiple locations (Stake, 2006); that is, the diverse settings shed light on the phenomenon itself in a way that the single site cannot. Although the sites can be quite dissimilar, within a comparative case study they are bound together by the commonality of the phenomenon (Stake, 2006). In investigating educational policy, Levinson and Sutton (2001) remind us of the benefits of comparative case studies: multisite research is “attuned to different moments and cycles of the policy process as it unfolds in different sites” (p. 9). Multiple sites produce multifaceted understanding of policies as they are enacted and negotiated in real and diverse settings. In this way, comparative case studies allow the researcher to investigate across, or horizontally (see Figure 2).

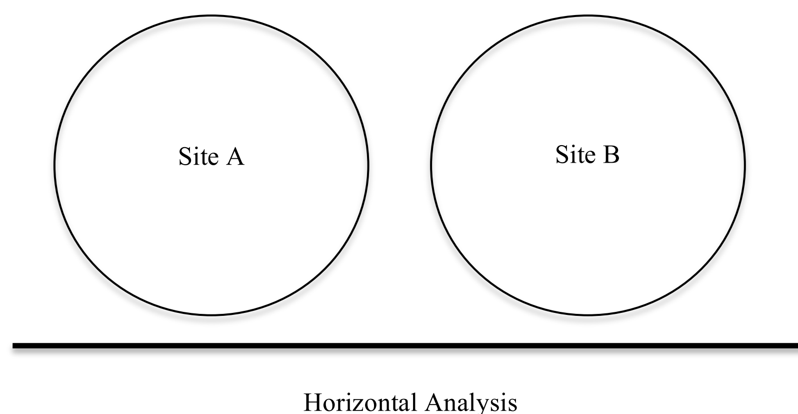

Figure 2. Comparative Case Study Analysis.

Vertical case studies utilize the strengths of the comparative case study by not only examining horizontally (or across locations) but also attending to the vertical, analyzing the micro, meso, and macro, as well as to the transversal. Micro-, meso-, and macro-levels are not necessary dichotomous or distinct, instead these levels are intended to draw the researcher's analysis outward to the various levels of context (Barlett & Vavrus, 2014) (see Figure 3). The vertical analysis in Barlett and Vavrus' (2013) conceptualization maps onto the Anthias' (2012) three layers of intersectionality analysis: (a) social category, (b) arenas of influence, and (c) historicity. However, instead of theorizing historicity as the outermost layer of analysis, Barlett and Vavrus (2013) theorize a transversal line cutting through all possible layers. This transversal line, like Anthias (2012) asserts, in analysis focuses on space and time (see Figure 4). Through the analysis of contexts both physical (i.e., sites) and intangible (i.e., historical and cultural), Bartlett and Vavrus (2014) identify that a vertical case study "expands the locations of research while showing how actors are related through specific historical contingencies that connect disparate social sites and social actors" (p. 132).

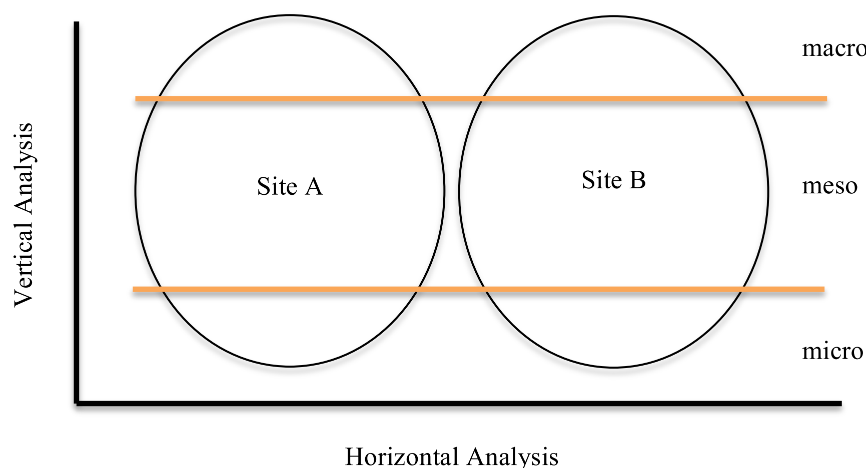

Figure 3. Vertical and Horizontal Analysis.

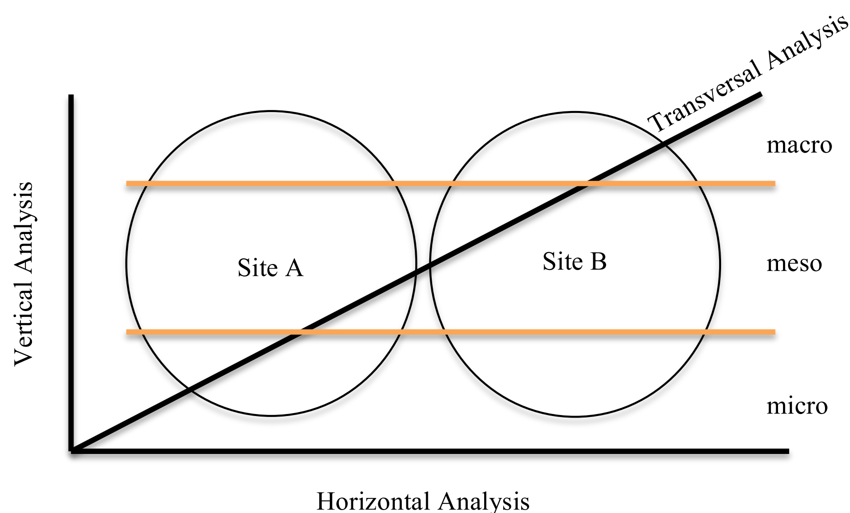

Figure 4. Vertical, Horizontal, and Transversal Analysis.

Ethnographic Methodology

Although the conceptualization of ethnography itself is contested (Grenfell, 2012), in the context of this dissertation *ethnography* should be understood as “a principled effort to describe the everyday, cultural life of a social group” (Bloome, 2012, p. 9). Grounded in anthropological origins, ethnography has long been used to investigate culture. Heath and Street (2008) remind us that culture is not merely a matter of racial, socioeconomic, or national demarcations:

> We generally associate “culture” with one more “societies,” often seen as synonymous with “nation,” “racial group,” “religion,” or “ethnicity.” Yet these biological and geographic frames of birth origin or chosen affinity also develop subgroupings that have a strong sense of their own special ways of doing and believing. (p. 9)

These subgroupings are inclusive of institutions and organizations that often develop their own ways of “doing and believing,” and in fact, educational institutions often harness their ascribed culture to attract and retain prospective pupils and their families

(Heath & Street, 2008). The particular culture within a school has also attracted educational researchers as well; in the last several decades those within the education field have a growing interest in more naturalistic research to investigate "'the culture of classrooms' and the socio-historic factors impinging on the process of teaching and learning" (Grenfell, 2012, p. 2). The consequence of which has resulted in the popularization of ethnography as a principal methodology in educational research (Walford, 2001a).

The utility of ethnography extends beyond the study of culture to also include the study of policy. Ethnography is useful for understanding policy creation and implementation (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Walford, 2001b). Moreover, Walford (2001a) asserts that in the investigation of educational policies, ethnography can uncover whether policies (a) actually influence practice, (b) create unexpected consequences, and (c) give rise to contradictions. In considering policy relating more narrowly to language, ethnography is best suited for multiple sites, because many of these policies cut across location (Johnson & Freeman, 2010). In addition to multisites, ethnography lends itself to multilayer analysis for language policies. That is, ethnography, according to Hornberger and Johnson (2007), can cut through the policy "onion," examining the macro and micro "to reveal varying local interpretations, implementations, and perhaps resistance" of policy (p. 510). The ethnographic orientation of this dissertation, I posit, aligns with its investigative aim—to examine at multisites through multilayers service delivery practices and the particular role school culture plays as well as the educational policies implicit and explicit therein.

Fieldwork Sites

Williams Elementary

Surrounded by charming homes, open green fields, and nearby shopping centers filled with pizzerias, grocery stores, and nail salons, Williams Elementary typifies—as it seems—a suburban elementary school. Williams Elementary is composed of grades kindergarten through fifth and at the time of the study had a school population of approximately 600 students. Also typical of a suburban school, Williams is predominately Caucasian at 81% with a remainder of the student body that is 8% African American, 8% Asian, and 2% Hispanic. The school has undergone significant changes and many conversations with Williams teachers revealed their perceptions that their school's golden age had come and gone. Teachers complained, in fact, about what they perceive was a general deterioration—students with lower academic performances and a lack of moral development, parents too busy or apathetic for involvement, and families that are no longer intact and experience economic difficulty. At the time of the study there were talks of redistricting within the district Williams belongs to, Cedar View, but some parents resisted this change as their children may be placed in one of the less affluent schools like Williams. In recent years, Williams was designated a Title I school—a designation for schools receiving federal assistance based on the percentage of low income students per school. In addition to the changes in economic background of the student body, teachers at Williams reported a cascade of diversification in general, including students who are racial and linguistic minorities.

More recently, Williams Elementary began instructing all the elementary-age learners with autism living within the bounds of the school district, resulting in a relatively large population of learners with disabilities within just one school. There were approximately 30 students with autism at Williams in addition to learners with intellectual, learning, and orthopedic disabilities. The history of specialized programs for learners with disabilities began several year back when Williams first educated all learners with emotional disturbance (ED) in elementary grades. Although many teachers reported having multilingual students within their classrooms, only 12 students qualified for ESL services. Of these 12 ELs, two were identified as having a disability, while one other EL was being monitored for special education referral.

The ESL program models at Williams were both push-in, during which an ESL teacher provides support to ELs during content instruction in the general education classroom, and pull-out, when the ELs receive English language instruction as a group in a separate classroom. Overall, the school district administrators preferred the push-in model, believing that ethically students should not be divided into separate learning environments because of differences, whether linguistic or ability-based. However, when the general education and ESL teachers presented a case wherein an EL may perform better in a pull-out setting, the school district acquiesced. Likewise, Williams attempted to create a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for students with disabilities through inclusive classrooms. Some students with more severe autism, however, were taught within self-contained classrooms while students with more moderate to mild forms of autism spent varying portions of their day in inclusive classrooms.

Rationale for Second Fieldwork Site

During my ethnographic case study at Williams Elementary, a data-driven assertion emerged—school culture influences the delivery of services for ELs with disabilities. The initial analysis revealed a particular culture that emphasized understanding and accommodating disability. The preliminary findings also revealed this school culture played a role in the school personnel's construction of a social reality in the school wherein ELs with disabilities were not provided services in terms of their intersectional social categories: In the school they were not *language* learners with disabilities but *learners* with disabilities during service delivery. That is, services at Williams Elementary predominately targeted the special needs of the ELs while ignoring their EL status, thereby constructing both an identity for the learner and a reality within the classroom.

In order to test this assertion further, I deliberately selected a second site—San Pedro School—for my dissertation with a contrasting school culture to Williams Elementary. San Pedro has a unique school culture that focuses on students' L1 and L2 through their two-way bilingual education program. I argue that its bilingual education program represents ultimate attention to and emphasis of understanding and accommodating language learning.

Further, Stake (2006) avers that in selecting sites the researcher should seek above all else to build knowledge of the phenomenon. Typical cases have their value, of course, because they present the conditions that are commonly found; however, atypical cases can further enhance understanding of the phenomenon, because the conditions open the researcher to another set of unusual circumstances also tied to the phenomenon. I propose

that Williams Elementary and San Pedro School achieve the effects of atypicality and typicality around the phenomenon. Williams represents atypicality in the following ways: (a) it is a suburban school, (b) its ELs with disabilities were Arabic and Bengali speakers, and (c) its ELs with disabilities have low incidence disabilities—autism and an orthopedic impairment. The aforementioned representations of atypicality are substantiated in demographic data of the American school-age population. ELs, for example, tend to be clustered in high numbers in specific locations; that is, ELs in the average American suburban school are only 8.6% of the student population, whereas this number nearly doubles within the urban context (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013a). Further, Bengali-speaking and Arabic-speaking ELs comprise only 1.8% and 1.2% of the total EL population, respectively, and are less common than their Spanish-speaking EL peers (Migration Policy Institute, 2009). Likewise students with autism are approximately 0.8% of all students with disabilities and students with orthopedic impairments represent just 0.1% of the school age population with disabilities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013b). Certainly, with these three characteristics present, Williams represents the atypical case.

San Pedro, however, offers the meaningful contrast of typicality. Intentionally, I sought a location that not only had a contrasting school culture, but quite closely connected to this, I sought a site with learners who captured specific criteria that were not represented in students at Williams. The criteria included that the focal students were: (a) L1 Spanish speakers because they represent the largest group of ELs within American schools at roughly 73% (Migration Policy Institute, 2009) and 77% of all ELs with disabilities (Zehler et al., 2003), and (b) identified with high incidence disabilities. The

learners at San Pedro in particular had either, or in some cases both, an SLI or LD, which are the most common disabilities in the school-age population, a pattern that is also reflected amongst ELs with disabilities. Of children and adolescents ages three to 21, roughly 4.8% have an LD and 2.8% have been identified with an SLI (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013); however, just focusing on the population of ELs, 5.1% and 2.1% have an LD and SLI, respectively (Zehler et al., 2003).

San Pedro School

In stark contrast to Williams and its surroundings is San Pedro School, located in a neighborhood known for its crime and poverty within an urban Pennsylvanian city. San Pedro is a combined charter elementary and middle school; however, this dissertation study focused on the elementary grades within the school, which hereafter are the foci of the data I present. With its two-way bilingual education program—where half of the content during the school day is delivered in Spanish and the other half is delivered in English—it is no surprise that of 550 students, 85% are Latino/a, 12% are African American, and 3% are other (i.e., Caucasian, Asian, or two or more races).

Like Williams, San Pedro is a Title I school with 79% of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch. Although there is a cluster of public and charter schools located within just a few blocks, San Pedro is known throughout the neighborhood as one of the best options for Latino families, and this is manifested in both a waiting list comprising more than 500 families and a 25% increase of Latino/a students in the school over the years despite the lottery system for enrollment. San Pedro has a large population of L1 Spanish speakers; in fact, only 1 of the 143 ELs was *not* a Spanish speaker. However, as I discovered during fieldwork, school staff assert that although the school has a larger

population of ELs, these students are not dominant in Spanish. Instead according to the staff, their ELs show "deficits" in both English and Spanish. There are 65 students with identified disabilities in the school, and of these learners, 15 were also identified as ELs.

With the ultimate goal of producing a bilingual, biliterate student population, every student at San Pedro participants in the dual-language program regardless of their L1. In this two-way bilingual education program 50% of the day has content delivered in Spanish and 50% in English. Typically, a particular classroom will start the day with instruction in one language and then around lunchtime the class with transition to the other language (see Table 1). For example, the first grade inclusion class had English instruction in the morning with the exception of their special classes, which for two of the three specials (i.e., art and music) instruction was in Spanish, and then in the afternoon the class was instructed in Spanish.

Table 1

First Grade Schedule of Content and Language Instruction

Time	Content	Language
08:15-08:45	Writing	English
08:50-09:35	Specials	Spanish
09:35-09:45	Bathroom	N/A
09:45-10:45	Reading	English
10:45-11:45	Math	English
11:45-12:00	Book Challenge	Spanish
12:10-13:50	Lunch and Recess	N/A
13:15-14:15	Reading	Spanish
14:15-14:45	Writing	Spanish
14:45-15:30	Language	Spanish

For the students who are ELs, they receive push-in ESL during language arts and math, which both occur in English. In each grade there is a designated inclusive classroom for learners with disabilities and for roughly half of the day a special education practitioner coteaches with the general education practitioner in the inclusive classroom. Towards the end of the fieldwork at San Pedro, special education practitioners also began a pull-out literacy intervention with the lowest performing students of the inclusion classrooms.

Participants

Participants in this study include practitioners and other school personnel from Williams Elementary and San Pedro School. Recruiting participants at the two sites took different forms. At Williams the study was approved by both a district-level administrator and the school principal; however, the recruiting process was facilitated by the Williams ESL teacher, Mrs. Franks. With the limited number of ELs with disabilities at the school, it was relatively easy to identify potential practitioner participants who were currently instructing at least one EL with a disability. Prior to the beginning of fieldwork, Mrs. Franks personally introduced me to the potential participants, and it was at this point that I described the focus of the study and the scope of their possible participation. In total, there were five participating focal practitioners clustered in first and third grades: two general education practitioners, one ESL practitioner, and two special education practitioners specializing in autistic support (see Table 2).

Table 2

Williams Elementary Practitioner Profiles

Teacher	Age	Grade	Professional Role	Subject	Years Teaching	Specialization
Mrs. Franks	Late 40s	K-5	Practitioner	ESL	11	Early Childhood Education ESL Certification
Ms. Glass	Mid 20s	K-5	Practitioner	Reading Intervention	2	Special Education ESL Certification
Mrs. Harris	Mid 20s	3	Practitioner	General Education	2	Elementary Education
Mrs. Motts	Mid 20s	K-5	Paraprofessional	Autistic Support	2	Special Education
Mrs. Roberts	Mid 30s	1	Practitioner	General Education	13	Elementary Education

At San Pedro the vice principal, Mrs. Fuentes, was actively involved in the recruitment of participants. After meeting with me, Mrs. Fuentes consulted school records first starting with identifying students who were identified as ELs and had an IEP. Her search yielded 15 possible students spanning a number of grades; however, since I wanted to draw more meaningful comparisons across the sites, I requested to focus the study on first and third grade students. There were five practitioners in total instructing these students: two general education practitioners, two special education practitioners, and one ESL practitioner (see Table 3). All practitioners except for the ESL practitioner, Mrs. Neal, were bilingual Spanish-English speakers. Mrs. Fuentes explained the study to the practitioners and personnel, introduced me to the potential participants via email, and facilitated many of the initial meetings during which I explained the study in more detail.

Table 3

San Pedro School Practitioner Profiles

Teacher	Age	Grade	Professional Role	Subject	Years Teaching	Specialization
Mr. Alvarez	Late 30s	3	Practitioner	Inclusion Bilingual Education	9	Elementary Education
Ms. Calderon	Mid 30s	K-1	Practitioner	Special Education	5	Special Education Spanish Certification
Mr. Medina	Late 30s	3-4	Practitioner	Special Education	1	Elementary Education Special Education
Mrs. Neal	Mid 30s	1	Practitioner	ESL	3	Special Education ESL Certification
Mrs. Soto	Late 40s	1	Practitioner	Inclusion Bilingual Education	15	Early Childhood Education Bilingual/Bicultural Education

In addition to the 10 focal practitioners from both schools, there were 23 school personnel, hereafter referred to as *key school professionals*, who participated in the study. These individuals—the schools' principals, vice principals, school psychologists, ESL coordinators, special education coordinators, speech pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, specialist teachers (e.g., technology, music, library, etc.), reading specialists, and paraprofessionals—were not responsible for educating the students on a daily basis but interacted with ELs with disabilities frequently or could provide insight about service provision from an administrative perspective.

Focal Students

Focal Students at Williams

At Williams there were two ELs with disabilities. In Mrs. Roberts' first grade class there were two female ELs from India; one learner named Rita was an L1 Urdu speaker and the other student named Lula was an L1 Bengali speaker (see Table 4). Along with her family, Lula immigrated to the United States prior to the start of primary school. The exact age of her arrival remained unknown to her teachers. Lula often baffled her teachers because of her complex learning needs; she was diagnosed with an orthopedic impairment, resulting in difficulty in her gross motor skills, such as walking, coordinating movements, and achieving balance, for which she received physical therapy in a pull-out setting (Table 5). In addition to having an orthopedic impairment, Lula was being monitored for an emotional disturbance (ED). She had a tenuous relationship with Rita, so much in fact, that Rita's mother insisted the girls be placed in different classrooms for the next academic year. The ELs in Mrs. Roberts' class, including Lula,

received pull-out ESL instruction with other first grade ELs in a separate location with Mrs. Franks.

Table 4

Williams Elementary Focal Students

Student	Grade	L1	Disability	ACCESS English Proficiency
Lula	1	Bengali	orthopedic impairment	Bridging (5)
Ahmed	3	Arabic	autism	Expanding (4)

Note. ACCESS proficiency levels are not based on raw scores but are grounded in teachers' reports and/or observation of ACCESS test performance.

In Mrs. Harris' third grade classroom there was one EL who was diagnosed with autism (see Table 4). Ahmed was a native speaker of Arabic who arrived to the United States as a first grader two years prior. Unlike other students in the school with autism, he was considered highly functioning. For this reason Ahmed was placed in an inclusive classroom where an autistic support (AS) paraprofessional, Mrs. Motts, pushed into the classroom as specified by his Individualized Education Program (IEP; Table 5). She assisted both Ahmed and Jeff, a non-EL boy with autism. Other services Ahmed received for his disability included speech therapy, occupational therapy, reading interventions, and social skills training (Table 5). Reading instruction occurred in a pull-out setting with either Ms. Glass or Mrs. Brock and push-in ESL services were provided by Mrs. Franks. Following each class, both Ahmed and his teachers completed a behavior assessment. These self- and other-assessments were a strategic part of his Positive Behavior Support (PBS) plan, which is an approach to obviating negative behaviors by encouraging and building positive, or prosocial, behaviors (Cohn, 2001).

Table 5

Williams Focal Students' Special Education and Related Services

Student	Service	Setting	Frequency	Duration
Lula	Physical Therapy	Pull-out	1 time/week	30 minutes
Ahmed	Autistic Support	Push-in	6 times/cycle	4 hours
	Occupational Therapy	Pull-out	1 time/biweekly	30 minutes
	Reading Intervention I	Pull-out	6 times/cycle	30 minutes
	Reading Intervention II	Pull-out	6 times/cycle	30 minutes
	Speech Therapy	Pull-out	2 times/cycle	30 minutes
	Social Skills	Pull-out	1 time/cycle	30 minutes

Note. At Williams Elementary a cycle consists of six school days. Physical and occupational therapy schedules operated on a traditional school week schedule.

Focal Students at San Pedro

The focal students at San Pedro were also in first and third grades concentrated in two inclusive classrooms. In Mrs. Soto's first grade class there were three ELs with disabilities: Alexa, Christian, and Alonso (Table 6). These learners shared some commonalities as they all were Latino/a L1 Spanish speakers and all had a speech or language impairment (SLI)[1]. These learners received speech services from the school's speech language pathologist (SLP) on a weekly basis for 30 minutes each time (see Table 7). Alexa was retained in first grade, so this was her second year as a first grader, making her one of the oldest and tallest students within the class. Significantly, as it relates to the findings of this study, one student in the first grade class was thought to be an EL by some of her teachers; however, according to school records she was a learner with a

[1] Under IDEA an SLI is defined as a communication disorder that negatively influences a learner's educational performance, and can include stuttering or impaired articulation, language, or voice (IDEA § 300.8).

specific learning disability (LD)— describing a number of neurologically-based disorders in information processing (IDEA § 330.8)—in reading and math.

In Mr. Alvarez's third grade class there were five ELs. Four of the five ELs also had a disability. One student, Darell, was suspected of having an LD, so he was placed in the inclusive classroom to receive extra support and monitoring (Table 6). The other four students included Zoe, Bruno, Dominick, and Rafael, who like most students at San Pedro, were L1 Spanish speakers and were of Puerto Rican or Dominican descent. Zoe, Bruno, and Dominick were identified with an LD in reading and math, but in addition Dominick was also identified with an SLI. But, Dominick was making progress in his speech sessions, so much in fact, that he only received speech services once a month (Table 7). Rafael had a dual diagnosis with an LD in reading fluency and comprehension and an SLI for which he received speech services twice weekly. All of the ELs received push-in support everyday for three hours from a special educator, Mr. Medina, and during the second trimester all five ELs started to receive pull-out literacy interventions because of their low achievement in reading (see Table 7).

Table 6

San Pedro School Focal Students

Student	Grade	L1	Disability	ACCESS English Proficiency
Alexa	1	Spanish	SLI	Emerging/Developing (2.9)
Christian	1	Spanish	SLI	-
Alonso	1	Spanish	SLI	-
Zoe	3	Spanish	LD in reading and math	Developing (3)
Bruno	3	Spanish	LD in reading and math	Emerging/Developing (2.8)
Dominick	3	Spanish	SLI; LD in reading and math	Developing (3)
Rafael	3	Spanish	SLI; LD in reading fluency/ comprehension	Emerging/Developing (2.6)
Darell	3	Spanish	-	Emerging/Developing (2.6)

Note. There were no ACCESS proficiency scores for Christian and Alonso at the time of the study. These learners were initially assessed when they entered San Pedro with the kindergarten WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT). Their scores are available for the W-APT, qualifying them for ESL services.

Table 7

San Pedro Focal Students' Special Education and Related Services

Student	Grade	Service	Setting	Frequency	Duration
Alexa	1	Speech Therapy	Pull-out	1 time/week	30 minutes
Alonso	1	Speech Therapy	Pull-out	1 time/week	30 minutes
Christian	1	Speech Therapy	Pull-out	1 time/week	30 minutes
Bruno	3	LD Support	Push-in	5 times/week	3 hours
Dominick	3	LD Support Speech Therapy	Push-in Pull-out	5 times/week 1 time/month	3 hours 30 minutes
Rafael	3	LD Support Speech Therapy	Push-in Pull-out	5 times/week 1 time/week	3 hours 30 minutes
Zoe	3	LD Support	Push-in	5 times/week	3 hours

Note. During the later months of the school's second trimester, all of the third grade ELs with disabilities started receiving a pull-out reading intervention, Leveled Literacy Intervention, instead of participating in guided reading. This intervention was implemented by the special educator during push-in LD support.

Data Collection

I began fieldwork in the winter of 2012 at Williams Elementary and visited the site 42 times for a six-month duration. Fieldwork for San Pedro began in November 2013 and continued until May 2014, also lasting for a total of six months. The total number of separate visits to San Pedro School was 46. Fieldwork at both sites consisted of collecting the following types of data: (a) classroom observations, (b) interviews with personnel, (c) meeting fieldnotes, and (d) school artifacts.

Observations

I conducted 75 observations at Williams Elementary and 58 observations at San Pedro School with roughly half the observations for each site focusing on the learners within first grade and the other half focusing on third grade. To gain a holistic view of ELs with disabilities' educational environments, I observed a range of content areas—math, science, English language arts, social studies, Spanish language arts—and various service delivery contexts, such as ESL, special education, reading interventions, occupational and physical therapy, and speech. I defined an observation based on the services being delivered at that time. For instance, when a learner was receiving ESL push-in services, I counted each of these times as individual observations. Observations lasted for 30 to 75 minutes depending on the allotted time of service delivery. Although originally I intended to conduct non-participatory observations—strictly taking ethnographic notes, capturing the events in the classroom—I soon discovered that when amongst elementary-age students, who possess a natural curiosity and uninhibited extroversion, my observation became participatory. Participant observations align methodologically with ethnography, as and Bloome (2012) reminds us, afford the researcher an insider's perspective.

Interviews

The interviews I conducted throughout the dissertation study were semi-structured in which predetermined questions were balanced with spontaneous questions that emerged in reaction to participants' shared thoughts. Across both sites there was a total of 40 interviews with participants—17 interviews with practitioners and 23 interviews with key school professionals. Of the 17 interviews with practitioners, 10 were with San Pedro

practitioners and seven with William practitioners, and of the 23 interviews with key school professionals, 10 were at San Pedro and the remaining 13 were at Williams. Following each individual interview, I transcribed the discourse verbatim and drafted fieldnotes identifying and synthesizing themes that emerged.

Practitioner Interviews

Interviews with practitioners occurred in two rounds with the first interview occurring at the beginning and the second interview towards the end of the study. The first series of interviews focused on the practitioners' professional history, previous experiences teaching learners with disabilities and/or ELs, as well as reflections on the complexities of providing services for learners with multiple educational needs, whether linguistic or disability-related. The second series of interviews included questions pertaining to both themes that emerged and events that occurred during classroom observations. One focal teacher, I will note, declined to be interviewed for reasons that I will explore later in the results section (i.e., Chapter 4). Interviews with practitioners ranged from 35 to 65 minutes depending on their availability.

Key School Professional Interviews

Interviews with key school professional occurred once with each participant during the middle and later months of fieldwork at each location to ensure that questions were more informed by observation data. The duration of the interviews varied from 22 to 63 minutes, again depending on the schedule of the participants.

Meetings and School Artifacts

During the study, opportunities arose for meetings and informal conversations with participating practitioners and key school professionals. Following these meetings

and conversations, I wrote detailed notes describing the information the participants shared. Lastly, used in triangulation with the other ethnographic data, I collected artifacts from practitioners, including instructional materials and Positive Behavior Support (PBS) documents. From school administrators and websites, I collected the following artifacts: school demographic data, records, and policies. In addition, at San Pedro I was also given access to focal students' assessment grades; however, at Williams per the request of the district-level administrator, I was not permitted access to focal students' records or assessment data. Further, I was unable to interview focal students' and their parents at the request of both sites—a limitation I will detail in Chapter 7.

Data Analysis

To begin data analysis, I developed a preliminary codebook in the qualitative research software HyperResearch of nearly a dozen inductive codes (i.e., codes derived from the data) from my initial fieldwork at Williams Elementary. As data collection continued, I incorporated additional codes that emerged from interviews and observations. For each code I developed a corresponding definition, which I utilized during the coding process to evaluate the relevance of the data against each code. As a consequence of my fieldwork occurring sequentially—first at Williams then later at San Pedro—I coded data from Williams first during the first cycle coding or, commonly referred to as initial coding. I used the methods of descriptive coding and hypothesis coding. Descriptive coding can be easily understood as topic coding (Saldaña, 2009). During descriptive coding I identified the topic of a chunk of data for the benefit of attempting to understand what topics were prevalent and which were not. For example, after several weeks at Williams Elementary the topics of *professional development*, *time*, and *schedules* were all

prominent throughout interviews and observations. Consequently, I developed a code for each of these. After approximately two months at William Elementary, I began using hypothesis coding, a method that utilizes codes to specifically test emerging hypotheses. Saldaña (2009) attests that hypothesis coding is particularly useful in examining explanations and causes found in the data, and further, hypothesis coding is often an appropriate method once the researcher has spent sufficient time in the field. In the context of Williams Elementary, there were several hypotheses to code, including: "School culture influences service delivery;" "Services for ELs with disabilities do not reflect intersectional practices;" "Special education take precedence over ESL." Therefore, short phrases were developed as codes to capture the essence of these hypotheses.

After my fieldwork at San Pedro, I began the first cycle coding process again but with data from San Pedro. I used the codebook developed earlier to begin descriptive coding; however, because the sites have unique characteristics as schools and service delivery practices, I found it necessary to adjust the codebook through adding codes that were common topics in the data (see Appendix D). For instance, *rostering*, *two-way bilingual education program*, and *small group instruction* were all frequent topics in interview and observation data. Also I began to use hypothesis coding after several weeks at San Pedro to test emerging assertions particular to this site. After the first cycle coding of data from San Pedro, I went back to the Williams data and recoded with the new expanded codebook to determine if during the initial coding there were topics common at San Pedro that also applied to the Williams data. In particular, I found that *small group instruction* was a prevalent topic also at Williams.

During second cycle coding I reexamined the first cycle codes from both sites location "to develop a coherent synthesis of the data corpus" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 149) by grouping the data into concrete themes. In essence, the purpose in second cycle coding is to fit the codes together (Saldaña, 2009). To assemble the codes together to form a whole, I employed axial coding, wherein I regrouped or chunked similar coded data together. In doing so, the number of codes from first cycle coding was reduced into a new relabeled category or theme (Saldaña, 2009). For instance, the codes *schedule* and *time* were grouped together with codes *rostering* and *instructional priorities* into the theme *Logistics Matter* because all of these codes pertained to the educational constraints within the sites that influenced the way services were provided to the learners (see Appendix E).

Data Authenticity and Trustworthiness

In data collection and analysis I considered the question: How do I know my data are authentic and trustworthy? Addressing the former, at the core of case study research is ecological validity, because as Stake (2006) asserts, the "qualitative case study was developed to study the experiences of real cases operating in real situations" (p. 3). For this vertical case study, I investigated real schools and teachers as they negotiated service delivery for ELs with disabilities in a way that a controlled experimental study or survey research could never capture. As I conducted my fieldwork, I used thick description, which consists of detailed depictions and interpretations during observations (Geertz, 1973), and triangulation of data (Campbell & Fiske, 1959)—in this specific study, the examination of how different data converge to a shared reality about service provision at Williams Elementary and San Pedro School.

To further assure trustworthiness and authenticity of the data, during data collection and analysis, respectively, I incorporated extended engagement in the field and consideration of disconfirming evidence. Extended engagement—visiting the site for prolonged periods of time—has no determined duration, but in ethnographic fieldwork typically lasts for months, if not years (Creswell & Miller, 2000). As Guba and Lincoln (1989) indicate, extended engagement in the field "overcome[s] the effects of misinformation, distortion, or presented 'fronts' . . . [and] establish[es] the rapport and build[s] the trust necessary to uncover constructions" (p. 237). Through extended engagement in the field I gained intimate knowledge about the service provision practices that happened not just once or twice but continued throughout a majority of the academic year at both sites. In total, I spent one entire calendar year collecting data from the two sites.

Also during data analysis I deliberately considered disconfirming evidence to test emerging hypotheses and nuanced conceptual perspectives through hypothesis coding. Creswell and Miller (2000) assert that the "search for disconfirming evidence provides further support of the account's credibility because reality, according to constructivists, is multiple and complex" (p.127). In the context of this study, I sought out data that demonstrated how learners were provided services in light of all of their intersectional identities and how services were delivered in confluence.

Researcher's Role

In ethnographic fieldwork the researcher serves as the instrument of both data collection and analysis. But, a human instrument has limitations, one of which is the potential for bias, or subjectivities (Merriam, 2009). According to Merriam (2009), one

way to safeguard against subjectivities is to practice reflexivity, careful reflection of the positions the researcher occupies at the fieldwork location. As a practice of reflexivity, below I discuss the three focal roles I negotiated during my fieldwork at both schools: (a) Role with Personnel, (b) Role with Students, and (c) Role as a Linguist.

Role with Personnel

My experiences as a researcher interacting with school personnel were quite disparate at the two schools. At Williams Elementary the administration took a hand-off approach to my study. In fact, although the principal approved the study, she later shared in a meeting that she was not familiar with its scope and focus. Most of my connections with personnel at that school were established through the ESL teacher, Mrs. Franks. Her facilitation of these connections on one hand was very generous and helpful—as she wanted people to know that I had an inside connection and was "safe" to have around—but on the other hand, it presented its pitfalls. As my key informant, she at times muddied the waters. For instance, Mrs. Franks volunteered to set up an introductory meeting with me and some of the focal practitioners. She mentioned that I was a student, but did not explain that I was a *doctoral* student hoping to conduct dissertation research there. So, one practitioner in particular was quite surprised and upset when I began talking about my dissertation study, and I too was surprised and upset because I thought we were all operating under a shared understanding about who I was and why I was there. I believe that Mrs. Franks coordinating the introductions created another unforeseen consequence in addition to miscommunication; I sensed other practitioners felt that Mrs. Franks and I were somehow aligned or a packaged deal, especially in the beginning weeks of the study. For example, one practitioner had a question about the study and in turn asked Mrs.

Franks. Realizing that this was not a healthy dynamic, I quickly established connections to and communication with the focal practitioners independent from Mrs. Franks. It was not easy: I found that most personnel were unfamiliar with me as well as the study and they needed reassurance that I was actually approved to conduct my dissertation research there. Many introductions, explanations, and clarifying details ensued. With time, I became a familiar, less-so-threatening face. As a token of my appreciation for the focal practitioners, I offered to be a volunteer for their classrooms and many of them took me up on this offer by having me assist in the classroom with activities and multi-step projects, make copies, and prepare class materials.

At San Pedro negotiating my role with practitioners was much easier. Mrs. Fuentes, the Vice Principal at San Pedro, was involved from the beginning of data collection. She sent out an email, on which I was copied, to all potential participants. The email welcomed me to the school, but also informed the personnel that I would be in contact with them. She also set up the initial meetings with the focal practitioners, and just as I was concerned about my perceived connection with Mrs. Franks, I was also worried that practitioners felt compelled to participate because they received an email from the vice principal and were also scheduled to participate in a meeting with me. But, having learned from the past, when I met with practitioners I assumed they knew nothing about me nor the study, and I explained very emphatically that their participation was voluntary. Practitioners at San Pedro were initially cautious, especially Mr. Alvarez but more quickly trusted me to share their classrooms and honest thoughts. Since it was common knowledge around the school that I was a doctoral student at Temple, it was

very easy to approach personnel to participate in the study. Unlike Williams, I was not starting from scratch with each encounter.

Also at San Pedro, I offered to volunteer for the inclusion teachers. They each had their own unique ideas of how I could best provide support: Mr. Alvarez invited me to assist with small group activities and holiday projects; Mr. Medina would often call on me to keep a group of student occupied whenever there were behavioral problems to avoid more students getting involved in the skirmish; and Mrs. Soto thought it best for me to assist students when they were doing independent math and language arts work.

Role with Students

Across both schools I was “that lady” who came to visit and sometimes assist. They often were unsure if I was a teacher or not, but they assumed that I had a similar authority role because I was, after all, an adult. For instance, whenever a student had a question and the practitioner was busy, I would often be the person they consulted. “How do you spell…?” and “Miss, can help me with this?” were the common questions throughout the course of an observation. The physical set up of the classrooms often determined the level of interactions with students during observations. The classrooms were smaller at San Pedro, so often I occupied a seat that was close to, if not amongst, the students, whereas at Williams Elementary the classrooms were so large in size, I often sat several feet away from the nearest student. This did not, however, stop students from soliciting my help, asking me why I always came to their class, and chatting with me about whatever was on their minds.

After some time had past at both sites, I began volunteering in the classrooms. Taking a more active role in the classroom brought new knowledge about the students,

especially the ELs with disabilities, as well as presented some challenges. While assisting the students, they often shared about themselves—their experiences, opinions, and emotions. One EL with a disability, Zoe, shared that in the week prior she got in a physical altercation with another female student, and she explained that was the reason for the large scratch on her face. Other students chimed in, relishing the gritty details of the event. At Williams Elementary, Lula wanted to read stories to me. She read quickly, accurately, and with emotion. The emotion in her voice was moving. Interactions such as these provided further insight in a way that sitting alone in the back of the room did not. At times, however, I wanted to pull back from my involvement with the students. One precocious boy in first grade would ask me what I was writing in my notes and one day he even dictated to me what I should write in my notes: "Student raises hand," he said. He often would visit me to share about his brothers and sisters, household chores, and conflicts with other students. This, of course, was distracting. In Mr. Alvarez's class many of the students craved additional attention. Some of the girls in particular would yell something that resembled "Miss Kangas" when I walked into the room and then they invited me to sit next to them.

Role as a Linguist

In addition to my role with the students and personnel of the schools, it cannot be ignored that I occupy a role professionally. I see myself as an applied linguist, and as such. I am concerned with and preoccupied by language. I also am a former ESL teacher, which creates its own proclivities and potential biases. Professionally, I have long been motivated by social justice knowing that in the U.S. ESL instruction in school is essential to individual agency and opportunity. This is not to say that English is the only language

that counts but to admit quite regretfully that without English proficiency, ELs are seen as lacking. Even the government's preferred term for ELs, *Limited English Proficient* (LEP), signifies that there are perceived deficits when English is not present. This bias towards native-like English coupled with the English dominant educational system, I carry the perspective that ESL instruction is significant for an EL's educational and life opportunities within the American context.

However, not all assign the same significance to ESL, an occurrence I encountered readily throughout my fieldwork. It was difficult, but I attempted to suspend these beliefs by asking myself whether ESL really mattered for ELs for those with disabilities. Many seem to think it did not. But, was I willing to accept that in reality ESL services may not be important in the presence of a disability? My answer to this question surprised myself: I was willing to believe and accept this assertion but not without questioning and probing. I approached fieldwork with this in the forefront of my mind to ward off my own biases and see San Pedro and Williams through an untainted perspective.

CHAPTER 4

THE WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY CASE

The data analysis illuminated that ESL, special education, and related services were provided to the focal two ELs with disabilities at Williams Elementary but with differential levels of consistency. Further, the analysis revealed several prominent themes, including (a) *Logistics Matter*, (b) *Some Services Are (Not) Negotiable*, (c) *Some ELs Need ESL, Others Do Not*, and (d) *School Culture Matters*, that influenced *how* services where delivered and *what* factors, whether institutional or ideological, influenced the educational services the ELs with disabilities received. Each of the themes listed have within them a series of metathemes that more specifically delineate how these themes emerged in the data.

Logistics Matter

Toward the beginning of my fieldwork at Williams Elementary two practical factors emerged as influential in the services that were provided for ELs with disabilities: schedules and inclusive program models. In terms of the former, both the schedules of the ESL practitioners and ELs with disabilities posed a difficulty in forming a schedule where the linguistic and special needs of the learners could be addressed. With the latter, the inclusive program models both for special education and ESL resulted in interrupted ESL services for the focal students.

Practitioner Schedules

A practical constraint that created a tension in the delivery of services at Williams was the schedules the ESL practitioners. For the entire district there were two ESL

practitioners, who were responsible for providing ESL services at a total of seven different schools. Mrs. Franks, the focal ESL practitioner, described her schedule during an interview: "Um, I've done the elementary schools. She did [the] high school, middle schools, and then she'd plug in the spots in between those times." Consequently, travelling became a necessary component of their jobs. Mrs. Franks reported that travelling detracted from instructional time: "So, it's just scheduling is the biggest frustration and not getting in there enough, like and digging in." Another teacher who formerly taught ESL but now is a learning support teacher for the school[2] also explained the challenging nature of the her former schedule, as it limited the amount of time she could teach ELs. Mrs. Avery said, "My days were so packed. There's two, two schools a day, and sometimes I was going back to the same school, like start at one school, go another to another, come back to that school." She concluded, "It was a lot of travelling, a lot of time wasted in travelling when I could have met with the kids." The ESL Coordinator, Mrs. Shaw, who also served a high-level district administrator, expressed the difficulties of the ESL practitioner's schedule:

> I would say one of the challenges is with the efficiency of the schedule. And our teachers, I mean, they're travelling to, they're covering seven different buildings. They're two people. Um, we're trying also, we're looking at how we become more efficient with the schedule and maximize them as resources. Um, we always, we continue to look at how we offer the instruction to our kids.

Specifically, in reaction to the current schedule Mrs. Franks stated that she felt ESL was "coming up short" within the district because of the limited amount of time scheduling permitted her to spend time with the students. In fact, the ESL practitioner's schedule was

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[2] Mrs. Avery was an ESL practitioner at Williams Elementary, but she now works as a learning support specialist for students with LDs for the school.

the driving force for how much instruction ELs at Williams received, as explained by Mrs. Franks:

> Well, it’s [ESL services] driven by schedules. I look at their specials, their lunches, their language arts times, recess, all that. And then we try to get push-in or we try to schedule them during their language arts time. So, that’s the primary thing. Some kids I do . . . social studies, science, which is okay ’cause there’s a lot of reading and writing.

After creating a schedule that allowed the ESL practitioner to provide services at several schools during English language arts or social studies, the ELs received only 1 to 3 hours of ESL services per week. At the time of this study the Cedar View School District adhered to Pennsylvania’s Basic Education Circulars (BEC), state issued recommendations for the interpretation and implementation of educational law (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2001). According to these recommendations, as shown in Table 8, ELs are to receive a certain amount of daily planned ESL instruction depending on each student’s language proficiency determined by the ACCESS proficiency test, an assessment used in numerous states throughout the U.S. to determine English proficiency.

Table 8

Basic Education Circulars (BEC) Guidelines

English Language Proficiency	Amount of Daily ESL Instruction
Entering (Level 1)	2 hours
Beginning (Level 2)	2 hours
Developing (Level 3)	1-2 hours
Expanding (Level 4)	1 hour
Bridging (Level 5)	up to 1 hour of instruction or support

The Pennsylvania Department of Education states, “Exact hours of direct language instruction by proficiency level must be determined based on student need and program/instructional delivery model” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2001, para. 12). Through these suggested guidelines, the Cedar View School District created a schedule for ESL instruction wherein the ELs receive approximately one hour of instruction every other day on a rotating schedule *regardless* of English proficiency. In a neighboring school district with similar demographics, however, ELs received 1.5 to 2 hours of ESL instruction *per day*, not per week. The current amount of ESL instruction at Williams was significantly lower than the state recommended guidelines as a consequence of the district-created practitioner schedule, making the provision of ESL services difficult for all ELs, not just those with disabilities. A former ESL practitioner, along with Mrs. Franks commented that the travelling alluded to the importance of hiring more than two ESL practitioners for the district. Mrs. Avery said, “So, it was really difficult. I mean, they could have stood to gain three or four, having three or four teachers in total to just meet the needs and not have to travel.”

The ESL practitioner’s schedule also made coplanning—a necessary component of push-in ESL wherein practitioners are coteaching—with general education practitioners difficult to impossible. Mrs. Avery commented that she was unable to even discuss the needs of the ELs with their general education practitioners: “[There was] not enough time to meet with the teachers to discuss their needs because you just wanted to get to the kids.” When asked to describe and quantify her coplanning sessions with other Mrs. Harris, Mrs. Franks responded, “I would say if I’m lucky, 15 minutes” per six-day cycle. Further, Mrs. Roberts said of her coplanning time with Mrs. Franks: “That’s just

hard. We tried." She the explained how coteaching was determined by the quality of coplanning:

> But planning, that was just [pause] we tried. I was just like, "Whatever works for you let me know. We're figure it out. And then when you come in we're figure it out." You know, and we were trying to do some new things in the classroom myself and, you know, she had a lot of advice and we worked together and it was kinda "Let's just wing it, see what happens" and . . . . That's how we worked [laughs] this year.

Indeed, "winging it" was a common occurrence, as during some observations coplanning occurred upon Mrs. Franks' arrival to class. For instance, during social studies Mrs. Franks and Mrs. Harris were co-planning during the showing of video on the differences between democrats and republicans. While the video played, the practitioners discussed the upcoming content and the particular details of the poster project the students would start during that very class.

During the following observation, students were unable to complete a summary packet because of a lack of coordination between practitioners, and consequently, the whole class needed to backtrack:

> The students are missing some information in their packets because Mrs. Harris told Mrs. Franks to skip through the book. Now the students are lacking essential information. So, Mrs. Franks in response goes to the front of the classroom to read about the Constitution and Supreme Court appeals. Mrs. Franks reads several pages of information now, because as she said to the class, she "didn't know what was in the packet."

Mrs. Franks' confession to the class illuminated her ignorance about the instructional focus in the general education classroom, an effect quite possibly resulting from the district's institutional policy for ESL practitioners to travel to multiple schools. Such travelling decreased the amount of ESL push-in services they could provide to all the ELs within the district regardless of their proficiency level, which violated the guidelines for

ESL instruction for Pennsylvania schools. Further, travelling also placed limits on the amount of time the ESL and general education practitioners could coplan, an essential aspect of effective coteaching in the push-in model, which will be explored further later in this theme.

Student Schedules

ELs with disabilities, too, had complex schedules that made the delivery of ESL services difficult; for instance, third grader Ahmed received pull-out instruction in reading, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and extracurricular orchestra lessons in addition to his other general education and ESL classes (see Table 9). As evidenced below, Ahmed's schedule was complex; however, what added to the complexity was more than the number of services he needed to receive and where he needed to receive them (all pull-out services occurred in a different room). The frequency of the services was significant, as certain services operated on a traditional five-day cycle while other services were offered according to the district's six-day schedule. With services operating on two different cycles, there was ample opportunity for "double-booking." When multiple services were scheduled at the same time—and one of them was ESL—there was a clear hierarchy with ESL at the bottom.

Table 9

Service and Extracurricular Schedule According to Student

Student	Service	Setting	Frequency	Duration
Lula (Grade 1)	ESL	Pull-out	3 times/cycle	1 hour
	Physical Therapy	Pull-out	1 time/week	30 minutes
Ahmed (Grade 3)	ESL	Push-in	3 times/cycle	1 hour
	Autistic Support	Push-in	6 times/cycle	4 hours
	Occupational Therapy	Pull-out	1 time/biweekly	30 minutes
	Reading Intervention I	Pull-out	6 times/cycle	30 minutes
	Reading Intervention II	Pull-out	6 times/cycle	30 minutes
	Speech Therapy	Pull-out	2 times/cycle	30 minutes
	Social Skills	Pull-out	1 time/cycle	30 minutes
	String Lessons	Pull-out	1 time/cycle	30 minutes

Note. At Williams Elementary a cycle consists of six school days. Physical and occupational therapy schedules operated on a traditional school week schedule.

As I observed, the demands of Ahmed's schedule resulted in missing ESL several times when services and extracurricular activities, such as string lessons, were scheduled at the same time. This reduced ESL instruction to only 1 to 2 hours those particular weeks, well below the recommended amount in the BEC Guidelines for ELs with the most advanced proficiency. Mrs. Franks described the difficulty of trying to provide ESL services with the competing demands of the student's schedule:

> But, it's frustrating to be flexible when I want to be like, "No, ESL's more important. I don't see him [Ahmed] enough. Get him in here" . . . . And with scheduling, like especially the end of the year, you see what it's like with field trips, field days. And it's not possible for me to reschedule all the time, so they miss their time completely.

Lula's schedule—although it appears simple in comparison to Ahmed's—also presented a schedule conflict between ESL and the related service, physical therapy due to the

differing cycles of services (see Table 9). On a biweekly basis physical therapy overlapped with ESL, and in these instances, ESL instructional time was forfeited, resulting in reduced ESL instruction by one-fourth of the total time. ELs with disabilities were not the only ones whose ESL support was reduced due to other services: ELs who were *suspected* of having a disability had similar service delivery patterns. For instance, Fredo, an EL being monitored for an LD, participated in a literacy intervention that consistently overlapped with the ESL class, and during my observations of ESL, he would leave the class early for the literacy intervention, indicating that his learning needs that *possibly* connected to a disability held greater importance than any learning need *actually* stemming from L2 proficiency. When asked why in such scenarios services related (or remotely related) to a disability, were prioritized over ESL, Mrs. Franks offered a possible reason:

> Special ed is a legal issue. And so, for the district and for the teachers, there's IEPs that they legally have to do. They legally have to get it done. They legally have to meet. ESL, it's, "What do I think they need?" and "Oh, let's try to follow this." It's a much looser set of demands.

Ultimately, she argued that there was room for interpretation of the BEC guidelines and therefore, ESL services at the school were not prioritized in the same manner as special education and related services. A former ESL practitioner, Mrs. Avery, made a similar assertion: "I don't know how much on the radar it [ESL] is because of you can play around with, I mean, they have *recommended* [emphasis added] times that you should be with these kids."

At Williams ESL services overlapped with special education and related services, but at times the ESL services were also in conflict with the general education curricula

activities. In these instances general education activities took precedence over ESL instruction. For instance, during several ESL observations, Mrs. Harris scheduled a "Mystery Reader"—a parent of one of the students—to come to the classroom and read a few stories to the students, reducing the ESL instruction by 25 to 30 minutes out of the total 60-minute class on a biweekly basis for Ahmed and two other ELs. Together education and extracurricular activities resulted in at times weekly disruptions to ESL instructional time for Ahmed. Mrs. Franks spoke of the Mystery Reader as lost time that she could not reschedule: "It's Mystery Reader on Fridays. So, whenever ESL falls on Friday then I'm done." Throughout the study, Mrs. Franks was frustrated about the low priority ESL received, but I noticed that whenever services overlapped, she would retreat to her frequently spoken mantra "flexible people never get bent out of shape," instead of expressing her concerns or asking questions. So I asked why she acquiesced to the relinquishment of ESL services when clearly she disagreed with the practice. She responded, "For me to start making demands and I don't know that I would have the back up administratively for that." Mrs. Franks did not express her concerns about the limited amount of ESL her students were receiving, but instead asked, "Who am I to say that I take precedent over that Mystery Reader when I'm only there every other day?" Most emphatically, Mrs. Franks should not be considered a powerless victim; her actions were complicit in the underservicing of ELs with disabilities, as she maintained a "flexible" attitude with her colleagues that resulted further in the reduction of ESL services.

Further, student schedules resulted in least optimal pairing of practitioners and students, as was the case for Ahmed. When I first began data collection, one of Ahmed's autistic support (AS) practitioners taught him during an intensive reading intervention,

"Soar to Success," which aimed to bolster students who are reading below grade level in their literacy development. What was unique about this practitioner, Ms. Glass, was that she was a special educator certified in ESL. Although she was ostensibly the most equipped to instruct Ahmed in reading (I will focus on her pedagogical approaches later in the chapter), she stopped working with him after a few observations and was replaced by a paraprofessional who specialized neither in special education nor ESL. Mrs. Motts explained why matching student and practitioner schedules was a process that was in flux: "So, they have to re-juggle the staff based off of what, and if we get new students, what are the students' needs are and how each person can best fit those needs." Based on Mrs. Motts' comment, Ms. Glass may have certainly been a "best fit," so I asked Ms. Glass why in this case she was not teaching Ahmed. She explained in email correspondence: "I had another student on my caseload whose extreme behavioral needs required me to be with him during the third grade guided reading time. Mrs. Brock was the easiest person to schedule to work with Ahmed during that time." Her answer indicated that scheduling again became a key determinant in service delivery for ELs with disabilities, like Ahmed, as the matching of practitioners with him did not consider his ESL needs, instead the decision was based on logistics—whoever was free during that particular period.

Inclusive Program Models

Logistics as a prominent theme also manifested in the inclusive program models utilized by Williams for both special education and ESL. Three years prior to my fieldwork at Williams Elementary, an intermediate unit, and not the district, educated school-age children with autism. Administrators, however, wanted to move towards more

inclusive school practices and therefore designated one school to have specialized services for students with autism, ranging from self-contained to inclusive classes with select interventions implemented in resource rooms. Also for students with LDs there was a learning support resource room where students received small group or individual support as specified by their IEPs, but they spent the majority of the school day in inclusive classrooms. ESL, too, became more inclusive as ESL services for the entire district—except for a few students, including Lula[3]—were delivered through a push-in model, wherein the ESL practitioner provides L2 support in the context of the general education classroom. By doing so, ELs were not isolated from their peers nor were they missing content instruction, as they would be in the pull-out model.

Although Williams administrators preferred the push-in model for ESL, this model provided little opportunity for ESL instruction for students who were receiving both ESL and special education services in the general education classroom, ultimately creating a conflict in service delivery in the school. Ahmed not only had an AS paraprofessional, Mrs. Motts, pushing into his general education class providing individualized supports but also an ESL practitioner. During these times, Mrs. Franks had abrupt interactions with Ahmed only asking him a few questions or encouraging him to continue in his work because he was already working alongside of Mrs. Motts—a common occurrence in Ahmed's ESL push-in classes. Instances wherein the ESL practitioner barely interacted with Ahmed were quite common in push-in and were corroborated in an interview with Mrs. Franks: "Now with the coteaching, I feel like I'm

[3] Lula and other first grade ELs together received pull-out ESL instruction due to the lower English proficiency of one of the ELs within this group. After numerous attempts to push-in the general education classroom with the group of ELs, Mrs. Roberts and Mrs. Franks decided that this program model was ineffective, so they advocated for pull-out.

not getting meaty ESL instruction anymore." Further, she explicated: "But, I'm like pitching in two seconds here, whereas if I had them for 45 minutes, we could really dig in more, I guess, and get more specific to that kid's needs or those children." Mrs. Franks' concern was substantiated throughout the observations of push-in ESL, when most days she provided ESL support for Ahmed from 5 to at most 15 minutes. Although Mrs. Franks felt that she could not provide "meaty instruction" to Ahmed in push-in, Mrs. Motts posited that the negotiation of services in the push-in model was not challenging:

> However, when Mrs. Franks is in the room there's a student with ESL needs, I'm gonna step back from that student a little bit. But, she's not there everyday. And everyday, every period I'm addressing their special ed. needs . . . . So, during that time I'm going to step back a little more and let her handle that particular student because that need isn't getting addressed as much my needs are.

Despite this "stepping back" reported by Mrs. Motts, only one observation revealed an instructional practice wherein Mrs. Motts primarily worked with another student while Mrs. Franks worked with Ahmed. Mrs. Franks corroborated this pattern by discussing the difficulty of providing ESL services in push-in when there are multiple specialists present: "It's very much a challenge because a lot of times she's [Mrs. Motts] got Ahmed and I'll just kind of eye-ball him and focus on the other two."

Ahmed's brief moments of "ESL instruction" during push-in can be attributed to the limited amount of time for coplanning, as explicated earlier. With only 15 minutes for coplanning for several weeks of lessons, it is not difficult to imagine that coteaching dynamics would be strained. Further, the coplanning that occurred between Mrs. Franks and Mrs. Harris did not include a significant third party, Mrs. Motts. This further complicated service delivery, as the three people who needed to coordinate their efforts

during ESL push-in did not have a structured, realistic time for coplanning together. Second, the type of coteaching model itself proved significant during ESL push-in. There are seven variants of ESL coteaching many of which originate from special educators' and general education practitioners' collaborations in the classroom (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010). Some of the models include: (a) *one lead teacher/another teaches on purpose* wherein the general education and ESL practitioner alternate fulfilling the main teaching role, but one focuses on students gaining specific knowledge through mini-lessons; (b) *two teachers teach same content* to several groups of students; (c) *one teacher preteaches, one teaches alternative information* in which the ESL practitioner, for example, would preteach ELs who may not have background knowledge. Despite the variety in models, in Ahmed's class the *one teaches/one supports* (or assesses) was the dominant model. In Ahmed's class the "one" supporting was actually two people—Mrs. Franks and Mrs. Motts—and the "one" teaching was Mrs. Harris. In fact, for only two of the observations of ESL push-in over the six months of fieldwork was another model used, involving the coteaching of a lesson where Mrs. Franks stood at the front of the classroom alongside of Mrs. Harris teaching the whole class while Mrs. Motts sat next to and supported Ahmed and Jeff. Significantly, the one teaches and, in this case, two support model resulted in two practitioners needing to assist the same EL, and as observation and interview data indicate, Mrs. Franks would often move on to work with the other two ELs in the classroom (see Figure 5).

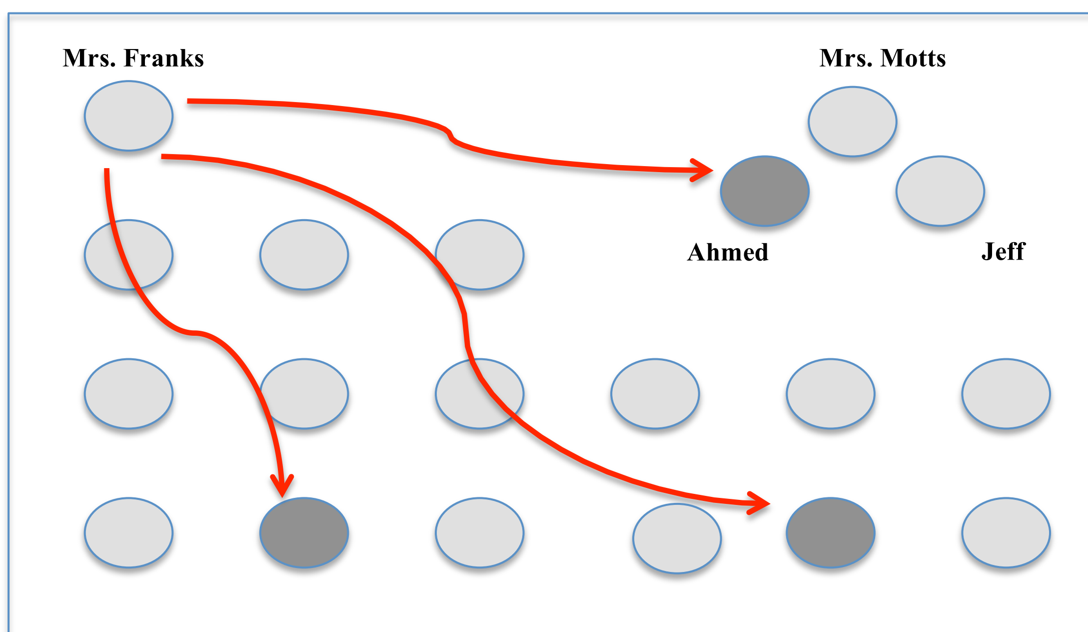

Figure 5. Class Seating Arrangement.
Note. The dark gray circles represent ELs. The arrows indicate the typical movements Mrs. Franks makes to provide support to the three ELs during push-in ESL.

In examining ESL program models, however, I identified prominent disconfirming evidence. Unlike for Ahmed, there was a greater quantity and quality of ESL instruction for Lula in pull-out ESL. For example, during a majority of the observations when Mrs. Franks pulled out Lula, Marti, and Fredo, the students received roughly 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes of ESL support every other day. This was in stark contrast to the amount of ESL instruction Ahmed received in the push-in model. In pull-out Mrs. Franks was able to target the students' linguistic needs, for example, by taking note of the errors they were making and using those critical errors as topics of instruction for upcoming classes. In this way, the instruction was more tailored to the needs of the ELs. Also, Mrs. Franks was able to develop their language skills through intensive times of oral and written language production. This was illustrated in an ESL lesson wherein

Lula and her EL classmates received direct instruction on lexical knowledge pertaining to giving directions, practiced delivering directions using a map, and then took turns providing directions through the hallways of the school. This activity allowed for extensive speaking as well as organization of thought, which according to Mrs. Franks was an important skill Lula needed to develop. Lula, who had a more advanced English proficiency than Ahmed, through the pull-out model was afforded a greater amount of instructional time composed of more tailored language support. Significantly, the pull-out model that afforded more tailored ESL instruction for Lula and her peers was an anomaly at Williams, as all other ELs received push-in ESL.

Some Services Are (Not) Negotiable

Emerging from the data and extending from the previous theme was a second theme, *Some Services Are (Not) Negotiable*, which demonstrates how ESL services were considered negotiable, able to substituted by instruction in the general education instruction. Yet special education and related services were deemed non-negotiable with the responsibility of individualized supports to be provided by a number of specialists.

ESL through General Education

In the previous theme involving logistics, it was evident that the ELs with disabilities at Williams did not receive the appropriate amount of ESL instruction given their proficiency levels in English, but the justification for this approach to their language education was explained by the ESL Coordinator: The district satisfies the recommendations of the BEC guidelines because general education practitioners also delivered ESL services throughout the day. In fact, through examining the district's

expressed policies, I discovered that the Cedar View School District, as is typical of English-dominant schools, defined ESL as:

(a) "planned instruction by a qualified ESL/Bilingual teacher" or

(b) "adaptations/modifications in the delivery of content instruction by all teachers based on the student's language proficiency level and the Pennsylvania Language Proficiency Standards (PA ELPS) for ELs as well as the Pennsylvania academic standards."

With this conceptualization in mind, I searched for evidence of the servicing of ELs in the general education classroom by drawing my attention to pedagogical approaches used by general education practitioners that supported Lula and Ahmed's L2 development as well as inquiring about practitioners' knowledge of these approaches. For example, Mrs. Motts, who worked with Ahmed for a majority of the day and even was present during ESL push-in instruction, identified her own limited understanding of ESL. When asked about her familiarity with ESL, she answered, "Not very familiar at all." Mrs. Roberts, although an experienced practitioner, did not know about the instructional approaches and content of ESL until a few months before the study began. These reflections were corroborated by observations of Mrs. Roberts, who differentiated instruction for learners according to reading level but not by language proficiency. When I asked her about specific approaches for ELs, she posited that ELs did not need differentiation because at the elementary-level all students—whether ELs or not—require the same teaching approaches. Further, Mrs. Roberts explained that she does not differentiate for ELs, but instead she taught at the cognitive level of first graders. "I mean, we do a lot anyway in first grade with picture cues. 'Cause there are kids with those needs anyway. You know, and we do one- and two-step directions." She continued that for all students she "slow[s]

down the pace." When speaking specifically of her approach for ELs, she said, "I implement things in my classroom for not because of them [ELs] but, there's other kids too. So, I don't zero in." During observations of Mrs. Roberts' teaching, she provided directions for students in a way that was age-appropriate, but as she expressed was not "zero[ed] in":

> The students were directed to pull out the book entitled *Silly Kitty*. She [Mrs. Roberts] directed them to page 21 by showing them through the table of contents in the front of the book. Mrs. Roberts wrote out the steps:
>
> page 21
> search y, ie
> read handout
>
> Mrs. Roberts reviewed the directions, making the students repeat some of the directions. For example, "On what page?," she asked them to ensure they knew what steps to take next.

Certainly providing simple directions and incorporating message redundancy, the delivery of a message in several varying forms, are strategies that facilitate comprehension of directions for all students, including those with diverse proficiencies in English. In this way, Mrs. Roberts' strategies were not incompatible with ESL. She expounded upon her teaching strategies in first grade and how they "reach" all learners:

> In the beginning of the year, it's like one or two [directions] and everything's pictures. You know, it's "Get out your scissors," and I have scissors. That's step one. Step two, "Get out your glue." And there's pictures. And I put "1" and "2" and then I have the kids repeat it—one and two. And then we add on. And by the end of the year there's five- or six-step directions. I mean, your average first grader should be able to do it. But, for those EL kids, it just, it benefits them also.

In addition to message redundancy, Mrs. Roberts did include visuals during some of her instruction. For instance, coin manipulatives were utilized during a math unit focusing on currency and further, students were taught how to represent the number of coins needed

to purchase an item by drawing the following letters: Q, D, N, P (i.e., quarter, dime, nickel, penny). If a student needs two quarters in the math problem, she could draw "QQ." Math class in third grade also included visual representations and manipulatives for solving problems. GallonBot, for example, was a visual tool used in Ahmed's class to assist students in their measurement unit (see Figure 6). This tool assisted Ahmed and other ELs in their comprehension of say, how many pints are in a single court, because the input they received from practitioners was supported by visuals, which is more comprehensible than spoken or written language alone.

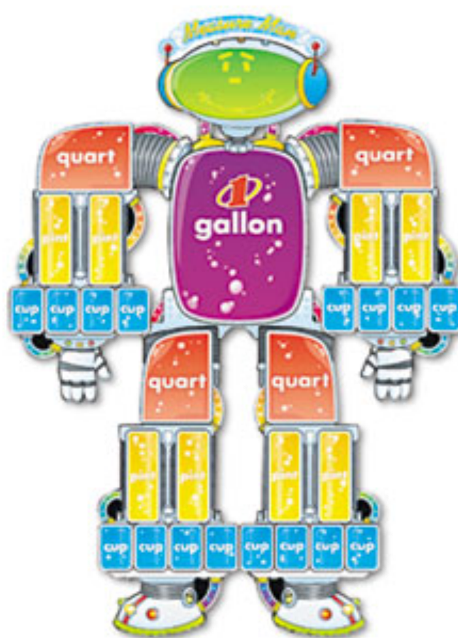

Figure 6. GallonBot.

But pedagogy that is inclusive of ELs is more than instruction that is driven by visuals and repeating directions: A critical component is Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP; Ladson-Billings, 1994). A practitioner that implements CRP will consider the cultural backgrounds of his students and bridge the gap between the dominant culture of the

school and the culture of students, in this case ELs. There were instances during instruction when the ELs, including Lula, required differentiated instruction based on their cultural knowledge. For example, in an activity focusing on identifying the main idea based on a series of clues, a culturally-biased example was utilized:

> "My main idea is baseball," she [Mrs. Roberts] said. The students start listing the details: "bat," "catcher," "bull," "spring," "bases," "pitcher," "team," "positions." The ELs were not participating although the girls [Lula and Rita] frequently do. Lula offers a detail; she describes the net and the ball going inside of it. Mrs. Roberts corrects her and explains that she must have been talking about soccer.

In this example Lula misunderstood the main idea in this particular activity conceivably because this topic is culturally-biased, hence the adage "as American as baseball and apple pie." Knowledge of ESL, however, may have led Mrs. Roberts to use an example that was less culturally-bound. CRP would have been helpful for Ahmed during a reading intervention. When attempting to explain the concept of *dusk*, Mrs. Brock said, "Just, it's starting to get dark." She then used the example of "The Bureau of Transportation" directing drivers to put on their lights at dusk, and Ahmed remained silent, quietly looking at Mrs. Brock. It is unclear as to whether Ahmed understood this clarifying example, "Bureau of Transportation," but undoubtedly this illustration was culturally-biased, as the practitioner used an American bureaucratic entity as an example for a child L2 learner. Moreover, this example was linguistically challenging as it featured more advanced vocabulary and was developmentally disconnected from the child's experiences.

Considering the previous example, vocabulary often remained unmodified and unsupported by visuals in the general education classroom, especially in science and social studies. For instance, Mrs. Roberts utilized more linguistically advanced material

without providing differentiation for Lula or Rita through playing an informative video on the defense practices of butterflies in first grade science. Despite the video quite obviously incorporating visuals, the vocabulary was far too advanced for first graders, not to mention ELs, as exemplified in the following: *beguiling*, *endowed*, *prelude*, *courtship*, *binge*, and *severity*. The lexical difficulty of the video demonstrated inaccessible, unmodified or unscaffolded instruction for ELs. Moreover, in Ahmed's social studies class students, including Ahmed, listened to Mrs. Harris read from a novel entitled *The Kid Who Ran for President* without the use of visuals or illustrations to facilitate their linguistic and cultural understanding of an abstract, complex concept—democracy. Further, the story included metaphorical language to describe positions of political power, such as "the king of the hill." The understanding of pedagogical approaches in the general education classroom that make knowledge more accessible to ELs with disabilities remained narrow—only incorporating visuals and manipulatives when possible. In fact, there was no active promotion of ELs with disabilities' language development in these contexts. An exchange between Ahmed and a paraprofessional, Mrs. Brock, demonstrated this point, as for the majority of the reading intervention she asked lower-order thinking questions, such as the following: "What's the softest rock?, What's a metamorphic rock?, Where you can collect rocks?" These questions elicited very short utterances from Ahmed (i.e., "A diamond.") and at times resulted in no answers, after which Mrs. Brock proceeded to ask more comprehension questions that required minimal output from Ahmed. In this way, instruction did not aim to promote his linguistic proficiency; however, this could easily be ameliorated through eliciting additional

language in the form of asking follow-up questions or structuring questions to tap into higher-order thinking skills, necessitating Ahmed produce more than short, quick answers.

Similarly, scaffolding, whether linguistic or instructional, remained on short supply in the general education classroom. For instance, Mrs. Harris played an educational video about the Electoral College, and after the video concluded she said aloud to the class "the video said it best," thereby concluding the instruction on this topic. Simply, the instructional burden was carried entirely by the content of the video. Students were expected to apply this knowledge without any further assistance from the practitioner and were not given any scaffolding to understand the content of the video. Conceptually, the Electoral College system is complex and the content of the video remained unexplained even though the ELs (both with and without disabilities) required amplification of its content through scaffolding (Walqui, 1992), such as clarifying explanations, demonstrations, and graphic organizers to hone in on and establish connections between essential information.

It was the case that much of the instruction remained uniform for all learners unless a specialist like Mrs. Motts or Mrs. Franks was present. After spending months coteaching in the general education classrooms, Mrs. Franks did not speak highly of the supports offered to Lula and Ahmed for language:

> Those ESL kids do slip under. And we see it Harris' class and Roberts' class, not to their detriment, but just 'They're getting along', you know. So, I'm just keep getting them along. But, they don't always necessarily throw in some of those features in a lesson that would really help them, like previewing vocabulary or putting things on a board so they can see it.

Mrs. Avery expressed the same opinions of ELs in the general education classroom: "They have to fend for themselves." Although Ms. Glass cautioned that practitioners

need to be aware of language at all times, "Really just being aware of it and just being intentional that you're not just teaching a concept, you're always also teaching language skills," practitioners, such as Mrs. Motts and Mrs. Roberts, amongst others expressed their lack of knowledge about providing ESL support. A specialist who often supported ELs shared a similar perspective:

Sara: Do you find yourself using different strategies for the ELs than the English-speaking children?

Mrs. Trillio: To tell you the truth, I probably don't.

Sara: Okay.

Mrs. Trillio: Not really.

Significantly, this lack of awareness of ESL created an educational contradiction within Williams Elementary: Although practitioners were expected to provide ESL services through accommodations in the general education classroom, many practitioners did not possess adequate knowledge of ESL to do so. Mrs. Shaw, a high-level district administrator, explained that the district provided ESL support within the general education classroom to satisfy the BEC guidelines: "While the guidelines indicate they should be seen everyday by an ESL or ELL person at the elementary level, we don't necessarily use an ESL person to support them in the area of language arts; we use the classroom teacher." Later in the same interview she contradicted this very assertion: "Yeah. It's hard for our teachers. I mean, our teachers, the general classroom teachers, they don't know, they don't know exactly what to do. And all they want to do is support these kids, you know." At Williams the practitioners and paraprofessionals spending the

most time with the ELs with disabilities were not familiar with ESL pedagogy, indicating that services were not delivered or were, at best, delivered incidentally during this time.

Preservation of Special Education and Related Services

Special education and related services were approached quite dissimilarly from ESL, as special educators and related service providers, respectively, bore the responsibility of providing services that target the disabilities of the students at Williams. Further, time with these specialists was protected, as was apparent in the case of Lula and Ahmed. Lula never missed scheduled time with the physical therapist despite having ESL scheduled at the same time, and Ahmed, whose schedule presented a complex web of services (Table 9, p. 71), frequently had limited ESL instruction, but not so for his scheduled services of AS, therapies, and interventions. When I inquired with a range of personnel about the simultaneous negotiable nature of ESL and steadfastness of special education, they all indicated that perceptions of education law played a role.

As described previously, Williams Elementary primarily used coteaching to provide instructional supports, so in the inclusion classrooms, there were a number of paraprofessionals assigned to support students with autism as well as other paraprofessionals and learning support practitioners for students with LDs. Mrs. Motts and Mrs. Brock were two of such paraprofessionals who spent a majority of the day with Ahmed or other students with autism, implementing the supports identified in students' IEPs through small group instruction while the general education practitioner focused on teaching content to students without disabilities. A learning support practitioner spoke of the support the students received in the general education classroom: "Special ed's being

met in their room most of the day, AS has a support system with them at all times or most of the, I mean, they have to have somebody at all times. So they're getting their needs met and addressed." Ms. Glass who oversaw Ahmed's academic progress shared about how inclusive practices have been effective at Williams due to the presence of the paraprofessionals:

> When I heard I was getting Autistic Support because, I didn't feel like I knew enough about it and how I was going to handle this. And I was very, very nervous about it at first. Um, then when I met the children and, you know, it seemed to go okay then I was much better. But, you know, I was really nervous. As far as having people in the classroom here, that's actually a help. Um, because they not only help the AS kids, they help other kids too. So, that's kind of been nice to have some extra support in here.

The presence of support for students with disabilities is a matter determined by the specifications of the IEP. For example, Ahmed's IEP specified when he needed to have an AS paraprofessional present while participating in the general education curriculum—during math, science, social studies, and technology. Mrs. Motts spoke of the significance of the IEP's specification in providing adequate services: "I mean, an IEP does make things difficult because you have to follow it. But, at the same time, it's a contract between the teacher and the student basically of this is what I'm gonna promise to make sure you understand." She further explained that the IEPs despite the burden they create, do benefit students: "Yes, they're frustration (sic) and they're a lot of work but um, I mean, if it's gonna get the best education for the, the students then that's what's important in the end." Just like Mrs. Motts, other practitioners clearly understood the contractual nature of IEPs: "Because they [students with disabilities] have the IEP which is legally-bound document. They don't have IEPs for ESL, so therefore special ed

becomes more of a preference, more of a priority because it is legally bound," learning support practitioner, Mrs. Avery reflected. In her comparison she characterized ESL in juxtaposition to special education—one being legally bound while the other not. Mrs. Motts also noted that the "flexibility" of ESL facilitated the relinquishment of services during the course of the day: "I think if we had more strict rules about it [ESL] we'd be better able to help the students because the school districts would then, this is what they would have to put in place versus what we can do." Significantly, in her explanation Mrs. Motts distinguished between what they *can* do and what they *must* do, a distinction that indicates there are some services that cannot be compromised—in Mrs. Franks' words a "pecking order of demands." With ESL not having the legal-backing of special education, ESL was subject to negotiations, although some like Mrs. Avery and Mrs. Franks, as practitioners who studied ESL, longed for a stricter system. Speaking of a contractual document for ESL, Mrs. Avery opined: "Then it [ESL] would happen. Then you would have to be, you're legally bound to that. If you deviate from that then you're breaking the law." Although wishing there was a better way, Mrs. Franks was skeptical about contractual documents for ELs, as she expressed, "There's a lot of debate with ESL students whether or not to do the IEPs because half of the families don't understand and read them anyway . . . . And so, that's ongoing debate and then if you make it legal issue, schools have to step up more." More feasible than an "ESL contract," similar to an IEP, is the inclusion of ESL supports and goals within the IEP; in fact, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (2001), IEPs for ELs should consider the L2 goals and skills necessary for the learner's academic progress, because language proficiency plays a critical role—amongst other factors—in ELs with disabilities'

academic progress, and should not be ignored. Particularly, needed L2 supports and services could be delineated in the Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) section of the IEP where specific services, accommodations, and teaching approaches the student requires as a result of her disability are detailed. This was not the case for Lula and Ahmed, so only their special education and related services were provided with greater diligence.

Some ELs Need ESL, Others Do Not

Prominent in service delivery for ELs was the ideology that ESL was negotiable because some ELs do not really need ESL services. Throughout my fieldwork, in fact, educators frequently thought ESL services and supports were not as imperative for some ELs because (a) they are not "beginners," (b) they are conversational, and (c) they constituted a small population in the school. Each of these beliefs, discussed as metathemes below, served as a rationale for ELs receiving limited services.

They Are Not "Beginners"

Williams educators' understanding of ELs was narrow, thinking that ELs were only students who had obvious, gaping holes in their language. If an EL possessed a higher proficiency in English then she was deemed "proficient," but if she was a beginner, she was perceived as being an EL. The practitioners and specialists supporting Lula and Ahmed shared this binary view during interviews; for instance, general education practitioner Mrs. Roberts when asked if she felt comfortable working with ELs, responded, "I do because there's never been, they've never been extreme where they were non-speaking." She further characterized that Lula and Rita "don't stand out" and "they just get it" in terms of their English proficiency, and she explained how instructing

these ELs, in general, was similar to instructing other first grade students whose L1 was English: "But, like I've said, I never had those really, really low. But, I did teach 'small first' which were years, a couple of years ago, where it was just 15 kids and they were mainly your summer birthdays." Here, Mrs. Roberts equated teaching ELs as similar to teaching students who are not entirely ready for first grade, indicating that she perceived the differences as negligible. Likewise, the physical therapist that worked with developing Lula's gross motor skills said of Lula, "I know that she does get ESL services. Um, but, it's not obvious to me." The librarian who teaches all students kindergarten through fifth said that in general the ELs' proficiency was indicative of how well they could participate in the task at hand: "As long as they're going along with the motions, I figure they know, they know what they're doing . . . you know, if they are just sitting there not looking for a book then I need to go show them exactly what to do. But, that's not hard to do." She concluded, "I'm fine with whoever comes through the door."

Ahmed's teachers and specialists shared similar perspectives on his proficiency. Although he tended to be quiet during class, while working one-on-one his inquisitive nature showed through his thought-provoking and sometimes humorous questions. For example, during his literacy intervention he was reading a short nonfiction book about recycling, he asked Mrs. Brock, "Do you recycle peoples that are so old?" Ahmed was able to communicate more ideas and feelings than many other students with autism who were in self-contained classrooms; however, those who supported him the most demonstrated a weak understanding of what it means to be an EL. Mrs. Motts cited that it

was not apparent that he was an EL because "his dad is a native speaker now.[4] He speaks English at home to him. So, I think he's getting it at home. Ah, his mother, I don't believe knows very much English." She continued to explicate,

> I get the greater sense that his mother I think has a [laughs] well, harder time with it um, in letters that she'll write. But, I don't find that with Ahmed. 'Cause sometimes, you know, with a, a native person versus someone who's learning, they'll write things differently. Ahmed doesn't do that um, but he was taught this from the very beginning.

Mrs. Motts was conceptualizing an EL as someone who first, has parents that only speak the L1 and second, who exhibits signs of cross-linguistic transfer in orthography. L1 Arabic speakers, if literate, may show signs of cross-linguistic transfer, where the orthographic forms of the L1 can affect the orthography produced by the EL in the L2. The absence of negative transfer in the writing of the Roman alphabet, in which the EL—in this case Ahmed—erroneously applies L1 forms in the L2, is not the only marker of an EL. Further, a student may qualify for ESL services without having parents who strictly speak the L1. In fact, EL parents can have a high proficiency in English and, by a layperson's standard, be called "proficient." Ahmed's occupational therapist also could only identify that Ahmed was an EL whenever she used idioms: "Sometimes if I use some type of idiom or ph-, phrase that he's not familiar with, I might have to explain it to him." It was only Ms. Glass who understood Ahmed's language proficiency more fully, not merely a matter of understanding idioms and having legible hand-writing. She explained, "Ahmed's language development seems pretty good, especially understanding spoken English, but I do still notice that he has trouble with the more complex language

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[4] In this comment, Mrs. Motts expressed the prevalent dichotomous view of ELs being either beginners or native-speakers by claiming that Ahmed's father is now "native" in English because he has a more advanced proficiency in English.

skills." She shared that his language learning needs were fairly complex because his L2 proficiency was interacting with autism:

> The things he still needs to work on are definitely language-based, although having autism affects those skills as well. There are a few times when it is obvious that it is an ESL-related challenge rather than an autism-related challenge, such as when he doesn't know the meaning of a fairly common word, but a lot of the time the challenges are so closely related it's hard to tell the difference.

Ms. Glass earned an ESL certificate in addition to a special education degree and was able to understand Ahmed as an EL whose language proficiency was not a direct measure of one or two factors. Mrs. Franks, as the ESL practitioner, did not conceptualize ELs as dichotomously: "beginners" or "proficient." Like Ms. Glass, she saw learners as along a continuum: "I cringe a little bit when they say, 'Oh, we don't have any low ESL' . . . . And just because they're not beginners doesn't mean they don't have a great need for that language development." She explained further that she envisions her role as the ESL practitioner to clarify (mis)information about ELs:

> I'm more than just an ESL teacher; I'm sort of that advocate and educator to everybody. And I send my newsletters out to all the specials teachers. I don't know if they read them. But, at least it's out. And I'll say you know, "Here's some things you can do in the classroom. Here's the difference between, you know, here's what ELs need and, and, you know, here's how that might be deceiving, that you think they're just fine. But, they go under the radar, so we have to really flag them." And just trying that educational piece is big um, as my role, I think.

Spending six months of fieldwork in Lula's and Ahmed's classrooms revealed first-hand how these learners have EL-needs that may not be readily apparent to those without knowledge of ESL. For instance, one of Lula's greatest needs in the classroom, especially when interacting with peers was to develop pragmatic knowledge, the understanding of socially-bound rules of language, in English. On at least two occasions during the

morning sharing time called "Kid News" that commenced every Monday, Lula did not share about the activities of the weekend but, for example, shared a story about how a person gets "bloody gums":

> Mrs. Roberts asks the students to share what they did over the weekend. When it was another student's turn, a small blue ball was passed, indicating it was his/her turn. Lula eventually shared. Lula said that she asked her mother whether you could brush your teeth a thousand times. Her mother responded that this could not be done because you would have "bloody gums."

In reaction to her story, the class stared in silence because it did not conform to the pragmatic conventions of the "Kid News." Pragmatic language knowledge also includes the invisible meaning; that is, what is not directly expressed but is somehow conveyed. Later Mrs. Roberts shared that she did notice that Lula struggled to draw inferences from a text: "But, one thing with Lula when we do the reading assessments, you know, they ask what's the lesson, she doesn't grasp any of that." Mrs. Franks corroborated this assertion, identifying Lula's need to develop "social and interpersonal interactions and skills." When Mrs. Franks shared her professional insights regarding Ahmed, she asserted that Ahmed's needs involved producing more output (i.e., spoken and written language) and yet were complex in nature: "I just want to get him talking more and sharing his thoughts. He's so quiet." Mrs. Franks detailed, "And, you know, at first it took a lot to decipher, and we still don't really completely understand sometimes how much he's understanding and how much it is the autism and how much of it's the language barrier." It was only Mrs. Franks and Ms. Glass who approached ELs with the understanding that language proficiency exists along several continua of biliteracy (Hornberger, 1989), while other personnel considered ELs to be beginners in English, barely able to string

together words. Commenting on proficiency level, Ms. Glass identified this misconception amongst her colleagues: “Sometimes for the kids who are further along in their language acquisition when some people forget that they are an EL ’cause they’re so high, which is great that they’ve made that much progress. Not that we always see them as just that, but sometime it’s hard to, for everyone to always remember.” For this reason, Lula and Ahmed’s needs as ELs in the general education classroom remained overlooked because they lacked the severity of need much of the staff expected.

They Are Conversational

Personnel expected ELs to have proficiencies that were lower, and when they encountered students who had intermediate or high proficiencies, like Ahmed and Lula respectively, they assumed that the students did not have English language needs. Similarly, personnel mistook the ELs with disabilities’ conversational L2 skills as fluency in English. Mrs. Franks recognized this perception as well during an interview: “Lula and Rita don’t always get that focus on the EL needs because they seem okay. Oh yeah. I would say that across the board for my EL students, well, all my ELs are like that.” She then gave an example of Fredo, an EL with a lower proficiency in English who was being monitored for an LD. He received more support because he did not seem fluent in English: “Like Fredo gets all kinds of stuff. They don’t think, they don’t assume he is getting it.” Just as Mrs. Moyer, the librarian, shared earlier, as long as ELs could follow along with what the class was doing, she assumed they were “getting it,” another practitioner also shared that ELs’ oral language skills eliminated barriers to learning in the classroom:

Mrs. Tilman: The ones that I've had though, you know, their English is really fine. And uh, they did, they were taken out for some extra support. But, I haven't had anyone, I think, in all my years of teaching that couldn't understand English or I couldn't understand. Yeah. I've had, not had that at all.

Sara: What about um, students who are ELs? Did you ever notice like a difference between the ELs and the non-ELs?

Mrs. Tilman: No, not really.

Sara: Not really.

Mrs. Tilman: Mm-mm.

The physical therapist also commented on Lula's conversational skills as evidence of her English proficiency: "Ironically the student [Lula] you were gonna observe today, who is um, born in India, is my most conversational student. In the cases with, with the other students, I'm dealing either with, with autism to the point that they may be non-verbal." Here, she described Lula's language proficiency through a comparison to students with autism, and by this comparison she thought Lula's language needs were limited. Another practitioner utilized an analogous description of ELs' language needs by claiming, "So actually with those kids, the learning support and the English language learners are easy, you know, their problems aren't or their, not problems, but their obstacles aren't as, as I see them, in this environment aren't as big as the autistic kids. They come in. They can function." Yet simply because ELs—with or without disabilities—can function conversationally and follow directions in the classroom, does not mean that their English language skills are fully developed.

A seminal research finding in ESL education distinguishes between conversational and academic language in school. Cummins (1984) found that ELs first

acquire Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) in one to two years; this can best be understood as conversational language about ordinary topics. In the context of elementary school, I conceptualize BICS as "playground talk." A significant characteristic of BICS is that is it based in the here and now, focusing on contextualized language, such as who butted in line or what gifts students received for their birthdays, while Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) focuses on academic language and cognitive skills. This can include making inferences, synthesizing information, and evaluating an idea. These tasks are reputedly more linguistically and cognitively demanding for ELs and therefore, require additional time—approximately five to seven years. In thinking about the BICS and CALP distinction, it is imperative to recognize that after an EL acquires BICS, there can be a lag time of anywhere from three to five years for her to then reach her grade level in CALP. This is an important distinction for educators teaching ELs to make, because *conversational* English needs should not be essentialized as the *only* language needs. Only Mrs. Franks and Ms. Glass were able to make the distinction between BICS and CALP in their teaching of the ELs with disabilities. Of Ahmed, Ms. Glass commented:

> And I was thinking, I was thinking about that closer to the beginning of the year. I said, "Oh, my gosh. I don't speak this language." And then I saw that the child was pretty far along in English. Yeah, so then that made me feel a lot better about not knowing because he was able to comprehend at least most of what was said to him as long as it wasn't like a really complicated academic thing.

Referring to the ELs' language skills, Mrs. Franks succinctly stated, "It's deceiving. It's absolutely deceiving." Yet the conversational abilities of the ELs, in general, at Williams led many educators to believe that their needs were not as desperate, especially when

compared to their peers with autism. However, without understanding the distinction between BICS and CALP they stood the risk of assuming the ELs with disabilities had no language needs.[5]

They Are A Small Population

The final reason why some ELs were thought to need language services and support, while others did not, involved not just the specific skills or proficiencies of the learners but also the size of the population within the school. During fieldwork, the conditional phrases "if we had a larger population of ELs" and "if ELs were not such a small number" were tossed around in discourse to explain why underservicing was occurring in the school. For example, when I asked the former ESL practitioner whether practitioners were aware of the L2 needs of ELs, she responded, "I don't know. I don't know. I can't speak for them. I don't think that is stressed here." She also shared that because the EL population size was small, their needs get overlooked:

> I think of, of the small population we have here, and maybe it's a disadvantage because they're not in, in with a larger population they don't get as much attention. I think maybe a larger population's, like Local School District A or Local School District B maybe they're more equipped to or they don't feel as single, singled out, or maybe there's more resource there 'cause they're so used to the population.

Mrs. Franks echoed this sentiment when she explained, "I believe that they believe in us and they, they just let, trust us to handle it. And again, it's such a small percentage of

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[5] BICS and CALP is a significant theory in the field of educational linguistics and in this example is useful for dispelling the notion that ELs' linguistic abilities should only be understood by their conversational capabilities. Conversely, language proficiency should not strictly be conceptualized as having *academic* language proficiency, which has often become the case in the utilization of the theory in the field. For this reason, this theory has been severely criticized. For example, MacSwan (2000) argues that the BICS/CALP distinction reinforces deficit notions of ELs' linguistic abilities by positioning them as not proficient simply because they may not have mastered the literacy-based academic language of schooling (i.e., CALP). Further, Edelsky et al. (1983) assert that CALP is a construct merely based on students' ability to master test-taking, and therefore does not represent a legitimate linguistic threshold. Altogether these criticisms point to both a fallacy in framing language proficiency dichotomously and an apparent double-standard: ELs must master academic language in order to qualify as legitimate speakers of English, but native speakers do not have to demonstrate this knowledge for such qualification.

their priority when they're prioritizing budget cuts and special ed issues, and parents issues, and, and all the things they deal with in administration." She too absorbed the message of size mattering in service delivery: "I feel very ego-centric saying, 'Listen to me and my 20 kids' when you have, you know, 900 kids." Because of the size of the ESL program, budget cuts were a concern of Mrs. Franks. Although she was tenured, during my fieldwork she often shared her angst about the school cutting the ESL program, justifying that the ELs received ESL services through the supports of general education practitioners. Further, a Williams speech pathologist, who supported Ahmed, shared that she had interest in learning more about ELs, so she can apply her knowledge of multilingualism during sessions, but only if the population became more substantial: "Especially if I saw that I was having a large population of those kids. Um, but yeah, I'm always interested in learning more about all those things for sure."

It is true that the EL population in Williams Elementary was small—only a dozen students (i.e., 2% of the student body). But, there are several fallacies in the argument of needing a larger population to provide services adequately. First, if the Cedar View School District was reluctant to hire a third ESL practitioner for the district because the population of ELs was too small then general education practitioners needed to be equipped to provide linguistically and culturally differentiated instruction. Although investing in professional development, whether through ESL workshops or certificate courses ostensibly sounds expensive, the school's practice of placing ELs in the same grade within the same classes reduces the costs of further training. At most this would include training one practitioner from each grade in ESL pedagogy. Second, students with disabilities received specialized education regardless of whether there were other

students with similar learning needs in adherence to IDEA's provision of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). In FAPE an *appropriate* education includes "education services designed to meet the individual education needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met" (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, para. 10); that is, learning needs cannot be ignored because they are different. With this understanding of the law, if there are only two students with intellectual disabilities within a school, does that mean the school can justify not providing services? Further, does this also mean that their learning needs are insignificant? The answer, unquestionably would be *no*. And in fact, the logic of not providing ESL services due to the size of the EL population could never be applied to special education, because of the legal-backing special education possesses. Mrs. Franks explained this contradiction in service delivery practices: "You know, like if special ed with IEPs and all the law and litigation, they're not going to say, 'Oh, no. You don't have to do it.' So, I just have been like, 'Yeah, whatever you want me to do. Just, let's go and we'll make it work and we'll do what we can with what we're given." Mrs. Avery also spoke of the legal power of special education services: "Because they have the IEP, which is legally-bound document. They don't have IEPs for ESL, so therefore special ed becomes more of a preference, more of a priority because it is legally bound." Likewise, Mrs. Roberts opined that ESL would be adequately provided if ESL services were more clearly delineated and regulated by a document like an IEP:

> It'd probably hold teachers more accountable for what they need to do and not kind of put them on the wayside . . . . I think there'd be more accountability. So, I would think it depends on the teacher. Yes, it would be okay for some. You know, 'cause these are the things you need to make sure as a teacher for these children and make it more individualized.

Significantly, for ELs with disabilities IEPs must not only include special education services and supports for the learner but also consider the L2 goals and skills necessary for the learner's academic progress (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2001). However, this is predicated on the inclusion of L2 goals within the IEP in the first place; otherwise these services are considered "flexible." But, as I posit, these services are not considered flexible because of the population size within the school: ELs with disabilities were not provided the identified amount of services because of the perception of ESL as less legal. Therefore, the number of ELs served at Williams as a rationale—albeit a convenient one—that would never be applied to students with disabilities without the threat or realization of lawsuits.

School Culture Matters

Ingrained in the fabric of the school was a deep understanding of disabilities, yet ESL remained unfamiliar and sometimes even mysterious. The culture of Williams was centered around disability as evidenced through (a) the school's institutional history, (b) the prevalence of special education professional development opportunities and special events, and (c) the allocation of resources. These factors altogether created a culture within the school that was attuned to disabilities; in fact, providing specialized education was a focal identity for the school within the district.

Institutional History

Williams' history in educating students with special needs is a rich one, because in addition to teaching students with LDs, this school has specialized in teaching students with emotional disturbances (EDs) and later students with autism. All the elementary-aged students with ED were taught at Williams as one practitioner shared:

> About five years ago, I think, um, our principal chose to bring all the district's elementary emotional support children in just our school. So, we started bussing them in from the other elementary schools. That changed our population drastically 'cause not only do we, we have learning support classroom, which all the schools have, but now we have emotional support as well.

For many years Williams staff specialized in providing services for students with ED, and then the school also opened its doors to students with autism. At one point, both special education programs were housed at Williams, resulting in a large population of learners with disabilities in this one school. As the principal shared, the decision to create an AS program came at the behest of the district administrators who wanted all students with autism to be educated by the district and not an intermediate unit, which is an alternative placement along the special education continuum (IDEA § 300.115), but one that is considered more restrictive since students are educated in a separate school. Williams then became the school where students with autism would learn through a range of settings, including self-contained classrooms for lower functioning students with autism to (partial) inclusion for students like Ahmed who were considered highly functioning. A veteran special teacher at Williams shared how she has seen the school change over time as a result of a shifting student population:

> Because uh, we have, we have our regular learning support kids we've always had, but now we have autistic support and they're all over of the spectrum. We've got high functioning and we've got kids who are non-verbal . . . . So, it's definitely, it's definitely presented new challenges in the classroom because some of these kids are only being mainstreamed for special. They're in with the, their own teachers the entire day, but for 40 minutes a day they come to special with the regular ed class. So, it's definitely changed, changed some of our, the ways we're teaching, some of our methods, some of our practices.

Indeed, having more students with disabilities at Williams changes their pedagogy, and with Williams in its third year of having the AS program, the effects on the school from staff to students to their parents were widely observed. Mrs. Motts, an AS paraprofessional, purported that the school has grown to accommodate disabilities:

> So, it's a learning curve. But, looking back two years ago on what they expected to see in a hallway when things were if someone was having a tantrum and what they expect now, they've adjusted to it. And they're a lot more welcoming of our students [with autism].

The occupational therapist, Mrs. Mackery, who frequently worked with students with autism shared a similar perception of the school's development over time: "I have noticed an increase of acceptance and tolerance from the teachers, in general. Um, I think three years ago a lot of them didn't know what to do, didn't know how to react. And I think there's a comfort level that we're starting to see now um, that the kids have been here." One of the practitioners, Mrs. Tilman, with several decades of teaching experience under her belt, had precisely the fears and concerns identified by Mrs. Mackery:

> I do think people are much more, you know, understanding about disabilities and I know I am because I was so afraid in the beginning. Like, "My gosh! I am gonna be able to teach these kids?" and you know, "What's this going to be like?" and um, I think we are, you know, as a community much much more um, willing and much more able to handle disabilities.

Williams' Principal Emitt shared that she felt her staff was able to rise to the challenge of learning about autism and becoming equipped to provide instruction in the classroom because of their "can do" attitude. Staff, like Mrs. Mackery, although once reluctant became converts, espousing the benefits of inclusion for students as well. Dr. Emitt shared that this school was filled with empathetic people "from the tiniest kindergarten to the most senior teacher." This empathy and support manifested in several observations

when fellow students cheered for Ahmed and Jeff —a non-ELL boy with autism— when they successfully answered math questions in a class game or completed a science project, such as hand-made flashlight. In other observations, students, for example, were partnered with Ahmed, providing scaffolding during an exercise on writing numbers in word form in Spanish:

> Ahmed starts flipping back and forth to get the answers. Tyler is also working and asks, "Ahmed, do you need help?" He answers affirmatively.
>
> Tyler: "Do you see 70 anywhere?"
>
> He [Ahmed] found 70.
>
> Tyler: "What's in the one's place?"
>
> Ahmed: "70."
>
> Tyler: "No. What's in the one's place?"
>
> Ahmed: "7."

In special classes, such as Spanish, students were often asked to assist students with autism, especially when there were a limited number of paraprofessionals. Mrs. Motts, who was with Ahmed for a portion of the day, was not, however, scheduled during Ahmed's special classes as per his IEP, so in these instances the support and understanding of his classmates were vital.

In regards to Lula, Mrs. Roberts observed that many students were more supportive of her: "I know they think she's different. You know, I think some of them are more accepting of her as the year's gone on." Mrs. Martin, the Williams Spanish practitioner, corroborated this acceptance from the student body: "And I think it's a learning experience for regular ed kids. They can teach and learn from that. They can

definitely become more open-minded, more sympathetic, less egocentric. The world does not revolve around them." I saw this first hand in observations of Lula's classes, for instance, where one classmate in particular showed compassion as he defended Lula when another student took some art supplies from her, resulting in the safe return of the items. One exception to this acceptance was Lula's volatile relationship with Rita, another EL from India. Although Lula adored Rita, the sentiment was not mutual. During many observations the girls had some kind of conflict whether about who plays with whom at recess, who can write in cursive better, who won the game, etc. In fact, toward the end of my fieldwork at Williams, Mrs. Roberts and Principal Emitt received an email from Rita's mother requesting that she and Lula no longer be placed in the same class together.

Teachers and administrators reported a positive effect on parents of Williams students as well. Dr. Emitt shared that many parents were concerned about students with autism being in the class with their sons and daughters. Mrs. Tilman, however, believed that parents have become more understanding and open-minded: "And I think even the parents, too, seeing them when they come in, say, for parties and things, um, much more understanding of children with disabilities."

Professional Development and Special Events

With inclusive school practices guiding the services for special education and ESL, general education practitioners required professional development to become equipped to teach the diverse learners in their classrooms. Practitioners and paraprofessionals reported receiving extensive professional development for supporting

students with disabilities and yet none for teaching ELs. These trainings (or lack thereof) were influential in shaping a school culture attuned to and centered around disability.

Practitioners who taught ELs, including those with disabilities, had not received any additional training in ESL education or pedagogy. Cedar View offered professional development academies in the summer in addition to in-service "flex days" during the school year when staff could receive training in a number of areas. Throughout interviews many shared that the number of days and options for professional development were once more numerous:

> They'd come out with like a 30-page book and you can sort through and, and according to your schedule and your needs and your interest level. You know, if you needed more technology training, you could sign up for technology courses. And now it's a little more structured. There's like the same course offered three or four different times. Um, and they only let you take what they think you need, like as oppo-, like I obviously wouldn't want to take like a secondary math, you know, like how to get kids learning math or whatever. So, there's less options and there's less flexibility now. But, they still help you get what you need.

With none of the participating general education practitioners or paraprofessionals who worked with Ahmed having any background knowledge in ESL, professional development became a significant matter; as indicated earlier, general education practitioners were responsible for providing ESL services to ELs. It was through the support of general education practitioners that the district administrator claimed the district was meeting the recommended BEC guidelines. However, as I interviewed practitioners and paraprofessionals to inquire about their opportunities for professional development, I discovered that none of them received any training for ESL. For instance, the following was revealed in an interview with Mrs. Roberts:

Sara: Have you gotten any like ESL professional development? Any support there?

Mrs. Roberts: No.

Sara: Would you ever be interested in, in ESL professional development? Like say Cedar View decided to do it. Would that be something that interests you?

Mrs. Roberts: I would think so.

Later, Mrs. Roberts explained the value in having ESL professional development because "I mean 'cause I always seem to have them [ELs] in the classroom." Another practitioner who also tended to frequently have ELs in her classroom received no training in meeting the needs of the ELs in her classroom, despite having that responsibility assigned to her.

Sara: Have you had any ESL professional development?

Mrs. Tilman: [pause] Can't say that I have.

Ms. Glass also expressed interest in ESL professional development, but she also acknowledged that there are other priorities for her own growth as a teacher. She explained, "I would definitely be interested in ESL professional development, but unfortunately there are other needs that I feel I need to address first." She cited social skills training as a key area of need for her development and she explicated, "There are many more kids on my caseload that would benefit from my having more knowledge in those areas . . . . I would really like to fit in some more things about ESL because I will have one more EL on my caseload next year in addition to Ahmed." Mrs. Roberts, although interested in ESL professional development, shared the same push and pull with other knowledge she would like to attain: "Because there's other things I need to focus on. You know, and that's [ESL] just such a small piece of it." These rationales are seemingly

cogent; practitioners need professional development that gives them the most “bang for their buck” and with only a few ELs within their classes each year, it hardly seems as important as other priorities, especially in the current climate in education of high-stakes testing. However, at Williams Elementary, ELs tended to be grouped within the same grade-level class unless they were identified for ESL services during the middle of the year. Ahmed was an exception to this because he was grouped in a class with another learner with autism. Essentially, grouping students together based on disability and language proficiency was a common practice at Williams, so practitioners, like Mrs. Franks and Mrs. Motts could provide support to more than one student: It allowed for the school to maximize its human resources. With grouping ELs in one class, some practitioners such as Mrs. Roberts frequently had ELs in her class year after year. With this pattern of certain practitioners serving as the de facto general education practitioner for ELs then why did these practitioners relegate ESL as a “small piece?” Possibly, this sentiment connects to the prevalent view that ELs were a small population and therefore were not a priority. In the end, ESL remained unfamiliar and unknown as practitioners did not have training through either their teacher-education programs or Cedar View professional development opportunities.

However, the practitioners and paraprofessionals received training to teach students with disabilities, particularly those with autism. Mrs. Motts, a paraprofessional in the AS program described her level of comfort and confidence in the preparation she received to support students within the inclusive classroom:

> Yeah, I mean um, especially for the placement I have this year I was definitely prepared because I do um, more pushing into regular ed whereas last year I was in a more severe classroom and we pulled out for the entire time. Um, so, those students were a little different, but Cedar View gave me the training I needed in order to take care of them.

Another paraprofessional, Mrs. Brock, who taught Ahmed during his reading invention, also reported that she received ample professional development through the school: "I mean, we, I've learned a lot just in the past three years because really working with the AS people, we're specially trained. And we have a support system." I asked Principal Emitt about the professional development they offered to prepare staff for the AS program at Williams. She listed the following that were implemented school-wide: (a) mandatory book club, focusing on one of three books on best practices for students with autism; (b) weekly support meetings for practitioners who needed additional guidance in the classroom; (c) hiring of 11 personnel specializing in AS to support and inform colleagues. In fact, she explained that the district invested so much in preparing the staff to work with students with autism, that the program was there to stay. From this initiative to train staff, there was more of an understanding and acceptance of differences that were a result of (dis)ability, particularly autism, as reflected in the previous section. Also, the initiative demonstrated how when a school is committed to providing professional development and willing to make the investment, practitioners become more comfortable and skilled at teaching diverse learners.

What was striking about the school's effort to cultivate this understanding was that it did not stop with the staff; the student body was also included. The accepting culture around disability was fostered through special events, such as assemblies, aimed

to build understanding about autism; in fact, Williams held an "Autism Day" to build awareness, which Mrs. Motts described in an interview:

> And the kids didn't realize that they're very sensitive to light, and they're very sensitive to sound. And this what, what it would be like if you had autism and then we made things super bright or we made things really strong in smell. And they kinda got a sense of what it was like. It was, it was a really nice day and I think a lot of kids walked away understanding our students much better. Um, and as much as we don't want them to be identified and stick out like a sore thumb, unfortunately sometimes they do. But, I think it made the students much, appreciate them much more.

Mrs. Motts posited that the events had positively influenced the student body's understanding of disabilities. She explained further, "And I think that's good too because and it's good for the other children that are not in AS because then they understand that not everybody's the same and you know, we need to help these guys that have some difficulties. So, I think it's been good for the kids too." These events, as shared by Mrs. Motts and other personnel previously, were influential in informing students about autism, further developing a culture in the school centered around understanding and accepting students with disabilities.

Allocation of Resources

Culturally within the school a lack of awareness of the importance of ESL was made manifest through the resources allocated to ESL education. The limited allocation of resources was evident through the physical location of ESL classes and the limited funding provided to ESL.

Lula and the other first grade ELs received pull-out ESL in a separate location. For nearly half of these observations (i.e., 6 of 15), ESL was relocated from its current room—a television studio—to alternative spaces burdened with distractions often

occurring as a result of testing accommodations for students with disabilities. The most common alternative was called the Friendship Garden, a small faux garden with two mosaic-covered bistro tables with chairs. This space had the potential to be a viable learning environment except that it was stationed by the front entrance of the school, inconveniently also located outside the main office, cafeteria, and nurse's office. Upon entering the school, people were buzzed in by an office secretary, resulting in a loud clanking of the security system locking and unlocking. Here was a typical scene of a class located in the Friendship Garden: "People enter the school and walk by. One can hear the clicking of the securely operated door. Kids walk by to go to the nurse for their various aches and pains. And in the background there is loud exercise music playing in the cafeteria right behind us." On one occasion, ESL was bumped from its location in the Friendship Garden to the floor outside of the cafeteria because high school student volunteers were eating their lunches in the Friendship Garden. Relocating to the hallway proved distracting, as Lula and others—myself included—would watch children with bloody knees, loose teeth, and other ailments arrive to the nurse's office. Mrs. Franks corroborated the difficulty of keeping the ELs focused in the midst of so many distractions: "So, here [Williams] and I sit in the hallway or a TV studio. Or, yeah, or I grab a planning center or something. And that's got copiers in it and people are in and out with the copiers. It's not conducive." ESL was relegated to informal, impromptu locations because the school was at capacity; in fact, the school had two modular units attached to provide more space for students. With not a single unused space in the building, the television studio where ESL was housed became highly coveted.

Even during observations in which pull-out ESL remained in the television studio, the constant traffic of others utilizing the space resulted in the destruction and misplacement of materials; for example, one day some of the student-made word piles of key vocabulary were disheveled and even missing:

> The students were unscrambling their word piles after Mrs. Franks figured out which cards belonged to which students. However, some of the students are missing words from their sentences, so now they have to add some words. Mrs. Franks does not seem upset. She just tells them that they need to add words.

After realizing the number of missing words and the effort to remember as well as recreate the word piles was substantial, Mrs. Franks said, "'We're just gonna give it up. We'll just jump to the next thing'. She then tells the students to use the piles at home to make new sentences for practice." In my very first observation of ESL, the large desk in the ESL room was taken, leaving limited space for Mrs. Franks and the ELs upon which to write. The physical displacement of the ESL pull-out location and resources hindered the delivery of L2 services during half of the observations. ESL suffered with unequipped, distracting locations, demonstrating a lack of awareness of and respect for ESL culturally in the school.

Williams was a school brimming with educational resources, such as classrooms with smartboards, textbooks and countless leisure reading books, art supplies, manipulatives as well as a library that impresses upon entry with computers and an extensive listing of resources. Dr. Emitt described that in terms of resources, Williams was a "died and gone to heaven" type of school. She explained that as a Title I school, they have excellent resources to draw upon for teaching their students. ESL Coordinator

Mrs. Shaw shared in an interview how they were using remaining funds for ESL resources:

> This year we have some funds left in our ESL account and we're planning to buy iPads and engage some of our students with uh, with experiences on the iPad. Some of these apps that allow them to translate or all them to read in different languages. Yeah, lots of visuals. They can touch. They can listen. Yeah, so we're excited about that. We're getting ready to place that order actually.

When I asked further about the funds relating to the "ESL account," I discovered that Mrs. Shaw was referring to Title III funding from No Child Left Behind (NCLB): "ELs are Division of Federal Programs are Title III. So, we get funding for them through the Division of Federal Programs." She then explicated further, "So, Title I is the academically needy kids driven by the poverty. Title II is professional development. Title III is ESL, EL. And we get money for those students to support them." As indicated by Mrs. Shaw, Title III funding has the overarching purpose to enhance the services already provided to ELs, but has eight more specific purposes, two of which include the following:

> (a) to assist State educational agencies and local educational agencies to develop and enhance their capacity to provide high-quality instructional programs designed to prepare limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth, to enter all-English instruction settings; and
>
> (b) to assist State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools to build their capacity to establish, implement, and sustain language instruction educational programs and programs of English language development for limited English proficient children. (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, para. 2-4)

Certainly, providing iPads to ELs would qualify as enhancing ESL services, as the Pennsylvania Department of Education (2008) identifies the following as appropriate use

of Title III funding: "Curricular Materials; technology; intensify instruction; support personnel; tutorials, mentoring, academic or career counseling; community programs/services; parental involvement/outreach; supplemental instructional services; [and] family literacy services." However, by accepting Title III funding, schools must adhere to federal mandates surrounding ESL and bilingual education, which Mrs. Shaw was aware of: "We follow the guidelines, as we know them from the Division of Federal Programs because these are federal monies. If you accept the monies you need to play by the rules and we do that." The rules she was referring are specified in Title III—that receiving federal money to enhance EL education requires "implement[ing] high-quality language instruction education programs . . . based on scientifically-based research" (Departments of Justice & Department of Education, 2015, p. 6). This raises a critical question: How can Williams "play by the rules" and yet be underservicing ELs? The answer: Williams considered the time in the general education classroom as "ESL." Mrs. Shaw acknowledged this: "There are guidelines around how you must service ESL students if you receive the funding and I think ideally they'd like us to see our students everyday. Now our students do receive Language Arts everyday, which is what EL, ESL is supposed to be." This technicality, which was explored earlier in the chapter, I aver is a violation of NCLB, as Williams received federal funds to develop the ESL program and yet persisted in providing hours that were below the guidelines. Further, it is unclear how Williams is spending their Title III funds as they underservice ELs, not providing the "high-quality programs" nor "build[ing] their capacity to establish, implement, and sustain language instruction" (U.S. Department of Education, 2004), while also having

excess funds to purchase iPads for the ELs, which cannot compensate for the lack of services they received each week or inadequate space for learning.

CHAPTER 5

THE SAN PEDRO SCHOOL CASE

The School Culture Hypothesis

When I entered San Pedro School the school culture hypothesis I held—from Williams Elementary—was central to the questions I asked and the data I collected. I was curious if in a school that held the development of not only L2 but also L1 proficiency in high esteem would carefully and vigorously preserve L2 services for ELs with disabilities. San Pedro's mission statement explicitly claims that their focus as a school is on bilingualism: "San Pedro School empowers each student to reach their academic and social potential by developing into inquiring, *bilingual*, [emphasis added] intercultural citizens of the global community." Further, according to their mission, they espouse that a successful future for their students categorically involves bilingualism. Early on during my fieldwork it was evident that English and Spanish development was at the core of the school; it was not just a matter of purported beliefs. San Pedro sought out personnel for the various positions in the school who could teach bilingually, including specialists teachers (e.g., art and music), paraprofessionals, caseworkers, nurses, etc. In fact, only one of the five focal practitioners in the study was not a bilingual Spanish-English speaker, and Mrs. Neal was an ESL practitioner, a position that does not necessitate Spanish proficiency.

Beyond staffing the school with bilingual personnel, San Pedro was also committed to equipping their practitioners to be language teachers through various

professional development opportunities. One opportunity in particular included a series of book clubs that met Wednesday afternoons when the students were dismissed three hours earlier than usual. The Dean of Professional Development described how many of the book clubs focused on biliteracy. She also detailed a number of collaborations with neighboring universities:

> There was also last year a program from I want to say Pennsylvania College um, that came out and met for a couple of months with a lot of our dual language or EL group teachers. And that was um, I think a lot more comprehensive than any of the stand-alone things that we've done. They had textbooks. They had a syllabus. They read through it. They did um, kind of like a whole mini course [with] Pennsylvania College.

In addition to the "mini course" with Pennsylvania College, San Pedro recently formed a partnership with another neighboring university to have a considerable number of their staff certified in ESL. Throughout 2014 and 2015, 11 practitioners and administrators have been completing the required four courses for an ESL certificate. The ESL Coordinator expressed excitement about this new initiative in meeting the needs of the school's ELs: "I mean, that's [language education] like the purpose of the school. I mean, we're really designed around language. It's a dual language, you know, a dual-language school. And we have so many kids that it really, we really need to have everybody trained in it." She explained that over the years they had a number of professional development opportunities "through the regular avenues," but they needed as a school to take the development of their colleagues' ESL knowledge further.

San Pedro, however, did not want the commitment to language development to only take place within the four walls of the classroom; San Pedro practitioners were conscious of emphasizing language development throughout the course of the school day.

For instance, Mr. Alvarez, the third grade general education practitioner, explicated how language development was at the core San Pedro's mission:

> Yeah, so, and the school, school-wide we're getting, you know, to that point where we're making sure that Spanish is just as equal and as valuable as English. It's not just like individual classes, but the, school-wide, you know, they do announcements over the, in the mornings in Spanish and English. Um, and they do activities in nights, and games night in Spanish. So, in order to like say you know what, our school, we're a dual language school, we, you know, we speak English and we speak Spanish here. And, you know, and these are all the great things and the great benefits you would get from doing both.

Miss Rosales, too, described how language development was an essential component of their values as a school. She communicated this message to the students by explaining, "'And we're gonna do this in Spanish now 'cause Spanish is important and being able to talk to other people is important.' And I think that that's a good thing." To make becoming bilingual, in particular biliterate, more appealing to students, the school intentionally elevated Spanish to make it commensurate with the status of English. Mrs. Fuentes explained this intention: "Yeah, we're bolstering, we find ways to make the Spanish come alive more in the building, because, you know, English is the dominant language in the society, so you know, our teachers are really good with getting kids to talk academic Spanish."

Although they intently endeavored to elevate Spanish acquisition, this did not come at the cost of English development. In fact, the ELs (without disabilities) within the school received anywhere from 6 to 15 hours of ESL instruction and also L1 support through the two-way bilingual program for half of the school day. When accounting for the services delivered through ESL *and* the two-way bilingual education program, a majority of ELs received a range of 20 to roughly 30 hours language support weekly. Yet

within just a few weeks of fieldwork, I discovered that the school culture focusing around language development wielded little effect over the services provided to ELs with disabilities. That is, the intensive focus on and attention to language services did not apply to ELs with disabilities. Rather after careful analysis, the following themes emerged as significant in the determination of service delivery for ELs with disabilities: (a) *Logistics Matter*, (b) *Some Services Are (Not) Negotiable,* and (c) *Some ELs Need ESL, Others Do Not*. In the sections that follow in this chapter, I will demonstrate through each theme with its embedded metathemes how even in a context that emphasized language development, language services were superseded by special education for ELs with disabilities.

Logistics Matter

At San Pedro the theme of *logistics* emerged as the most prominent in service delivery practices for special education and ESL. In fact, logistical matters, namely the class rosters and instructional priorities of the practitioners became defining reasons why ESL services were limitedly or altogether not provided to ELs with disabilities across both first and third grades.

Class Rosters

Upon the initial meeting with Vice Principal Fuentes to discuss recruiting participants, I discovered based on the list of practitioners that she provided me, that for some reason there was no ESL teacher listed for the third grade ELs with disabilities. Thinking this was an oversight, I asked her for the name of the ESL practitioner. It was at this point she informed me that there is no ESL practitioner for that particular group of students because “special ed trumps EL”—a phrase I would hear quite often during the

next six months at San Pedro. In my initial interviews with practitioners I learned about what some at San Pedro called the “cohorts,” or more simply, the class rosters. With each grade, classes were rostered according to the institutional label assigned to the students whether relating to their disability or English proficiency. Each grade had one inclusive classroom in which almost all students with IEPs were placed and within each grade as well all ELs were rostered into one if not two particular classrooms. After this bifurcation occurred, the remaining students (i.e., those without disabilities and are not ELs) were rostered into the other classrooms for that grade (see Figure 7).

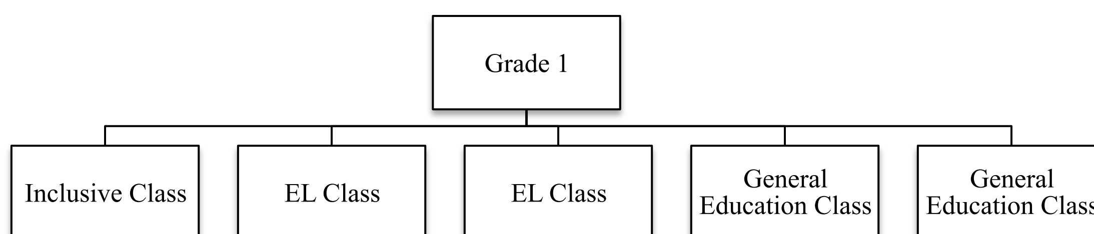


Figure 7. Rostering of First Grade Classes.

This rostering practice begged a significant question: Where does a student who is both an EL and has a disability get placed? The answer: These students were rostered into the inclusive classroom automatically regardless of their disability. So was the case for the focal students at this particular site: Alexa, Christian, and Alonso in first grade who all had SLIs and Zoe, Bruno, Dominick, Rafael, and Darell in third grade who all had LDs. Mr. Alvarez explained the existing class rosters: “So, how they’re grouped is they, they put all the special ed kids in one class, so this is the inclusion class. Yeah. And then the other two third grade classes um, one is just for EL students and the other one is no special ed or no EL students.”

The services provided to the ELs with disabilities within the inclusive classrooms were markedly different from the services provided to ELs: ELs with disabilities received little to no ESL services (see Table 10). For instance, the first grade ELs rostered in the EL class received daily ESL push-in support for three hours during four days a week resulting in a total of 12 hours of weekly ESL support. ELs with disabilities in the inclusive first grade class, however, received 1.5 hours of ESL support only on Wednesday mornings. A similar, but wider gap existed in the number hours of ESL support ELs in third grade received depending on their placement in particular classes. ELs received daily ESL push-in support for 1.5 hours four days a week for a total of six hours of weekly ESL push-in support while the third grade ELs with disabilities, in contrast, receive no ESL push-in services.

Table 10

Weekly Hours of Push-in Services by Student Group and Grade

Student Group		ESL	Special Education
Grade 1	ELs	12	-
	Students with disabilities	-	15
	ELs with disabilities	1.5	15
Grade 3	ELs	6	-
	Students with disabilities	-	15
	ELs with disabilities	0	15

Examining special education services, both first and third grade inclusive classes had a special education practitioner who pushed into the classes for approximately three hours per day during the time when instruction was delivered in English to implement the

supports identified in students' IEPs (see Table 10). Although ELs received six to eight times more instructional push-in support than ELs with disabilities, special education supports provided by a specialist for ELs with disabilities and non-ELs with disabilities (hereafter referred to as *students with disabilities*) occurred through 15 hours of support, a number that is consistent across both groups. The hours of special education support, in sum, remained constant, whereas the hours of ESL services plummeted, if not disappeared, when involving ELs with disabilities.

The decreased hours of ESL support was evident in first and third grade as a result of rostering; however, whether or not it was a school-wide practice was a matter I needed to confirm. Mr. Holloway, the Special Education Coordinator, explained that I was, in fact, observing an aberration: School-wide the first grade ELs with disabilities were the only students to receive any ESL support. The other classes of ELs with disabilities received *no* ESL support, as he explained: "I'm kind of taking a mental survey up through the grades. I know for a fact in the middle years, 6th, 7th, and 8th, because they've clearly rostered EL in one class and special ed in the other like never the twain shall meet, you know? You don't have, you don't really have that overlap." The ESL practitioners I interviewed confirmed the anomaly of the first grade inclusive class:

Sara: And so from what I understand, from other folks is that there's kind of a grouping of students, that the ELs are kind of in one class and the kids with special needs are in another. I just wanted to ask is that the same for those grades as well?

Mrs. DiLella: It is. So, what happens there is that um, the students that are both special education and EL learners are in the special education homeroom, which I don't see them, the way that works out.

Another ESL practitioner who also served as the ESL Coordinator, Mrs. Fleming, corroborated this by explaining that the ESL practitioners' role for ELs with disabilities is confined to monitoring. She detailed, "And then we do monitor, so even if I don't see a child in fourth grade who's both special ed and ESOL, um, I talk with the special ed teacher, and we keep track of how that child is making progress."

In short, the 1.5 hours of ESL for the first graders was a best-case scenario for ELs with disabilities within the school. Yet during the entire month of February all ESL practitioners at San Pedro were administering the ACCESS proficiency test to each individual EL and therefore could not push into any classrooms to provide instruction. Further, in early March the ESL practitioner for first grade, Mrs. Neal, was on maternity leave until the final few weeks of the school year. Debates within the administration surrounded whether they would replace her with a long-term substitute teacher, and a few weeks into Mrs. Neal maternity leave ESL support began again through a student-teacher. Therefore, ESL instructional support although already limited for first grade ELs with disabilities, due to testing and Mrs. Neal's maternity leave was additionally discontinued for over six weeks.

Learning Environment

The effects of rostering were not purely quantitative; in fact, the most alarming consequence of the rostering practices at San Pedro was the deleterious learning environment within the inclusion classrooms, which manifested in off-task behavior and more severely verbal and physical fighting. The latter occurring mostly within the third grade inclusion class.

The learning environment in Mrs. Soto's first grade inclusion class was challenged by the large class size. Of the 26 students within her class, eight were identified with a disability. Although Ms. Calderon, a special education practitioner, provided individualized instruction for these students, in many cases, she was present strictly during the morning hours, leaving the remainder of the day solely under Mrs. Soto's purview. The size of the class alone, with no consideration about the special and/or linguistic needs of the students, was onerous for Mrs. Soto, a veteran teacher of 15 years: "But, the number I believe um, does present a challenge and uh, especially you have students with those needs. Um, regardless of whether it's a behavior need or academic need, but um, I feel that having perhaps a smaller class size um, would benefit them." The Spanish instruction in the afternoon hours when there was no special education practitioner present created an even greater challenge, as Mrs. Soto explained, "And uh, in the afternoon I don't have any support for the special ed students. So again, you know, I believe it is a big class and then when we're teaching two languages then it becomes complicated for them as well because, you know, the language sometimes is a challenge for them."

Indeed, Mrs. Soto was spread too thin for at least half of the school day and consequently, there was ample room for students to engage in off-task behaviors. Both in the morning and afternoons the first grade students participated in small group guided reading for English and Spanish, respectively. During guided reading, Mrs. Soto would facilitate the reading for three to five students while the remaining students worked in small groups, and on days when Ms. Calderon was present, she too would support a small group of learners with special needs. Although the small group work could be potentially

beneficial for students, most groups were prone to constant chatting and small quarrels. Common off-task behavior during small group work included: wandering around the room; throwing around classroom supplies; discussing siblings, snow-related recreation, and, of course each other; showing off recently acquired items; and breaking down into tears. In one particular observation a student's retainer garnered so much attention that three tables of students were engrossed in conversation about it: the "students are fascinated with this retainer and they then start passing it around. Then the girl at the other students' table is begging and pleading to put the retainer in her mouth. Alexa in fact urges, 'Put it on. Your break it?'" Invariably this type off-task behavior caught Mrs. Soto's attention, resulting in the interruption of instruction for her small group. "Qué triste!" [How sad!], she would sternly say in her loudest voice. This expression alternated with a simple yelling of the off-task student's name. Despite Mrs. Soto's best efforts to correct and monitor student behavior, the effects were temporary, at best, in encouraging the students to remain on-task:

> The reading centers officially start. Mrs. Soto said to the girls, "You're gonna write about insects. Remember?" Following this reminder, the girls discuss each other's names. Alexa said, "No, she Rachel," correcting another classmate's guess. This conversation transitioned into a conversation about whether they are right- or left-handed. Alexa asked, "Who write like this?," as she held the pencil in her left hand.

Mrs. Soto also described the difficulty of managing behaviors when students are rostered together again for a second year: "This year again because most of them are familiar with each other, I've seen a little bit more of a challenge in terms of their behaviors because they want to now pick on each other." Observations corroborated Mrs. Soto's perceptions, as two boys in particular had an on-going rivalry that resulted in outbursts, both

emotional and verbal, removal from the class, and a specific seating arrangement that isolated these two boys from each other and their peers.

To incentivize positive behavior, and as part of their school-wide Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program, Mrs. Soto dedicated consistent time toward encouraging prosocial behavior. Incentives came in the form of verbal praise, accompanied by a small blue piece of paper with a black image of a cheetah paw. After the students wrote their names on the cheetah paws, they deposited them into a large folder in the front of the classroom to be collected at the end of the week. One cheetah paw was selected each week for the entire school and the chosen student would have the reward of hearing his or her name announced to the school plus a prize. Along with dedicating time to disperse cheetah paws to deserving students, Mrs. Soto would remind the students, especially when they were off-task or disruptive, of their school PBS motto, C.A.R.E.—Compassionate, Accountable, Respectful, Engaged. During one observation, Mrs. Soto held a lengthy class discussion about how their behaviors were not CARE-ing.

> The whole class gathers on the carpet now. They talked about what happened this morning because they "are not engaged" in their work. She asks them about what they did this morning. Remmy explains that he was talking and not working this morning. Soto responds, "Thank you for being honest and having integrity." Soto said that they have some class rules that they learned at the beginning of the year. "So, we might need a visual to remind us what those rules are." The students then recited the class rules pretty quickly and confidently.

Although Mrs. Soto experienced difficulty in managing students' behaviors as a result of the rostering and consequently dedicated considerable amounts of time to student behavior, her challenges were minor in comparison to Mr. Alvarez. The reputation of Mr. Alvarez's third grade class, in fact, was surrounded by infamy

throughout the entire school. Frequently, at San Pedro when I would introduce myself to personnel and share that I was observing Mr. Alvarez's class, I was met with a similar reaction—a long pause, bulging eyes, and a question equivalent to, "And how is that going?" I understood this reaction all too well, because during the first observation of the class a verbal fight between two students escalated to the point when one threw a trash can at another. All in the classroom—myself included—watched, frozen, as Mr. Alvarez attempted to restrain the student, holding him by the arm. This was not the only physical altercation. During one particular observation three fights broke out, all involving different pairs of students. Physical fights, of course, interrupted instruction as at least one teacher would attempt to pacify the situation. For example, often during physical and verbal fights Mr. Medina, the special education practitioner for the third grade class, would escort one of the fighting students into the hall for an emotional break: "Tim and Gloria are having another dispute. Medina takes Tim out in the hallway to calm him down. Gloria taunts him through the window in the door and starts yelling." The fighting amongst the students even left its physical marks on Zoe. One day she shared with me that earlier in the week she fought with Gloria. As she shared, she pointed to the large scratch under her left eye. Mr. Alvarez acknowledged the negative interpersonal dynamics within the class: "You know this year we've seen, and I'm sure you've seen as well, that just some students can't work together." He shared further that because the students continually were rostered together year after year, unhealthy dynamics continued to be nurtured:

> And because they've been together since, you know, however long they've been here [at the school], like all the IEP kids, they know how to push each other's buttons. They know how to like get on each other's bad side and they know exactly what to do. So, I mean, there's advantages to having them be together, but then there's disadvantages as well socially.

Certain students within the class contributed more than others to the persistent fighting. As, Mrs. James, the technology practitioner, identified some students were "key players" in getting the other students agitated: "There's like four key people. If I can get them back, back on track then the rest of the class levels out." In interviews with focal practitioners, administrators, and paraprofessionals the following descriptors were used to describe the dynamics within the class: *wild*, *chaotic*, *difficult,* and *rough*. Mr. Medina shared his perspective: "It [the rostering] has created an environment that um, is difficult for anyone to work with. Even, you know, seasoned teachers would have a hard time managing that classroom." Mrs. Fuentes, a vice principal, was well aware of the learning environment and used a metaphor of "a valley" in her description: "Because this mix of kids have [been] particularly difficult this year. It has really . . . I think that right now we're kind of going up again, you know, we just kind of came up a valley. And Mr. Alvarez had several pretty good days, but there's some days that it's a disaster in that one particular room."

Even when students were not fighting, individual outbursts of anger and disappointment commonly sidetracked the class from learning. Felix, a student with a disability, experienced personal difficulties during Spanish; he hated Spanish. He started acting out, erasing the examples Mr. Alvarez had just written on the board and scribbling lines up and down the board with a marker. Other students threw their hands up in

frustration, as they could no longer see the examples Mr. Alvarez had provided. Unable to calm Felix, Mr. Alvarez called a security guard—"Mr. Tom."

> Mr. Tom comes by and invites Felix to go for a walk. Dominick and Marco watch Felix many times and are not attending to their work. Mr. Tom talks to Felix. He wants to tell him a story. Felix writes all over the board with a whiteboard marker. Miss Trevino grabs his arm. Mr. Tom takes over; he tries to pick up Felix, but he resists. He pulls him out of the room by his arm with his body dragging along on the floor all the way. Felix screams bloody-murder in the hallway.

Such outbursts quite obviously shut down all learning as practitioners tended to the upset student and classmates watched the breakdown unfold. This learning environment was a result of the rostering practice as students—even those who do not like each other—were placed in the same class together each year. Further, by placing all of the learners with disabilities within a particular grade in the same classroom, practitioners were stretched too thin to meet their students' needs. Mrs. Soto's large class of 26 students had eight students with disabilities (three also identified as ELs) and of Mr. Alvarez's 21 students, nearly half were also identified as having a disability (see Table 11). The high proportion of students with disabilities grouped into one class per grade raises the critical question whether these classes are inclusive at all. The designation of these classes and their practitioners as inclusionary was official, readily accessed through the school's webpage, and yet the very existence of this designation serves as an indication that a special placement was still occurring. The only difference between these classrooms and the specialized placement into a self-contained classroom was the presence of students without disabilities. This practice of placing some students without disabilities into a class of mostly students with disabilities is called *reverse inclusion* (Rafferty & Griffin, 2005). Although learning and social benefits of reverse inclusion

have been identified (Hardin & Hardin, 2002; Rafferty & Griffin, 2005; Schoger, 2006), this program may be a violation of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), which is a stipulation of IDEA that mandates the following:

> to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (IDEA, 20 U.S.C. § 1412)

With the students with disabilities' specialized placement into the reverse inclusion classrooms and more limited access to peers without disabilities, it is questionable whether the cohorts are adhering to LRE.

Table 11

Number of Students with Disabilities Per Inclusion Class

Student Group	Grade 1	Grade 3
ELs with disabilities	3	4
Total students with disabilities	8	9
Total students	26	21

The Special Education Coordinator, Mr. Holloway, acknowledged his skepticisms about the true nature of their inclusive classrooms: "You know, you have a special ed self-contained classroom with other regular ed kids grouped into it. That's what you have. That's never gonna be successful." He went on to explain further the challenges this model presented pedagogically:

> I would much rather split them [students with disabilities] up, take out a lot of those interpersonal dynamics, and really focus on the students and their needs and their deficits and give them those supports for maybe a 45-minute block compared to a 90- minute block . . . Instead of you got 15 kids, all raise their hand, and all need redirection, and all need simplification, and I'm running around in a room, like how effective is that?

The rostering practices within the school allotted little time for instruction. Miss Trevino, a paraprofessional for third grade, attested in an interview to the limited support she can provide for the students:

> Sara: Um, so I'm guess I'm trying to understand, um, how much do you think with that particular group you spend kind of trying to get them to stay on-task verses like actually getting to support them?
>
> Miss Trevino: Well, I feel like behavior is definitely, it's definitely what I'm like helping him more with than the actual instructional time. Um, I guess it's just because they know each other at this point. They like know, you know what I mean, they know how to push each other's buttons, so it's more behavior than instructional time. I'm sure you've seen it in there too.

In fact, instructional time was so scarce for the third grade class that Mr. Alvarez, when asked to describe a successful day in that class, cited actually teaching the content and having "no major incidences like fighting." The limited opportunity for teaching content coupled by a lack of ESL services provided to the ELs with disabilities created a linguistically deprived environment consisting mostly of behaviorally focused commands. This is not to say that the ELs within the inclusion classrooms were made victims by their other classmates' actions. Quite emphatically, the ELs with disabilities often contributed to the hostile learning environment. Dominick participated in some of the most volatile fights. One such example includes Dominick aggressively insulting a fellow classmate

with the gibe, “Your mom get you from the crack-head store.” At other times he would openly call other female students “fat,” and these hurtful comments would be returned to Dominick; as a student with Dominican heritage, insults at times were aimed at his skin color: “She called me ‘black’ . . . She called me the ‘n-word,’” Dominick angrily said as he paced around the room. Other ELs with disabilities, like Zoe and Rafael, were also prone to their bouts of distracting behaviors, particularly Rafael liked crawling around the floor on a daily basis. These examples all serve to demonstrate that learning environments created by the class rosters promoted hostility and distraction at the price of learning for all students. ELs with disabilities, however, were put at a greater disadvantage because not only were they denied opportunities to learn content, they were also unable to have a linguistically rich environment consisting of the academic language they need to access the little content they were learning.

The depicted dynamics within the first and third grade inclusion classes were not, I argue, typical of students with disabilities nor typical of this urban school. Addressing the former, many of the troublesome interactions between students had often involved students who were *not* receiving special education services. That is, several of the “key players” identified earlier by Mrs. James did not have IEPs but were rather grouped into the inclusion classroom. Their behaviors, therefore, were not typical of students with disabilities, instead demonstrated the negative relational dynamics and frustrations that come with students being grouped together year after year. With regards to the possible refutation that these behaviors are “typical” for urban classrooms and not a consequence of rostering, I observed other classes within first and third grades to gauge the learning environments and instructional foci as well as to draw comparisons between the

observational data. The findings from these comparative observations as will be discussed below.

Instructional Focus

Observing the EL-designated classes within the focal grades provided a meaningful contrast to test the hypothesis that the rostering practices created deleterious learning environments and offered the students, particularly ELs with disabilities, dissimilar instructional foci. Comparative observations of classes within the two grades revealed that in the EL classes practitioners devoted their instructional time to creating linguistically rich environments and teaching transferable skills whereas in the inclusion classes instructional focus consisted of managing behaviors and cultivating positive affect, (i.e., emotion) within the students about their skills and learning itself.

As illustrated in the previous section, managing students' behaviors often overtook instructional time within the inclusion classes. The behavior of the students in these classes was inseparable from their own personal affect about learning and their personal academic skills. A previous example demonstrated just this. Mr. Tom physically removed a student, Felix, from the class because of his disruptive and disrespectful behavior, but the genesis of this occurrence was that Felix was unmotivated by having class in Spanish. The connection between students' affect and their ability to remain on-task was something that both focal special education practitioners discussed in interviews. Ms. Calderon shared that she often integrated cultivating self-confidence in her students during instruction: "I have [experienced] in building a lot of self-confidence too. Um, it's also a big part, you know, a lot of them, more for first [grade] I noticed, not have big, they don't have lots of self-confidence or motivation." She then speculated why: "You

know, and a lot of it also has to do with home life, you know, so... They have to have to deal with that." Mr. Medina, too, described in detail the influence of students' motivation and engagement during learning:

> I think for special ed students specifically sometimes the work is focusing on specific skills and having them develop specific skills. Sometimes some of the work is just making them feel like they can actually do things. You know, so there's almost like there's this psychological, social element that uh, sometimes needs special attention. You know, it doesn't necessarily need its own uh, goal in terms of the IEP, but it's just part of being a good teacher—is sensing that the reason why this child isn't motivated is not, doesn't have anything to do with the fact that they can't do the work, but it's more like, they don't believe that they can. And you have to convince them of that. And so, um, part of what I try to do is try to uh, you know, discern if that is part of what's preventing them and try to address that, as I can.

Mr. Medina, a patient and kind teacher, frequently utilized motivational strategies with his students, especially the ELs with disabilities. One such instance included small group guided reading, a daily block where Mr. Medina worked with the two lowest groups of readers. With all of the focal ELs in this class qualifying as the lowest performing readers, attempting to read relatively short books became an emotional battle for the students. Mr. Medina offered constant encouragement to Zoe as she was reading: "When I returned to my seat I heard Mr. Medina say to Zoe: 'When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking'. . . . Zoe puts down the book in frustration. Mr. Medina tries to console her by telling it is okay. Zoe starts to read again." Beyond unconditional affirmation, Mr. Medina also attempted to integrate students' interests as a motivational tool when they became discouraged and flustered.

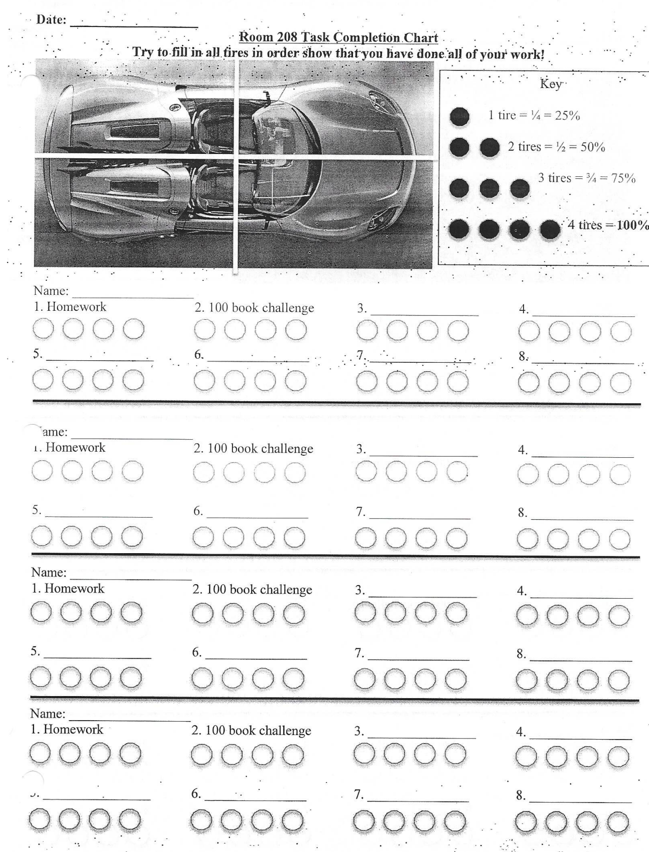
Bruno, a third grade EL with an LD in reading and math, often struggled with spelling and during one class Bruno was becoming frustrated while attempting to spell

the word "house" during a brief writing activity. Mr. Medina showed Bruno where to look for common sight words in his folder, but since the word was not listed, Bruno had to spell the word on his own. He spelled "H-O-L-S" [house] and Mr. Medina offered some assistance in editing the word. Yet still Bruno gave up and sat at his desk, not writing. When Mr. Medina returned, he attempted to renew Bruno's interest in the task by capitalizing on his personal interest in the game Minecraft: "Mr. Medina explained that they can change the spelling later. 'I know it [spelling] bothers you.' Mr. Medina says that a guy on his block is saying a lot of crazy things about Minecraft but he doesn't believe him. He thinks he is making stuff up, so he needs Bruno to write about it." As in the case of Bruno, it often became impossible to move forward during instruction while students were upset. "Yeah, so I mean, those are things that you just gotta you know, deal with. You can't ignore it. You have to deal with it before, you know, I get to be able to teach them a lesson," Ms. Calderon shared during an interview. Mr. Medina echoed this exact sentiment and offered some examples of how he attempts to overcome these difficulties—providing students with positive scripts and work completion charts. He shared about one student in particular:

> But, you know, there's sometimes when uh, he becomes so emotional that he can't move on. He can't get the work done. And so, you know, the teacher isn't the skill; the teaching is, "You can do this." You know, and giving him the scripts, so that that way he can overcome that and, you know, have the motivation or persistence to move beyond it. You know, so, yeah, even with him, my work was building a work completion chart for him.

Work completion charts were used in the third grade class to keep students motivated in fully completing their tasks. In fact, students were so frequently not completing work that Mr. Medina created a work completion chart, which commonly was referred to as "four

tires” or “getting your tires.” The work completion chart prominently featured an aerial view of a racecar with four tires (see Figure 8). There was a metaphorical connection between the racecar and work completion; just as a person would not buy a car that was missing a tire or several tires—because the car would not work properly—a student would not hand in work without completing all of it, because without completing all the assignments, the student’s learning does not “work.” As the students completed assignments throughout the day, they were to shade in the corresponding amount of tires for each subject according to the following guidelines: 25% of work = 1 tire, 50% of work = 2 tires, 75% of work = 3 tires, and 100% of work = 4 tires. The goal for the students each day became to shade in all four tires for each subject.



Date: ____________

Room 208 Task Completion Chart

Try to fill in all tires in order show that you have done all of your work!

Key

1 tire = ¼ = 25%

2 tires = ½ = 50%

3 tires = ¾ = 75%

4 tires = **100%**

Name: ____________

1. Homework 2. 100 book challenge 3. ________ 4. ________

5. ________ 6. ________ 7. ________ 8. ________

Name: ____________

1. Homework 2. 100 book challenge 3. ________ 4. ________

5. ________ 6. ________ 7. ________ 8. ________

Name: ____________

1. Homework 2. 100 book challenge 3. ________ 4. ________

5. ________ 6. ________ 7. ________ 8. ________

Name: ____________

1. Homework 2. 100 book challenge 3. ________ 4. ________

5. ________ 6. ________ 7. ________ 8. ________

Figure 8. Task Completion Chart.
Note. Students shaded in the number of “tires” they earned for completing each task for the subjects throughout the day.

In addition to encouraging students with this tangible goal on a daily basis, Mr. Alvarez and Mr. Medina developed their own additional PBS plan for the class that motivated the students to remain in their seats and focus on their tasks. The reward for students who did not get out of their seats more than three times during any given lesson came in the form of food—one or two M&Ms. In the mornings and afternoons, Mr. Medina and paraprofessional Miss Trevino, respectively, carried a clipboard with a chart where they could indicate the number of times the students left their seats (Figure 9). After each hour, the "M&M distribution" occurred for students who remained in their seats. Although motivating students to remain on-task in their seats, this plan necessitated constant monitoring and effort from Mr. Medina and Miss Trevino.

Follow Directions in 3 prompts & Stays in seat (gets out of seat 3 times or less) Name	8am	9am	10am	11am	12pm	L	2pm	3pm	Tally points
1.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
2.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
3.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
4.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
5.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
6.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
7.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
8.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
9.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
10.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
11.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
12.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
13.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
14.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
15.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
16.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
17.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
18.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
19.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
20.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	

Figure 9. Motivation Chart for Remaining in Seat.
Note. Student names have been redacted for privacy.

Observations of the EL classes revealed a stark contrast to the inclusion classes in the learning environment and instructional focus. Unlike the first and third grade classes, the learning environment was not filled with strife between students. In part this could be attributed to the number of EL classrooms because for many of the grades—particularly first and second—there were multiple EL-designated classrooms to accommodate the large population of identified ELs. The larger number of ELs per grade along with the influence of reclassification (i.e., ELs exiting ESL) allowed for more variance in the EL classes' rosters from year to year, and consequently less long-term tension between peers. Certainly, though, students at times were off-task in the EL classroom, but their off-task behavior came in the form of quick social conversations with their group mates, nothing as harmful as verbal arguments and physical fights. Further, because the students remained mostly on-task, the practitioners were able to provide instruction without frequent and prolonged interruptions. Moreover, although all participated in the school-wide PBS plan involving cheetah paws, these practitioners did not focus their energies on motivating the students; instead their instructional foci included creating a classroom with robust linguistic interactions and building knowledge of skills that generalize to other content areas. For instance, in the EL first grade class, ESL practitioner Mrs. Neal and another practitioner, Miss Ko, taught side-by-side during math class. Unlike Mrs. Soto's class where students were taught a whole-group lesson and then worked for extended periods of time on several pages of math problems, in the EL math class Mrs. Neal and Miss Ko split the math lesson into smaller chunks, creating a cycle of whole class lessons and then small group or scaffolded work followed by independent work. Specifically, after teaching students how to read three-digit numbers,

students completed just three problems where they identified the numbers in the respective digit columns to only reconvene together as a whole class to address the common difficulties students encountered during digit identification.

> Miss Ko writes the following number on the board: "109." She points to the hundreds digit and says, "This tells us we have 100." She covers up the tens digit, so they can understand how they can read the number. Then they practice reading the next two numbers: 112, 119. Miss Ko explains that for these numbers, they need to read again the hundreds digit and then the tens and ones digits together "12" and "19." Miss Ko explained, "Pay attention to what number is in the front, middle, and back." Mrs. Neal chimed in reminding the students that we read numbers left to right, just like in reading.

This interactive learning and more structured pacing of the math lessons allowed for the ELs to receive corrective feedback on both their math work and their language. With the latter, Mrs. Neal focused on the students' clear and accurate output, or speech, for the math content. She often said, "Mirror me," followed by a sentence or key vocabulary after which the students would repeat chorally. Throughout the lesson Mrs. Neal and Miss Ko worked together to circulate around the room, providing individual support for the math problems and language together, requiring the students to read the math answers to them and thereby ensuring the ELs understood how to read three-digit numbers aloud. The iterative math instruction, small group work, and individual supported work provided the ELs with a rich linguistic environment where they were hearing the language modeled for them through multiple exposures and also producing the language themselves.

The focus on transferable skills, or knowledge that could be applied in different content areas and languages, was especially apparent in the third grade EL classes. When Mr. Medina supported the ELs with disabilities in guided reading, often the burden of

managing behavior kept the groups moving past decoding the words to comprehension of the text overall; however, during guided reading Mrs. DiLella was able to focus on comprehension skills that the students could transfer to their upcoming PSSA tests during a poetry reading: "Mrs. DiLella continues, 'What does the speaker think about the trade?' and one student responds that he [the speaker] doesn't like it. They consult the text to see where they can find this answer. Next Mrs. DiLella asks the students about the purpose of the poem—to persuade, to inform, to entertain?" During instruction Mrs. DiLella was able to focus on ELs' global comprehension of texts by promoting their understanding of concepts, such as audience and speaker's perspective, while also honing in on students' lexical (i.e., vocabulary) development and pronunciation skills. During the discussion of the poem's purpose, "One student has difficulty pronouncing the word 'entertain.' Mrs. DiLella makes him slow down in pronouncing the word and then asks him what it means. He responds after a few second that 'entertain' means 'to make us laugh.'" Further, she supported the ELs' vocabulary development through utilizing a concise word wall of essential vocabulary by simply pointing to select words.

The observations comparing the learning environments of the EL classes demonstrated that not all the classes at San Pedro were chaotic, refuting the notion that these behaviors were attributable to the school's urban context. The other classes were characterized by more cooperative relationships amongst peers, allowing for practitioners to dedicate more time to quality instruction. The quality and quantity of instruction I posit would be more conducive for ELs with disabilities, provided they receive support within these classrooms according to the IEPs. If placed in these classes with special education

services, these learners would have more time for learning content and more targeted development of their L2. Mr. Holloway, although a special educator, opined that "the level service and support and kind of intentionality that the EL teacher brings through their lesson planning, many times supersedes what the special ed teacher is able to provide through small group instruction." To say the quality of instruction in these classes "supersedes" the instruction provided in the inclusive classes may be misleading. It was not the practitioners' skill set or professional knowledge that determined the quality and quantity of services the students received, as all the focal practitioners proved informed, hardworking, caring, and devoted; the rostering practices influenced—whether positively or negatively—practitioners' ability to provide instruction for ELs with disabilities.

Rationale for Rostering

On the surface level the practice of grouping students according to their educational needs seems cogent, as it allows either the ESL or special education practitioners to push into fewer classes and therefore provide more instructional support to the students as Mrs. Solis, a vice principal shared:

> Well, what I will say is that the students that are ELs that also have an IEP are automatically placed in an IEP class . . . . we have done is that we've tried to put as many of the students together would then allow a second teacher to be the coteacher in the classroom for at least, we try to do at least two hours or more in the day of coteaching happening.

The need to maximize the time of special education and ESL practitioners was inseparable from the size of the Special Education and ESL Departments at San Pedro.

For the 143 ELs in Grades 1 through 5,[6] there were only three ESL practitioners who split their time between multiple classes, if not, grades. For example, Mrs. Neal, as an ESL practitioner pushed into three first grade classes—two classes designated for ELs and the one inclusion class (see Figure 7, p. 120), while her colleagues, like Mrs. DiLella, split their time between the EL-designated classes in two grades. Special education practitioners, too, divided their time between multiple grades, special educator Ms. Calderon explained, “And then it’s just us three that do um, kinder through fifth so, we wouldn’t be able to be in one class. So, we split.” Another administrator explained the connection between the cohorts and number of personnel:

> And so really I think that if they [the students] were just actually like dispersed within the different classes, it would be really hard to service the kids and make sure that they were getting the supports and interventions. And so, I think that’s why scheduling wise it’s happened that all of those kids are in this one and all of these kids are in this one um, for each grade.

Although many attributed the class rostering practice to the number of practitioners and amount of hours during the school day, the rationale for how much time the ESL practitioners spent with the various classrooms was opaque. When I asked Mrs. Neal the reason for the variation in the amount of time she pushed into each of the first grade classes, she quickly responded, “Um, the numbers. I have a classroom of 26 [ELs] in one of the classes, so I’m with them half the day four times a week.” Following suit, she spent another three hours a day with another EL class of 20 students and then the least amount of time within the inclusion class. Although Mrs. Neal cited the number of ELs within a class as the dominant factor in the distribution of her time, another ESL practitioner

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[6] Kindergarten students at San Pedro are tested in February of every year to determine their eligibility for ESL services for the subsequent year in first grade. Consequently, there are no ESL services provided in kindergarten.

shared that she distributed her time according to the needs of the ELs: "I'm only with second grade for 45 minutes [in the] morning, 45 minutes in the afternoon and then all day Wednesday." She explained, "And my idea with that when I was scheduling is that third grade is the testing year. And also it's just a big jump, I feel like that year, so if I had a little bit more time with one grade, I wanted it to be third grade." These provided reasons for the varying hours in ESL support, however, do not align with the recommended hours of instructional support for ELs provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education: The amount of ESL instruction for ELs should be contingent upon the ELs' proficiency levels in English, not class size, presence of a disability, or demands of state assessments (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2001). According to Pennsylvania's Basic Education Circulars (BEC), which are state issued recommendations for the interpretation and implementation of educational law, as shown in Table 8 (p. 67), ELs are to receive a certain amount of daily planned ESL instruction depending on their language proficiency. The ELs with disabilities within the first and third grade classes were assessed as having "Beginning" and "Developing" English proficiencies and therefore required a range of one to two hours of instructional support daily, but instead they received zero to 1.5 hours of ESL per week.

Reactions to Rostering

The reactions to rostering amongst practitioners and administrators ranged from expressions of approval to outrage and disgust, with many falling somewhere along the middle—opining ambivalence. There were no emerging patterns in the staff's perceptions of rostering ELs with disabilities into the inclusion class; both special

education and ESL practitioners alike offered affirmation of and contestation against San Pedro's policy.

One reason for supporting the practice of rostering of ELs with disabilities into the inclusion class was quite simply that special education services were considered more important. Mr. Alvarez reasoned, "It's the most important thing. Um, because a lot of them need those services and through those services that they're getting um, in special ed, we try to incorporate the services they get, the EL services they should be getting." Mr. Alvarez's comfort with this policy stemmed from his beliefs about what kinds of services are more important and how the services can be delivered—ESL services can be provided by the inclusion practitioner. This rationale was expressed quite often at San Pedro and resulted in much of the ESL Department's support of the policy (which I will reserve for exploration in greater detail in the subsequent theme). Mrs. DiLella, the second and third grade ESL practitioner, when asked to share her thoughts on the existing rostering practices explained another reason for her support of the policy.

> Sara: And I was curious about your perspective on the way the classes are broken up. So, there are those kids that are in Mr. Alvarez's class that you don't get to see. Um, what, what are you thinking about that?
>
> Mrs. DiLella: So, initially it's kind of disappointing because I feel like those are my kids and I have a responsibility to them and logistically I don't know them; I don't get to see them. If I were to push in or pull out in addition to their, you know, the general class instruction and Mr. Medina giving his instruction, their day at that point is so choppy. I feel like that's actually doing more harm.

She held concerns about another additional practitioner (i.e., an ESL practitioner) pushing into the inclusion classroom and believed that the result could be unwieldy and disruptive

to the students. “Um, so while it’s frustrating, I don’t know that I would change because I think adding in is just going to make it, you know, it’s too sloppy.”

The ESL Coordinator, Mrs. Flemming, however, wished for a policy wherein ELs with disabilities could be placed in the EL classes for reasons related to the learning environments created at times by the rostering: “If it were my choice I would rather them be in the ESOL class because maybe it could just be the mix of particular kids that are in the special ed side.” She explained further that more flexible rostering would assist the special education practitioners who often face the instructional demand of differentiation: “And I feel like, you know, maybe that kid would be better serviced if, if they could be over with us during that time or, you know, maybe the levels are just really spread out, so I know that the special ed teacher is having to differentiate for like a huge different array of levels.”

More critical reactions to the rostering emerged during the study, resulting in some practitioners and administrators wanting to amend the policy. One special education practitioner, Mr. Medina, acknowledged that by placing students with IEPs within a single inclusive classroom for each grade, San Pedro administrators were able to streamline services and maximize the amount of time special education practitioners dedicated to providing individualized support. But, he concluded that this policy came at a hefty price. He offered, “I understand the logic behind doing that [rostering students]. However, as you have noted, it, it has created an environment that um, is difficult for anyone to work with. Right, even, you know, seasoned teachers would have a hard time managing that classroom.” As a result of the learning environment Mr. Medina furthered reported, “It really has become clear through the experience this year that that particular

group, that particular cohort would [benefit] from being distributed in different ways." Mr. Alvarez, the general education practitioner, concurred that the rostering practice was so disruptive to learning that he and Mr. Alvarez were brainstorming how to change the existing grouping practice for this particular class:

> That's a conversation that we've been having since the beginning of the year with myself and Mr. Medina and um, either just seeing who we need to separate . . . And the students that *don't* have IEPs *who are more challenging* [emphasis added] definitely need to be removed because then it agitates and aggravates those who need to be in this class. Um, so yeah, we're definitely always looking to see what, what we can do. And then for next year for sure we've, for sure, are gonna separate some kids that are not IEP.

After the experience of the third grade inclusion class, it appeared the administration was reconsidering its stance towards rostering. Vice Principal Fuentes, who was new to San Pedro aspired for this policy to change: "And it's been a challenge, but moving forward I know that I've been able to kind of switch that philosophy here a little bit, so that with at least this pocket of kids in third grade that we rethink how we schedule and how we roster those kids for next year." The administration did reconsider this policy, but only for this particular class. In a final meeting at San Pedro, Vice Principal Fuentes shared that starting in the 2014-2015 school year, the students with disabilities in that class will be spread out amongst the fourth grade classes. Further, she explained to abate the burden placed on inclusion classroom teachers, they will limit the number of students with disabilities to only 10. Although a sign of progress, under these new guidelines the class composition in Mrs. Soto's and Mr. Alvarez's classes would remain the same, suggesting that even the number of students with disabilities remained too high for effective learning. Moreover, as Mr. Holloway previously asserted, the classes by his definition were not

inclusive because high numbers of students with disabilities were still grouped together. Instead "You have a special ed self-contained classroom with other regular ed kids grouped into it. That's what you have."

Mr. Holloway was without question the most outspoken of all the participants about the rostering practices. He objected to the policy because he believed its basis was in convenience and money, not students' individual learning needs.

> And you actually, a student-centered approach to even rostering would literally take individual students in mind as they roster the students in those particular cohorts. It's not particular how it's been done. It's been um, "Okay, EL Coordinator, who are the EL students. Alright, let's conveniently group them." "Alright, who has an IEP? Let's conveniently group them."

Further, as a special educator, Mr. Holloway had misgivings about how San Pedro was conceptualizing "inclusion," arguing that the current policy did not embody inclusivity but ironically, segregation: "Then you go to a first or second or sixth grade class and you have 15 students who have IEPs and have significant learning deficits. So, the, the thinking is yeah, we're gonna cohort them . . . in the name of inclusion." In his final criticisms of the rostering practices he added the questioning remarks: "But, is it best for the students? And I would even add, is it best for the teachers? Which is in most cases never really considered." Indeed, the data from observations and interviews with staff illuminated how the best interests and needs of the students and teachers were not considered in the rostering practices and policies.

Inconsistencies and Contradictions in Rostering

Initially the rostering practices seemed fairly simple: For each grade students with disabilities and ELs were grouped homogeneously by their institutionally assigned label

into separate classrooms and students who happen to have both labels were placed automatically into the inclusion classroom. Yet after several weeks at San Pedro, I discovered that the rostering practices were inconsistently implemented, and to the students' detriment.

In collecting demographic information about the focal students, I requested Mr. Holloway's assistance. As the Special Education Coordinator, I thought he could provide useful information about the focal students' disabilities. In our correspondence he indicated that one of the ELs in the third grade inclusion class did not, in fact, have a disability, and yet just weeks earlier Mr. Alvarez and Mrs. Fuentes, the Vice Principal, indicated that he was an EL with a disability. Mr. Holloway wrote in an email, "Darell is an EL student, but has not been identified for special education." Institutionally, Darell was only identified as an EL, so why was he not placed in one of the EL classes where he could receive language services? Mr. Holloway offered the rationale for why Darell was placed in the inclusion classroom: "He is a student that is 'thought-to-be' in need of specially designed instruction and was therefore rostered into that class at the beginning of the year." Later I conferred with Mr. Alvarez about Darell's placement into the third grade inclusion class, and he corroborated Mr. Holloway's explanation:

> I think last year um, there's like a process that students have to go through in order to get evaluated. Um, so he, his teachers last year put him through the process. And I guess it was too late in the year when they finally get starting the, the ball rolling on that. So, they put him in this class and, you know, I had to wait to see if he really needed to, you know, there's a like a length, you have to wait this much time. So, he's in the process of get, getting evaluated because I, I think there's, he needs, something is just not clicking. Something is just not clicking for him.

Even if something was not “clicking” for Darell, the rationale for placing him in the inclusion class was not clear, as educational supports for his learning needs could theoretically be provided to him within the EL-designated classroom in addition to the ESL services he was legally supposed to receive. For example, two of the accommodations Darrell received were small group instruction and preferential seating. Darell, a charming, sometimes mischievous student, worked very hard when seated in a desk next to Mr. Alvarez. The rationale for these accommodations was twofold: to ameliorate off-task behavior and promote learning. As Mr. Alvarez explained, “And so, in order for us to avoid him getting into trouble, which he often finds himself anyway, you know, we try to sit him near us, so that if he needs something immediate we, I can try to be there.” He explicated further, “because he’s so so, so, so low, he needs constant, constant support. Um, he’s reading on a kindergarten level. He’s even lower than some of the IEP kids.” Darell was indeed reading far below grade-level; during the first and second trimesters he earned a “Below Basic” mark for reading, certainly warranting educational supports. Yet arguably, these same supports could be provided within the context of the EL third grade class where he would receive six times the amount of language support (see Table 10, p. 121). Further, ESL services may serve to target and improve his skills in decoding, fluency, and comprehension. However, in Darell’s case his *potential* disability superseded his *actual* ESL needs. Mr. Holloway was unaware of inconsistencies in the rostering, because this was his first year at San Pedro. It was not until I asked him about the specific disabilities of the focal students that he realized Darrell was an EL (without a disability) and quite possibly others practitioners did not realize he had yet to be identified as having a disability. He shared:

> It shows you how cloudy kind of some of that intersection gets ’cause there’s the perception that, oh, I thought he [Darell] was already identified. He’s grouped with those students. Well, my next question when I got that email was straight to the EL Coordinator right next door to me: “You know this student, um, why is he in that [class]?” If we’re gonna be consistent, why not, you know, roster him with the EL?

Just as the inconsistencies in rostering were illuminated in Darell’s case, Mrs. Soto’s first grade class roster was riddled with contradictions. In her class there were three ELs with disabilities—all SLIs. In San Pedro, students with SLIs received speech services in a pull-out setting. Why then if these ELs only received services for their disabilities in a pull-out setting for speech and language were they placed in an inclusion classroom? The answers to this question were dubious. For instance, Vice Principal Solis explained that the rostering practices considered the specific disability categories:

> There are some, there have been some cases where the s-, a speech student with an IEP in terms of speech has been in the, in the special education classroom. But, that is not always the case. For that primary reason, that if there’s a speech language person who comes out to visit them, no matter where they are, they would visit them anyway, so they’re not really required to be in the special education classroom.

Despite Mrs. Solis’ explanation about the consideration of the types of disabilities, the ELs with disabilities within Mrs. Soto’s class were not being serviced by the special educator, Ms. Calderon. When I asked Ms. Calderon why Alexa, Christian, and Alonso—the three ELs with SLIs—were rostered in this particular class, she offered the initial answer: “I just think they happen to, to be grouped in there ’cause I think they’re also EL, if I’m not mistaken. So, I think maybe that had also something to do with it ’cause the services they come in and provide there too, so...” Inherent in her response was an apparent contradiction: The ELs with disabilities were placed in the inclusion class so that they could receive ESL support; however, the ESL support in the inclusion was

minimal—1.5 hours each week compared to their EL counterparts in other classes that received 15 hours (see Table 10, p. 121). By this logic, Alonso, Christian, and Alexa should have been rostered into the EL-designated classes to receive more L2 services. Ms. Calderon offered another possible explanation for their placement in the inclusion class; she explained that Mrs. Soto looped with the students this year. That is, she taught this inclusion class in kindergarten and then again in first grade. Yet when I asked Mrs. Soto about whether the three ELs with SLIs looped with her from the previous year, she indicated that Christian "was the only one." In fact, Alexa was retained in in the previous year, making it her second time in first grade. In the case of these ELs with disabilities, their individual needs were not taken into consideration; rather, because they had IEPs—with no consideration about the kind of disabilities they had—they were placed into the (reverse) inclusion classroom where they received no supports for their disability and minimal supports as ELs in arguably a more restrictive environment. Further, placing ELs with SLIs in a classroom where they receive 90% less of the ESL services offered to their other EL peers (see Table 10) simply because they have an IEP created an ironic contradiction; although they needed language support both for their disability and EL-status, they were placed in a class where they received less language services.

Some Services Are (Not) Negotiable

As the roster practices illuminated the differential services students received according to their institutional label, I began to ask why this was the case. The answers to this question led to the emergence of a second theme: *Some Services Are (Not) Negotiable*. This theme manifested as ESL services were limitedly provided by ESL practitioners for ELs with disabilities precisely because ESL services were seen as

negotiable; at San Pedro ESL instruction could be substituted for instruction (a) in Spanish, (b) through general education, and (c) in small groups. While the aforementioned all qualified as "ESL services," quite dichotomously, special education services were less negotiable, only deemed provided when a trained specialist was present.

ESL Through Spanish

When I interviewed the practitioners of San Pedro's ESL Department, each participant cited the large amount of language services they provided to ELs. Mrs. Flemming said of their services, "So, we just, we really try to just make sure that everybody gets as much service as possible. We don't count hours. We, we service our kids probably—I think one time I checked—uh, we service our kids about four times as often as we have to by law." Included in the number of hours they "serviced" ELs was the number of hours they received instruction in Spanish. According to ESL education law, bilingual education programs can qualify as the legally required services for ELs. Within educational linguistics, bilingual education possesses a theoretical basis in part, due to well-know theory of *Common Underlying Proficiency* (CUP; Cummins, 1981), which states that a bilingual person has an integrated language system, not two separate language systems. With an integrated language system, knowledge in one language is transferrable to the other language. ELs' competence in the L1, in this case Spanish, will lead to developing competence in English. Further, as students are grasping concepts in their L1, they are developing cognitively as content is made more accessible and not simply "watered down," as Collier and Thomas (1997) remind us:

> Developing cognitively and linguistically in L1 at least throughout the elementary school years provides a knowledge base that transfers from L1 to L2. When schooling is provided in both L1 and L2, both languages are the vehicle for strong cognitive and academic development. Linguistically, deep structure in L1 transfers to L2. (p. 41)

The benefits of learning in two languages are not just theoretical. Participation in dual language programs leads to higher academic outcomes for ELs compared to programs that only utilize English or are English-dominant (Collier & Thomas, 2001). For these empirically based reasons, bilingual education programs are legitimate forms of language service provision. Although Mrs. Neal stated that ELs at San Pedro were serviced primarily through the ESL Department, she also leaned on the theory of CUP as a rationale their model for service delivery. She explained, "But, also with the philosophy that they're being supported in their native language as well. As they're developing their literacy skills in Spanish, those are transferring to the development of English. So, it's a, it's a conjunction of services."

San Pedro educators included this "conjunction of services" into their tally for ESL services, a number that equates to approximately 300 minutes, or five hours each day. When I asked Mrs. Neal why the ELs with SLIs received such limited ESL support, she pointed to Spanish instruction as a rationalization: "They're also serviced through the dual language program as well because they have some instruction in their first language. Um, that's one of the other strategies that we use." Likewise, Mrs. DiLella attested to abundance of services the ELs received:

> The other advantage, I think, too in this school is that since I believe all, certainly most of our EL students are EL with a Spanish background, they're getting half of their day in Spanish. So, they're hitting the same concepts and they're hitting similar material in a different way in a language they might be more familiar with. So, they're also getting that support throughout the day.

The presence of Spanish instruction was also a main reason why San Pedro administrators were considering not replacing Mrs. Neal during her maternity leave. While Mrs. Neal and I were corresponding about observations, she wrote, "There will most likely not be a replacement ESOL teacher for the time that I'm out. Our service requirements are *technically* [emphasis added] fulfilled through the design of our dual language curriculum as students receive instruction in their primary language for half of the day." It is true that receiving services in the L1 will lead to development in the L2, and logically, therefore, the hours of instruction in Spanish qualify as language services for ELs; however, this practice rests heavily on the assumption that instruction during the Spanish portion of the day was *actually* delivered in the Spanish language. Throughout my observations, I found that this was a faulty presupposition.

During the entire school day at San Pedro there are 600 minutes, 300 of which were dedicated to instruction in each language. As explained by Vice Principal Fuentes, "So, we've given the teacher, in August we give the teachers sort of like a template with the time that they had to switch and what subjects had to be taught in what language." The other Vice Principal, Mrs. Solis, explained that the practitioners diligently protected the time language boundaries throughout the school day, "But, for the most part, they do stick with the, the time." Certainly there may be times when a lesson takes longer than expected and in these instances the practitioners would adjust the times, but she stated

quite proudly, "It's, pretty impressive how they've been able to work to make sure that there's equity in, in both, both languages." These boundaries, as the observational data revealed, were somewhat of an abstraction.

During fieldwork I scheduled observations during various times of the day, so I could observe a range of content areas and languages. Yet for one-third of the observations of first grade and nearly half of the observations of third grade that were scheduled during the Spanish part of the day, English was the medium of instruction instead of Spanish. In contrast, none of the observations scheduled during the English designated time of day were in Spanish. An example from the first grade classroom included student presentations of their three-dimensional replicas of various insects. Despite the official designation of this class for Spanish instruction, during the lengthy presentation time, the students and practitioner all discussed the projects in English:

> They all gathered around the perimeter of the carpet to hear each other present. Tyrese presented his project first. Mrs. Soto had her laptop on her lap and she typed notes into a word document as the students presented. Soto would ask follow-up questions to the students. For example, she asked, "And can you tell us about your insect?"
>
> Michael presented, explaining the body parts of the insect: "It got eight legs. It got a thorax." And then he asked, "Can I read my sentences?" Meanwhile, Ricky is escorted to another room because he was criticizing others' projects and talking during others' presentations. I can see that Alexa and Alonso completed their projects.
>
> Alexa stated, "My insect is a butterfly. And my dad helped me write the words and butterfly. And I color it pink and purple. I got eyes and wings." Soto responded, "Very nice."

It is unclear why this particular activity transpired in English, especially as students learned about insects in both languages through an integrated unit and were required to incorporate Spanish into the project. Similarly, instructional time in Spanish even more

frequently occurred in English in the third grade class. During one observation, in particular, Mr. Alvarez elected to play two educational English videos on the rainforest and the life cycle of butterflies, although this was the Spanish designated part of the school day. Noticing this occurrence during several observations of Spanish content, I asked Mr. Alvarez whether this was a consistent pattern even when I was not present:

> Sara: Do you find that it's hard to keep the Spanish part of the day in Spanish?
>
> Mr. Alvarez: Yes.
>
> Sara: Yeah?
>
> Mr. Alvarez: Um, for various reasons. Because it's the afternoon. Um, they just come back from lunch and recess. It's um, you know, just the afternoons are just difficult anyway. And then in a second language and a lot of them are really low in Spanish . . . . So, it's really, really challenging. And, you know, I had to modify a lot. Sometimes I would um, you know, if I did a lesson and I said, "Oh, that didn't go so well. Tomorrow I'm gonna just do it in English." Because I don't want them to miss the content, you know. It's half of their day and if they're not getting anything, it's like they're missing half a day of teaching.

In the end Mr. Alvarez concluded, "So, I would rather sacrifice the language than the content" because he continued, "Like I said, with the afternoons being so challenging, it's you know, sometimes it's hit and miss. It's hit and miss." Indeed, Mr. Alvarez faced many difficulties in the afternoon with students' motivation and energy levels dipping and with more limited support from other colleagues. He only had the support of Miss Trevino, a paraprofessional, for one hour in the afternoon. After 2:00pm Mr. Alvarez was the only practitioner in the class. Significantly, because these times were so challenging,

he requested that I did not observe the class during the later portion of the school day. He detailed the difficulty of trying to delivery instruction in Spanish toward the end of the day:

> After you leave, you know, you've been here 2 to 3pm. 3 to 3:45 they're still here. We, you know, that's like the hardest for time. They're so close to leaving. They're exhausted from the day. Um, so that's usually when I'll have like an educational video either based on science we've been working on or something for them to relax.

The affective (i.e., emotional) and logistical factors of teaching Spanish in the afternoon compounded, resulting in him "switching up" the instruction into English. When asked how frequently he had to do this, he responded: "I would say at minimum two times a week."

Likewise observations of Mrs. Soto's inclusion class during the Spanish part of the day occurred in English every one of three observations. Mrs. Soto claimed that Spanish instruction was not really beneficial for the ELs within her class, because they are not Spanish dominant; in fact, she found that the ELs with disabilities often show higher proficiency and interest in English:

> So they feel more comfortable with that [English]. What, what do they hear on the playground or outside? Or what do they speak at, you know, with their cousins at home? I mean, you know, I know somebody at home. I mean, I grew up speaking both languages um, but again, you know, with my friends most of the time we spoke in English and then the books in school were English, and so that became more comfortable.

Believing that the ELs with disabilities within her class were dominant in English, the necessity to provide Spanish instruction consistently in the afternoon seemed irrelevant, although this was precisely how Alexa, Alonso, and Christian were supposed to receive the bulk of their language services.

The lack of ESL services afforded to ELs with disabilities was validated through Spanish instruction because the school was, in Mrs. Neal's words, "technically" fulfilling the legal requirements for services. The reality within the classrooms was that the L1 support that these learners were supposed to receive during the afternoons was simply not consistently delivered, thereby resulting in a categorical underservicing of the ELs with disabilities.

ESL Through English General Education

Another rationale for why ESL services were not provided by an ESL practitioner for ELs with disabilities was that these students were already receiving language support from the general education practitioners—in this case Mrs. Soto and Mr. Alvarez—during English content. Further, ESL support was also purported to be provided by special education practitioners. However, as Mr. Medina indicated earlier, he had other more pressing concerns when supporting ELs with disabilities, including motivation, affirmation, and behavior management. Moreover, he questioned whether the expectation for ELs to become bilingual when they already have a disability was a reasonable goal: "I don't know how desperate the need is. Because um, since these are a self-imposed regulations, since we have all expectations of how well we want the students to perform in this other language, well then, I don't know the expectations that we have are unreasonable and they just need to be adjusted." With the exception of Mrs. Soto, who at least took some ESL education coursework, none of the general and special education practitioners held certifications in ESL even though they were expected to provide ESL instructional support.

Despite not having formal training in ESL, many practitioners indicated that there were many opportunities to consult and collaborate with ESL practitioners during common planning times, which occurred once to three times per week. Mr. Alvarez detailed the consulting process with ESL practitioners:

> So, what I do is, when I'm creating lesson plans, I'll consult with her [Mrs. DiLella], what is she doing with the, you know, with her groups. And they can integrate that with what we're doing, or maybe we can, you know, Mr. Medina can use some of those strategies in his teaching um, with those kids.

With practitioners from same grade meeting together for common planning, ESL practitioner Mrs. DiLella shared that there was ample opportunity for general education practitioners both to collaborate and consult with her: "So, I think the fact that, I think actually the model works and there's ample to collaborate." But, she also indicated that the "ample" time for consulting was more theoretical: "But, *in theory*, [emphasis added] you know, if Mr. Alvarez or Mr. Medina were like, 'You know with these, I'm having trouble reaching these kids. Do you have any ideas?' because we do have opportunities to come together or, you know, even if it's just in the hallway real quick." The collaboration proved entirely theoretical as Mrs. DiLella later shared that she was never asked to consult about the particular ELs with disabilities within the third grade inclusion class. Opportunities for collaboration and consultation about ELs with disabilities, Mr. Holloway averred, were slim because of the rostering practice: "We don't see a lot of collaboration, 'cause they [practitioners] don't share students; they don't share the same space. They're in the same grade. They're assigned to the same grade level." He opined further about the lack of collaboration between ESL and special education practitioners:

> If they have an IEP, whether they're EL or not, the EL teacher only really pulls them to do ACCESS testing. They're with the special ed track, you know what I'm saying? So, why would we need to collaborate about those students? I'm not doing work with them like you are. You're doing small group or doing whatever. I'm working with the EL students. And vice versa: Why would a special ed teacher at that grade level need to go to the EL teacher and say, "Tell me about so-and-so that you're working with? 'Cause I'm also working with them."

Consultation about ELs with disabilities became a moot point when the ESL practitioner who would be consulted about the students—in this case Mrs. DiLella—only interacted with the ELs with disabilities once in the winter to administer the ACCESS proficiency test. Yet significantly, in the case of the first grade inclusion class, ESL practitioner Mrs. Neal actually did interact with the students, albeit if only on Wednesday mornings. Sharing the same students opened up the opportunity for some collaboration between the practitioners, as explained by Mrs. Neal:

> Though I'm not physically in there more than once a week, I collaborate regularly with Mrs. Soto and Ms. Calderon, so I supply, you know, different supports for them. We as a first grade team collaborate, so it's all the same learning targets and assessments. And I basically provide modifications or accommodations to all of them. Um, so Mrs. Soto has a lot of resources even when I'm not physically in the classroom.

In addition to consulting with Mrs. Neal and receiving modified materials from her, Mrs. Soto explained how she personally provided ESL services for the ELs within her class. She explained, "So they're still getting that ESL support from me 'cause I'm doing the English with them." Mrs. Soto asserted that because the ELs were instructed in English, they received ESL services. Without differentiated instruction or supports, however, ESL supports were not being offered; instead ELs with disabilities were expected to understand academic content in a language they still were learning. Perplexed by Mrs. Soto's understanding of ESL services, I asked later how ESL services were provided

through her instruction and she responded, “We’re still providing ESL because they’re learning in the English language, so that support they’re already receiving.” Mrs. Soto again equated instruction in English to ESL services, and when asked for specific examples of language support, she then offered the following:

> I’ll sit, sometimes I’m just pulling them ah, in our little, like bean table. You know, and having them over. Um, again, it’s sometimes vocabulary support. Uh, it might be writing support, depending on what it is. Like if it’s a shared reading day and they need that support. Or I’m just going around and checking, “Okay, are...”, you know, “...this is what I need you to know.” Um, and then I’m supporting in that way. So, it just depends again, on what I s-, like see their needs are and what kind of support I see that they’re needing at that moment.

However, in none of my observations of first grade did Mrs. Soto group the ELs with disabilities during instruction or provide more tailored support to them during reading or writing. She often circulated the room to check on students, but this was not a specific accommodation for ELs with disabilities. At times in the third grade class instruction and directions were not provided with scaffolding. Take the following for example:

> Mr. Alvarez then directs the students to write the meaning of *stem* and *root* and then finish all the drawings. They are supposed to complete two worksheets after that. But, he gave the direction in such rapid fire that I, as a native speaker, could not really understand what he wanted them to do.

Here, Mr. Alvarez did not support the ELs’ understanding of the four-step directions through providing linguistic amplification, such as repeating the message in alternate forms, supporting oral language input with written language, inquiring about ELs understanding, and scaffolding the process in stages. Such examples call into question whether he was actively supporting ELs’ linguistic and academic development in the classroom, though he was purportedly the primary practitioner for this responsibility.

The notion that general and special education practitioners (who did not have ESL training) were providing ESL support to ELs with disabilities became even more implausible with the discovery that most of the practitioners did not know which students qualified for both ESL and special education services. Across the board, the focal practitioners were not in agreement about who were actually ELs with disabilities. For example, Ms. Calderon even by the end of the study thought one particular student with an LD, Tiffy, was an EL, when she, in fact, just was a bilingual student (who did not qualify for ESL services). She said of Tiffy and her learning needs in math:

> I'm finding that Tiffy, which is, I guess, one of the ones that fit in your, what you're looking at. Tiffy sometimes knows how to add, you know, 2 + 3, but then might not know how to write it 'cause she doesn't know what that number looks like.

Even during the conclusion of my fieldwork at San Pedro in late May, Ms. Calderon was still under the assumption that Tiffy was an EL. Regarding the same class of students, Mrs. Soto's knowledge about who was an EL with a disability in her class waivered throughout the initial interview. First, she said, "I don't think any of them really have been identified special ed. I could be wrong." Later in the interview, however, she added, "I just remembered, maybe, I think there is one student is both EL and special ed. Two now [pause] now I'm thinking two. You know, two." While Ms. Calderon and Mrs. Soto had discrepant ideas on who was actually an EL, Mrs. Neal, the ESL practitioner, was the only one who correctly identified which students were ELs with disabilities. The same confusion over students' status as ELs and/or learners with disabilities was present in third grade. Mr. Alvarez during a meeting pulled out a stack of flashcards, each one had a student's name listed on it and featured as a profile of the learner. He flipped through the

stack reading the names of the ELs with disabilities, not knowing who qualified without his notes. The confusion about which students were ELs with disabilities is some ways was unsurprising given the racial and cultural heritage of the students: The majority of the school was Latino/a and either spoke Spanish or came from a family in which Spanish was once historically the home language. However, it is reasonable to argue that if practitioners themselves did not know which students were ELs within their classes and did not have training in ESL, they most likely were not providing tailored support to these learners based on their language proficiency.

Small Group Instruction Takes Care of It All

The negotiation of ESL services at San Pedro also came through the form of small group instruction, a model of learning heavily incorporated throughout the school day. Small group instruction was an essential component of their pedagogy. Mrs. Fuentes, a vice principal at the school, articulated why as a school they emphasized small group instruction: "'Cause it's part of our philosophy. We really do feel that we have to try to meet all the learners where they're at in order to really move them forward." Another administrator identified how small group instruction fostered targeted, differentiated instruction. She explained:

> And I have group of students after teaching a whole group that are struggling still with whether it's adding, you know, two digit numbers—whatever the skill is that's being taught—then I'm able to pull and it, and everyday does not need to be the same group of students. It's just when, after I see that these kids need extra support one-on-one.

In applying this pedagogical stance, small group instruction occurred during nearly every observation. For instance, small group instruction in the first grade inclusion class occurred for approximately 2 to 3 hours per day primarily through guided reading.

As a part of the bilingual curriculum, guided reading first occurred in English during the mornings for roughly 80 minutes and then in Spanish also for 80 minutes in the afternoon. Typically, one group would receive small group instruction from general education practitioner Mrs. Soto while the other students worked together on their assigned literacy-based task. When Ms. Calderon and Mrs. Neal, special education and ESL practitioners, respectively, were present they would also provide small group instruction, and during a typical class each practitioner would teach two or three groups of students. Similarly, in third grade small group instruction occurred during language arts in English during which Mr. Medina, as a special educator, would teach two groups of students and Mr. Alvarez, as the general education practitioner, would teach another two groups. Like Mrs. Soto's class, the remaining student groups would collaborate on a task with a literacy focus.

The groups of students for both English and Spanish guided reading were based on reading level, not based on the presence of a language learning need or special needs. The reading level groupings allowed practitioners to utilize differentiated materials, focusing on the literacy learning needs of the students. Mrs. DiLella, an ESL practitioner, attested to the value of this small group instruction, allowing her to "tailor things more to the interests and needs of a particular group." In the third grade class, the differentiated reading groups allowed Mr. Medina to implement a reading intervention to learners later in the year, and he was pleased with the results: "The first one is um, the LLI[7] Program, which is um, Fountas and Pinnell's Reading Recovery Program. Um, and so it's small group um, pull-out uh, very uh, intensive focused on that specific level and the specific

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[7] Leveled Literacy Intervention Program

skills that are related to that level." He discussed further the benefits of this new intervention: "But, what's good about that is even the low performers who don't have IEPs are benefitting from, you know, the extra support." With the focus on differentiated reading levels, and not disability or language background, special education practitioners, like Mr. Medina, and ESL practitioners often provided instruction to students who were not on their caseloads. Mrs. Neal discussed how she often taught students who were not ELs, although she was the first grade ESL practitioner:

> So, it's not like I necessarily have all ELs in one group. If I'm focusing on a particular reading target and that also is applicable to non-ELs, they're invited to my group as well. What I'm getting, basically is all three of us have the same guided reading groups listed, but there are other target that Ms. Calderon needs to meet and that I need to meet as well.

With the focus on specific literacy targets, the learning needs of the students became essentialized; that is, the learners' needs predominately became a matter of mastering a particular literacy skill. Yet because such instruction was tailored to the individual literacy needs of the ELs with disabilities, San Pedro deemed that they were "getting serviced." Mrs. DiLella explained how *all* of the needs of the students were satisfied through small group instruction: "We're coming up with a game plan together, so that students can just receive more small group and that it's more of a scaffolded or differentiated delivery of instruction. But, that we're all teaching. You know, we're all hitting the same skills at that students level." With the emphasis on students developing particular reading skills, the lines between special education and ESL services were blurred, as Mr. Holloway delineated:

> Yeah, there's definitely an overlap and I would say the predom-, I don't know, you know, are EL strategies and techniques, you know . . . . So, yeah, when you look at a grade level and deficits, they're gonna be

> sometimes almost identical. What an EL provider and the special education provider, when they came and did their gamut of assessments, even though they're all completely different assessment, or potentially could be, they come at the exact same conclusions.

The school's psychologist echoed the thinking that the literacy needs of the students could lead to similar small group instruction regardless of whether the student had EL or special needs. She said,

> And I'd say especially depending on the teachers and what they're doing, there is probably even that overlap between what the EL teachers are doing from the language component versus what some of the, the special ed teachers are doing when they're dealing with the students who have the language and the reading and writing disabilities. So, I think that definitely is overlap with some of it.

It is true that ELs' literacy needs can often mirror the needs of students with LDs; however, the claim of practitioners "hitting" specific literacy skills in small groups created an ethical dilemma: If small group literacy instruction covers all learning needs then that is to say that special education and ESL services tackle identical instructional foci. Mrs. Neal, for instance said, "Even if English for the other students is their native language, they still have a lot of language needs. It's just that they're very early readers, early speakers." Consequently, she concluded, "Those are things [specific skills] we work on no matter what." However, as demonstrated previously through comparative observations, ESL literacy instruction was not the exact replica of special education and vice versa. Based on observations of the first and third grade inclusion classes, students with disabilities often required different supports—affective and behavioral in nature—that extended beyond discrete literacy skills. Yet this notion that "needs are needs, period" was prevalent. Mrs. Flemming, the ESL Coordinator, expressed this belief:

> And we provide the same interventions for everybody and then on top of whatever they would need they get additional support for special ed. So, it's just kind of one of those things that we all push in, we all provide the support, so it's not as um, the difference is not as defined as it would be in some other schools.

Because of the focus on literacy needs, other practitioners mostly understood special education and ESL as similar; in fact, when I asked several ESL and special education practitioners to identify differences in instruction between the two, they could only identify the following differences:

(a) the permanence of the "obstacle" (i.e., an ESL need is temporary whereas a disability is permanent)

(b) practitioner expectations (i.e., understanding that ELs will eventually with time be able to grasp a skill whereas learners with disabilities may never)

(c) types of assessment modifications (e.g., an ESL practitioner will adapt vocabulary and sentence structure while a special education practitioner will eliminate the number of answer items)

The perception that students—ELs, students with disabilities, or both—have generic literacy needs resulted in the negotiation of ESL services: ESL services were deemed "covered" for ELs with disabilities simply because they participated in small group instruction based on literacy level in English and Spanish. However, ESL services are more than a matter of literacy level and are not simply a duplication of special education services, despite this indication from practitioners and administrators.

Preservation of Special Education

While ESL services for ELs with disabilities were seen as negotiable—able to be substituted for instruction in (a) Spanish, (b) English general education, and (c) small

groups—special education services were more carefully preserved through designated time with special educators and paraprofessionals. Using a coteaching model, special educators at San Pedro would primarily provide individualized instruction for students with disabilities and were responsible for implementing the Specially Designed Instruction[8] in the IEPs. Their supports occurred for approximately 3 hours each day for a total of 15 hours a week (Table 10, p. 121). Yet it was not just the amount of support that the ELs with disabilities received, it was how more vigorously special education services were "protected" that stood out in sharp contrast to ESL services.

The rostering practice itself speaks to the school's effort to preserve special education services. ELs with disabilities were immediately rostered in the inclusion classroom to maximize the amount of time they received supports for their disability. Further, the amount of staff within each department indicated the importance of special education. Although San Pedro had more than twice the number of ELs (*N* = 143) than students with disabilities (*N* = 65), the San Pedro ESL and Special Departments were both staffed with the same number of specialists—four. Having four special education practitioners, albeit is not a large number of staff, was still substantial considering the ESL Department had double the students. Staffing priorities also emerged for long-term substitutes. As discussed previously in the findings, Mrs. Neal's replacement while on maternity leave was debated amongst the administration, but this was not the case for another practitioner who was also pregnant but worked in the Special Education Department; she was immediately replaced without debate, as Mr. Holloway explained:

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[8] Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) is the part of the IEP that identifies what specific services, accommodations, and teaching approaches the student requires as a result of her disability.

"We have two teachers on maternity leave right now. One's an EL teacher. One's a special ed teacher. Are they gonna find a replacement for the special ed teacher? Oh, they don't need it for EL. This was what was kind of the thought because there's not really any legal matters connected to EL. That was what the conversation was about."

Connected to service delivery for special education was the clear understanding that providing special education services as stipulated by IEPs was a very serious legal requirement, and therefore, unlike for ESL services, could not be manipulated. For the students she supported, Ms. Calderon described how central IEPs were to service delivery. "I think again it goes back to going to their IEPs and really yeah, um, and providing, I mean . . . looking at their IEPs and seeing what exactly are their goals, what are the SDIs that are implemented in the IEPs that really, you know, providing that." It was not just meeting the students' educational needs that played an important role in the preservation of special education services: Threat of legal action from parents also mattered. In fact, the legal imperatives of special education were often invoked as a reason why these services must occur, although this same argument was not applied for ESL education law. Mr. Alvarez first shared about potential lawsuits as guiding the decision to preserve special education services for ELs with disabilities: "The IEP is a contract that the parents sign it and if we don't follow it, there could be legal troubles. And of course a school doesn't want to have the legal troubles, so we definitely have to prioritize one thing over another, unfortunately." Mr. Holloway identified the pressing concern of litigation arising from not following special education law: "There is no special education without law. I mean, you have to start with law. It actually starts with federal mandates and then trickles down to states and then districts and schools. So, at its very inception special education is

a legal matter . . . Not purely legal matter." He continued to share, "So I think statistically the amount of legal cases [are] attached to Least Restrictive Environment, FAPE."[9] It is true that legal and financial consequences, such as due process hearings and lawsuits, can result from schools not providing services for students with disabilities, yet ESL is a legally required service as well. Why then did practitioners not have the same level of concern for ESL services? Mr. Holloway, as a special educator, attempted to answer this question:

> I would imagine just anecdotally that's there's a very high correlation, um, many of which also are first and second generation immigrants to the United States, who, you know, some of which are undocumented, you know, in that process. So, I think there's kind of a lot of interplay and assumptions that go along with, you know, they're not even very defensible themselves. You know, but someone who has a child with a disability can pretty much run the gamut. They can kind of do whatever they want. They can demand whatever they want from the school. They can demand whatever they want of local municipalities, you know, strictly based on the, the disabling factor of their particular, there's a lot of rights, you know associated with students with IEPs compared to, well, you're just learning English, you know?

In Mr. Holloway's perspective concerns about EL parents pursuing legal action against a school were assuaged by a lack of advocacy that may stem from their own language abilities, knowledge of the school system, and personal sense of security.

When it came to special education services, it is evident San Pedro followed the letter but perhaps not spirit of the law, and this became evident through the lack of special education supports during the afternoon when students were learning in Spanish. Although students with disabilities continued to receive select accommodations like preferential seating or extended test time, they did not receive any differentiated or

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[9] Free Appropriate Public Education

tailored instruction during Spanish. But, some of the focal ELs with disabilities had LDs in reading, which proved significant during the afternoon when content instruction included Spanish literacy. Ms. Calderon, the first grade special education practitioner, shared that because IEP goals only pertained to English-content, at the school services from a special educator were not provided during Spanish instruction:

> When they're teaching Spanish because really IEP goals are not in Spanish, so the support, no support for special education is in Spanish. 'Cause that's one of the um, it's one of the challenges of this school in terms of that, being a dual-language school and servicing kids with special needs . . .

Mr. Medina also identified the reason why special education supports were only provided during English content: "Like basically um, Spanish language acquisition is not mandated by the state. And so, it's not mandated in IEPs." Further, Dr. Dalton, the School Psychologist, explained how state testing played a role in the divorce between Spanish instruction and special education support: "So, when it comes down to it, we want all the kids to, we want all the kids to be able to graduate being fluent in both languages, being fully bilingual." But, she went on to discuss, "When the state looks at everything, it's how are these kids doing in English. There are no state testing for how they're doing in Spanish . . . . When it comes down to it, English is the language they have to learn."

Mr. Alvarez shared about the challenges of the discontinuation of special education push-in support when the Spanish part of the day began:

> Um, we're trying to, I mean, we're trying to figure out ways to get those kids services in Spanish as well because most of the kids, I, actually will say all of the kids um, who have IEPs are also really low in Spanish. And so we want to get those services to them as well.

Mrs. Soto in first grade as well struggled to provided tailored instruction during Spanish instruction: “The special ed piece then for me again, you know, I understand um, differentiation and so on. But, it’s also difficult if I’m here by myself with some of these students to provide the special ed piece of and really, you know, targeting everyone’s IEP goals.” When I asked her whether she thought Spanish special education support would be beneficial, she responded: “Of course. Of course. Um, it, it seems to me . . . because she [Ms. Calderon] is bilingual, but [what she] explained to me is that the IEP is written in English.” As documented earlier, both Mr. Alvarez and Mrs. Soto were spread too thin during the Spanish portion of the day, making tailored instruction and in some cases any content instruction difficult to provide. Mr. Holloway corroborated the difficulty of not having special education support in Spanish:

> I think particularly in bilingual chartered schools um, that’s a real issue is that intersection—you know, the intersection you’re kind of researching and try to tap into. I think that’s where the rubber meets the road. Um, so the biggest challenges we have from a programmatic standpoint, from an instructional standpoint, from a management and behavior standpoint, has been the intersection of students with IEPs when they’re in the Spanish block.

He shared further that as the Special Education Coordinator, he tracked data on particular students with disabilities, finding that behavioral issues arose more often during instruction in Spanish. Such was the case for some of the students, in particular, Felix who was carried out of the classroom by Mr. Tom. Not providing support during the Spanish-designated time of the day created a dualism that does not exist for bilingual students with disabilities—that ELs’ disabilities only manifest in one language. Surely, when a bilingual or EL student has a disability, the effects of the disability do not appear only in one language, as if they possess two separate brains (i.e., one for English and one

for Spanish). Educational linguists refute this notion of a Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP; Cummins, 1984)— where a bilingual's skills and abilities in one language are separate from another language—but instead assert that languages form an integrated, connected system within a person. Yet as the services were delivered for special education at San Pedro, this conceptually did not seem to be the case.

Some ELs Need ESL, Others Do Not

Finally, ESL services were not provided for ELs with disabilities partially because of the personnel's beliefs about the language proficiency and skills of their ELs. This emerged as the final theme during data analysis. The belief that ELs were actually not "true ELs" became evident throughout fieldwork, and the reasons for this perception derived from (a) a deficit view of the ELs' language abilities and (b) the assertion that ELs were misidentified for services. In light of these beliefs, the impetus to provide language services to the ELs with disabilities was diminished.

They Have Neither Language

Semilingualism—a concept that has been severely criticized by those in educational linguistics—is the state of being neither proficient in an L1 nor an L2 (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). These types of language learners have also been dubbed "non-nons" or "semilinguals" to indicate their deficits in both languages. Although the terms *semilingual* or *non-non* were not referenced specifically by San Pedro staff, the perception that their ELs were limited across all of their languages became influential in the implementation of ESL services. Mrs. DiLella, an ESL practitioner, stated in an interview, "The fact is a lot of our students come in at a language deficit." She elaborated further:

> What's really challenging is when you have students that really have neither language. And so, their entire day is a struggle because they're not strong in Spanish and they're trying to understand what's going on. And then, you know, they may understand "Get up. Sit down. Sharpen your pencil," but they don't have the academic knowledge in the language.

The Vice Principal of kindergarten through second grade, Mrs. Solis, also initially identified broad language deficits in their student population, "There's no language that's been really, you know, developed." However, as she proceeded to share about the students' abilities, she indicated ways in which the learners were bilingual and not semilingual. "So, they're able to listen and speak in Spanish and/or in English, but the other more difficult um, concepts, especially when it comes to writing, that's the most difficult one in any, actually in any language, not just in English or in Spanish." Mr. Alvarez, a bilingual speaker of Spanish and English, also attested that students' limited abilities were more confined to literacy; although the ELs may be bilingual, they were not yet biliterate. He said, "If their parents are uneducated then they're not gonna, you know, read to them in Spanish and it makes it much, much more harder for them." Frequently, staff spoke of the assumed linguistic and resource deficits of the students' home communities as the genesis of the semilingualism. Yet another administrator divulged that the students were not bilingual and as such, San Pedro was actually not a bilingual school:

> Here, in my opinion, we're considered more of a heritage language program, which means that our population is supposed to be Spanish dominant because of their last names; they're Latino. But, they don't dominant the language, the Spanish language.

In fact, this administrator stated that their population was 95% English-dominant. The focal ELs' assessments in Spanish and English reflected this dominance in English. For

instance, all four focal ELs with disabilities in third grade performed lower in Spanish in either reading *or* writing with Rafael and Zoe performing lower in *both* reading and writing in Spanish (Table 12).

Table 12

Summary of Grade 3 Focal Students' Second Trimester Grades

	Reading		Writing	
	English	Spanish	English	Spanish
Bruno	Basic	Below Basic	Basic	Basic
Darell [a]	Below Basic	Below Basic	Basic	Below Basic
Dominick	Basic	Basic	Basic	Below Basic
Rafael	Basic	Below Basic	Basic	Below Basic
Zoe	Basic	Below Basic	Basic	Below Basic

Note. At San Pedro a Proficient mark indicates a score of 85-96%; a Basic mark indicates a score of 70-84%; a Below Basic mark indicates a score of 69% or less.
[a] Darell was not identified with a disability, but he was an EL placed in the inclusion classroom because he was suspected of having a disability

This pattern was also evident amongst the first grade ELs with SLIs when examining their performance on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Evaluación del Desarrollo de Lecto-escritura (EDL), reading assessments for school-age students for English and Spanish, respectively (Table 13). During the first two semesters, the first grade focal students performed lower in Spanish by a range of one to three levels, suggesting a dominance in English, and not Spanish despite their identification as ELs.

Table 13

Summary of English and Spanish Reading Assessments

	DRA Level		EDL Level	
	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 1	Trimester 2
Alexa	4	6	3	4
Alonso	3	4	2	1
Christian	3	4	1	1

Note. For first graders in their second trimester reading level goals for the L1 (Spanish) were levels 8-12 and for the L2 (English) were 4-6.

If the ELs with disabilities were not dominant in Spanish then the aforementioned rationale that ESL services could be substituted for Spanish instruction was illogical. Providing Spanish instruction instead of ESL support is a legitimate practice when the content becomes more accessible through the use of that language; however, for ELs with disabilities who have stronger skills in English, content will actually become less accessible when Spanish instruction is offered as a substitute. More simply, receiving instruction in Spanish is a viable language program if and only if the ELs are dominant in Spanish, otherwise an additional barrier to learning is created. More significantly, San Pedro's practices bring to light to two competing and mutually exclusive reasons for why ELs with disabilities did not require ESL support: These students did not need ESL because they received Spanish instruction as Spanish-dominant students, and yet on the other hand, they did not require ESL services because they were actually English-dominant.

They Are Not "True" ELs

In addition to not being proficient in either language, another pervasive reason why ELs with disabilities did not need ESL services was skepticism over the accuracy of students' institutional identification as ELs. Simply, some students were believed to be

"real" ELs while others were not. Significantly, these doubts were not strictly confined to ELs with disabilities but pertained to the school's EL population in general. Before their skepticisms can be examined in detail, the identification process for ELs must first be explicated. Identification as an EL typically involves two steps: (a) completion of the Home Language Survey (HLS) by parents or guardians, and (b) administration of the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT). The Home Language Survey is the most commonly used method in the United States for identifying students who have limited English language proficiency (Zehr, 2010), and it was selected by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as the designated method for identifying ELs. The survey is given to parents of new students and it features questions pertaining to the language practices of the family. Based on the answers of the survey, students are given a standardized proficiency test, W-APT, and it is the score on this language proficiency test that determines whether a student is identified as an EL.

This identification process caused many to question whether students were actual ELs or not. School Psychologist Dalton, made this distinction in an interview: "'Cause we have kids who are EL who if you ask them what language they prefer to speak, it's English. Or you speak to them in Spanish and they respond in English. So, I think it's also figuring out, some of them have the EL designation, but they're not true EL kids." Mrs. Soto speculated about the role of the Home Language Survey, in leading to misidentification of students as ELs: "I think it goes back to the um, we have a Home Language Survey or something and I, I just wonder sometimes if parents are honest on it just because if they maybe say, 'Yeah, my child speaks Spanish. I want them in that school because they're learning the Spanish language.'" Here, Mrs. Soto was referring to

a question on the survey that asks “Does the student speak a language(s) other than English?” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2013). She offered another alternative explanation beyond parents’ dishonesty—someone in the family besides the parents speaks Spanish (e.g., a grandparent). Because of the presence of this family member in the home, the parents indicate “Spanish” in response to the question “What language(s) is/are spoken in your home?” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2013) even if the child only speaks English. For this reason, Mrs. Soto concluded, “And again, so I don’t know how um, true those surveys are and I don’t know whether they’re really helping us identify those students.” As an ESL practitioner, Mrs. DiLella discussed the possibility of how a student who only speaks English could be identified as an EL based on her W-APT performance:

> So, then you have a student who may not speak any Spanish, but, you know, their uncle living with them does. And because of their general, you know, if they’re a little bit behind in their English skills and they take the test. If no one at home spoke Spanish, they still would have done poorly on that test because they’re generally lacking language.

It should be noted here that WIDA’s ACCESS test is not without its limitations, especially in regards to students with already identified disabilities. Despite reporting evidence of content and construct validity in measuring ELs’ language proficiency (WIDA, 2004), there are no reported data demonstrating validity for students with disabilities who may or may not be ELs. Instead, WIDA (2013) states that the test is valid if students with disabilities are provided the accommodations specified in their IEPs, as doing so “levels the playing field for students with disabilities, providing an equitable opportunity to demonstrate what they can do” (para. 3). Testing students with disabilities presents a legitimate concern, because to date WIDA only offers conjecture about the

validity of the results for students with disabilities. Significantly, the practitioners' concerns in the identification of ELs lay not with the ACCESS testing but focused on the Home Language Survey.

Yet in contrast to the identification processes for ESL, there were very few questions or reservations about identifying ELs for special education services. Although the school used a multimeasure approaching, examining trimester grades, DRA, EDL, and PSSA scores, attendance records, and a behavior assessment, BASC (Behavior Assessment System for Children), the school's psychologist and speech pathologist did not test ELs in any language other than English. During her five years at San Pedro the school psychologist shared that all assessments have been conducted in English: "I pretty much do is all English side. Um, it's really never an issue for the kids because even if Spanish is their home language or it's their primary, so much of my testing, not all of it, some of it's written, but a lot of it's also just the spoken language." She also explained that translators have never been used during her tenure. According to the Departments of Justice and Education (2015) and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC; 2010) this testing practice defies federal requirements and ethical education practice. The CEC states "Children with exceptionalities who are members of ethnic and multicultural groups should be tested in their dominant language by examiners who are fluent in that language and familiar with the cultural heritage of the children being tested" (p. 32). Despite this, practitioners only expressed concerns about the identification of language needs—not disability— cautioning that the Home Language Survey can lead to students being tested who are not actually ELs. But, specifically regarding the focal ELs with

disabilities in this study, none of the practitioners raised questions about whether these students were erroneously identified for testing due to the Home Language Survey.

Despite this identification of an English learning need, some personnel questioned the EL label because many of the ELs (with and without disabilities) at the school were not dominant in the L1. Indeed, examination of student assessments demonstrated that the focal ELs with disabilities did not appear to be Spanish dominant (see Tables 12-13, pp. 175-176). But, Mr. Holloway identified the difficulty in making the determination of whether a student is Spanish dominant by problematizing how *dominance* is conceptualized: "You have to really splice out what does it really mean to be Spanish dominant. Number one, what is the home situation like. And you can just say, well, the both parents speak Spanish, for example, at home. Um, that's not necessarily the type of Spanish that we're assessing for." Drawing connections between the students' linguistic abilities and the resources of the community, he went on to share a story about a recent encounter with a parent who wanted to assist her daughter, an EL with an LD, but could not because she did not acquire academic Spanish herself. He detailed, "She said, 'I speak Spanish. My husband speaks Spanish. But we can't help her with any of her Spanish homework.' Um, and she said, 'You know, I'm embarrassed by that, but just being honest like, we speak Spanish, but kind of slang-type of Spanish.'" Mr. Medina, a special educator, identified the importance of understanding the mismatch between the Spanish used in San Pedro during instruction and the Spanish used in the surrounding community, correlating available resources to linguistic form:

> There’s a difference between intellectual Spanish, academic Spanish and colloquial Spanish . . . And so, yeah, most of the students, I mean, if you’re sensitive to the, to the neighborhood or, it’s a socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhood. So, you know, even though they are Spanish dominant, socioeconomically they’re gonna be in the lower strata or less they live elsewhere. Um, and so with that, again, there does come more of non-academic terminology and slang and all that kind of jazz.

Mr. Medina’s and Mr. Holloway’s thoughts about the language abilities of ELs in Spanish offered one explanation as to why students who are identified as ELs demonstrate a lower proficiency in Spanish. Yet in many ways the personnel’s understanding of bilingualism was unexpectedly rigid, equating proficiency or dominance in a language with the ability to produce standard language forms (i.e., the idealized or “correct” variety of a language), like those prevalent in schooling. Further, some questioned the EL label because the learners demonstrated a lower proficiency in the L1, indicating that an EL in their understanding must be someone who has dominance or mastery of the L1. But, ELs do not need to have complete or even dominant proficiency in the L1 to qualify for ESL services; instead, by definition, they need to have an English learning need. Just as misconceptions about ELs’ proficiency do not invalidate the EL label, potential limitations of the Home Language Survey do not make the identification of *all* students receiving L2 support void. More significantly, even though language and content assessments for ELs made their learning needs opaque for teachers, none of the participating practitioners raised concerns about the veracity of the *focal* ELs with disabilities’ identification as ELs, despite my persistent questions about these students’ abilities in Spanish and English. Their qualms and second-guesses pertained to *other* ELs in their classes. According to the practitioners the ELs with disabilities were “true” ELs.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

At William Elementary the themes of (a) *Logistics Matter*, (b) *Some Services Are (Not) Negotiable*, (c) *Some ELs Need ESL, Others Do Not*, and (d) *School Culture Matters* emerged during data collection and analysis, and despite the schools' disparate demographics and available resources each of these themes resurfaced during fieldwork at San Pedro School except for school culture, which proved less consequential. Through these themes, it was revealed that at both sites when ELs had identified disabilities, language services and supports diminished in some cases and vanished in others. Utilizing the framework of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), or the examination of overlapping minority social categories and their impact on individuals' life opportunities, I will delineate how at three embedded levels, ranging from the micro to macro—social category, arenas of influence, and historicity— the intersectional identities of ELs with disabilities were reduced to a single category of significance (Figure 1, p. 31).

Social Category

In the core layer of intersectionality is *social category*, which examines how embodied social minority categories (e.g., disability, native language) that an individual possesses intersect (Anthias, 2012). Here, Anthias (2012) raises a critical question in intersectional theory as social categories are examined: "What does it mean to intersect?" (p. 12). As emphatically argued by some theorists (e.g., Yuval-Davis, 2009), intersectionality must be more than claiming a person is this *plus* that (i.e., an EL *plus* a person with a disability). The mere adding of identities fails to address the essence of

intersectionality—the intersection. Anthias (2012) reminds us that an intersectional analysis involves examining how the minority social categories "are affected by and affect one another" (p. 13) and more specifically, how they form an interconnected whole (Yuval-Davis, 2009).

In this study, minority social categories create a unique experience, as the disability and language proficiency of the child intersect, but how are they, in Anthias' (2012) words, "affected by and affect one another?" That is, how is being an EL with a disability different from being an EL *and* a learner with a disability? To answer this question, I will not discuss the focal ELs with disabilities in this study collectively, because each had a unique experience with varying disabilities as well as L1 and L2 proficiencies, and therefore they cannot be essentialized as having a singular experience; rather I will illustrate how the social categories of *EL* and *(dis)ability* intersect for two of the focal students, Bruno and Ahmed.

Bruno

Bruno, a third grade boy at San Pedro, was placed in the inclusion class because of his identified disabilities, an LD in reading and math. At the time of the study his proficiency in English was assessed at the "Emerging/Developing" stage in the ACCESS proficiency test with a score of 2.8 (see Table 14 for a general description of Bruno's abilities in English).

Table 14

General Description of an Emerging/Developing EL's Linguistic Abilities

Emerging (2)	Developing (3)
EL can understand or use general language related to the content areas.	EL can understand or use general and some specific language of the content areas.
EL can understand or use phrases or short sentences.	EL can understand or use expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs.
EL can understand or use oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support.	EL can understand or use oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative, or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic, or interactive support.

Note. These descriptors are provided by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System for the WIDA Consortium (2014).

With an LD in math (i.e., dyscalculia), students like Bruno will often experience the following: difficulty in learning math facts, problem-solving skills, and measurement; unfamiliarity with math vocabulary terms; and affected long-term memory in math (National Center for Learning Disabilities, n.d.). For Bruno, the social categories of native language and disability interact, for instance, in the learning environment of math class. While other peers who are ELs only experience their linguistic proficiency in math class, Bruno experiences the effects of his disability (see Figure 10). As an EL with his proficiency level (Table 14), the ability to comprehend and use some specific math language proves difficult, such as comprehending the vocabulary of long division (e.g., *divider*, *remainder*, and *quotient*) provided by Mr. Alvarez or Mr. Medina. Indeed, math as a content area is steeped in complex, academic language that students, regardless of English proficiency, find challenging to comprehend and use. That is, math is not language free: In fact, it is linguistically demanding because its unique discursive

practices consist of multiple systems of symbols interacting with oral language (Adoniou & Qing, 2014; Lucero, 2012; Schleppegrell, 2004, 2006). Now imagine having difficulty in problem solving. Often Bruno would become frustrated during math, and in one particular observation while students were preparing for the math portion of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSAs), Bruno became despondent when encountering division problems presented in a different format than their math textbook. The ability to problem-solve, applying knowledge of how to answer a new type of question based on previously learned strategies, was impossible for Bruno. The only way to develop this skill was through the explanations and supports of his teachers, but as an EL, these types of explanations can often present an additional barrier, not clarity. Schleppegrell (2006) discusses the linguistic demands of mathematics:

> One of the challenges has to do with the three forms of meaning-making that are always in interaction with each other in mathematics classrooms. Math symbols, written language, and spoken language typically all work together to build students' understanding of math. Unlike other subjects, little of math is typically learned by reading explanations in textbooks. Instead, math understanding is constructed in large part as the teacher talks about mathematical expressions using spoken language. The challenge for students is to make the connections between the math symbolic language and the teacher's oral explanations. (p. 54)

Through the presence of EL and LD needs, Bruno experiences an interaction wherein his language proficiency and disability together reinforce the difficulty of acquiring math knowledge; not understanding math language (e.g., vocabulary) will only reduce Bruno's comprehension of math explanations—the very conduit through which he can build his problem-solving skills for long division.

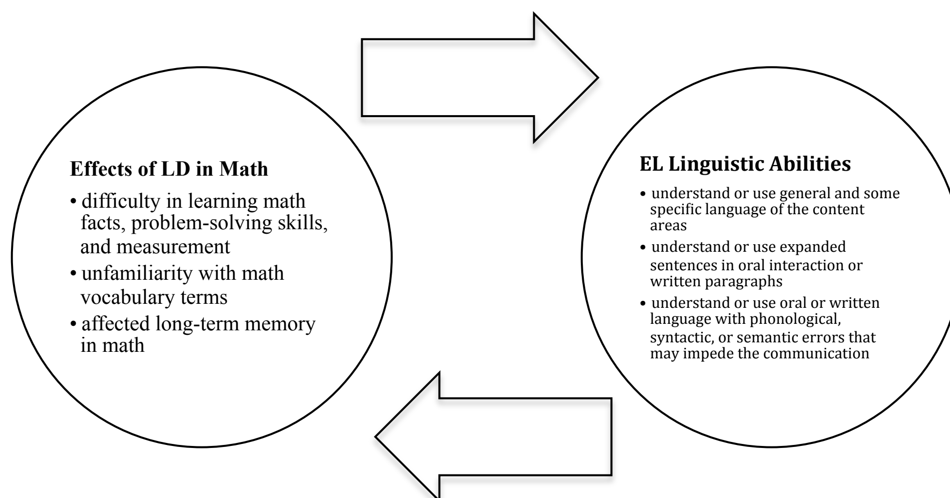

Figure 10. Learning Disability in Math and L2 Interaction.
Note. The descriptors for this figure are based on WIDA's Interpretative Guide for Score Reports (2014) and the National Center for Learning Disabilities (n.d.).

Ahmed

Ahmed's unique experiences as a child with autism and a native speaker of Arabic create an interplay between disability and language in his learning environment. Although there are many significant effects of autism, I will focus on just a few of the social aspects of autism as it intersects with language learning. In an English-dominant school like Williams Elementary, the only option Ahmed had for social language was to speak in English. As an EL with an "Emerging" proficiency (Table 14, p. 184), he can understand and use some extended speech during interactions with others and will often manifest errors in his speech—whether because of grammar, syntax, or pronunciation—that impede his interlocutor's (i.e., his listener's) understanding. Surely, these abilities as an EL can make interacting with peers more challenging and even isolating at times, but now consider how the social effects of autism interact with L2 proficiency. Although

Ahmed's classmates were friendly and caring towards him, Ahmed's only friend in the inclusive class was Jeff, who also had autism. Jeff was Ahmed's partner for most activities. And whenever given the chance to work with someone, they partnered with each other, but on days when Jeff was absent or elsewhere in the school, Ahmed was left without his partner. The impaired ability to form friendships and sustain social interaction with peers further affects Ahmed's proficiency in the L2, as he has more limited opportunities to participate in conversational language with peers, which would develop his ability to receive comprehensible input, or in this case, understandable auditory language, as well as produce output (i.e., speech). Further, interactions with peers foster an important opportunity for negotiation of meaning (Long, 1996), or ability to work through communication breakdowns by eliciting additional, clarifying information and by offering alternative explanations and details (see Figure 11). It is through working out these breakdowns that ELs receive and produce more extended conversations; however, for an EL with autism, like Ahmed, the inability or difficulty to sustain and hold interest in conversations with peers will hinder the negotiation of meaning that enriches linguistic development—the very linguistic development he needs to interact more flexibly and socially with his peers.

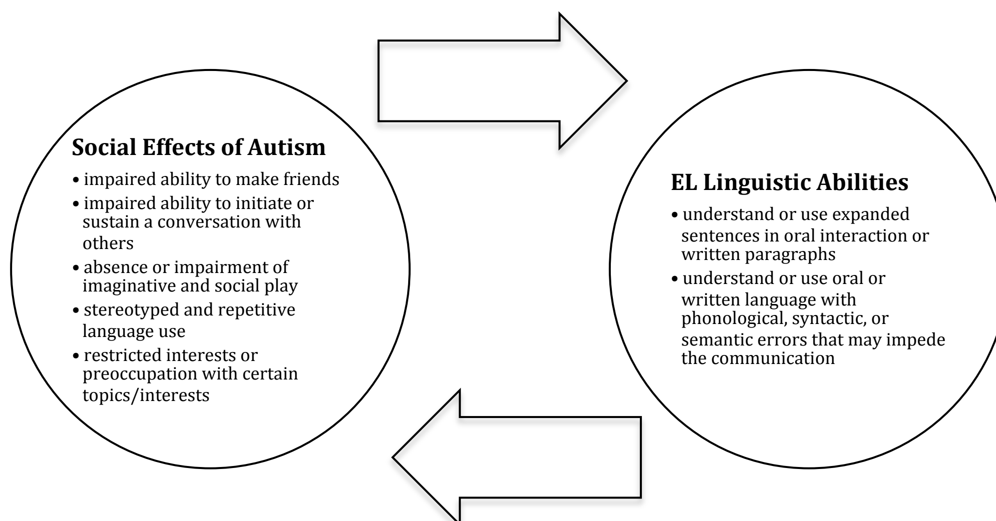

Figure 11. Autism and L2 Interaction.
Note. The descriptors for this figure are based on WIDA's Interpretative Guide for Score Reports (2014) and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (2014).

As demonstrated, L2 proficiency and disability do intersect for ELs with disabilities, each mutually influencing the other to create a unique set of experiences and needs within the learning environment. Yet these students' educational needs were assimilated into the needs of students with disabilities only. Some may ask: Why is this practice of prioritizing the special education needs of ELs with disabilities problematic when a need is a need? According to Crenshaw (1991), when individuals' intersectional identities are not acknowledged by institutions they become further marginalized. By predominately providing services that supported the disability of the ELs, with limited to no language services, these learners were, in fact, marginalized ironically by school personnel who desperately wanted these learners to succeed. Their marginalization occurred through ignoring their linguistic needs. For instance, Bruno received no ESL services and L1 services in Spanish frequently defaulted to English, and yet providing

language services would interrupt the mutually negatively reinforcing effects of his language proficiency and LD in math, because he would receive support through modified language to make the math content more accessible. Further, the intersection of language and disability was also ignored through the provision of special education services: No special education services with the exception of Positive Behavior Support (PBS), which was a school-wide program, were provided in Spanish for Bruno. The significance of this policy is that it reveals an illogical conceptualization of disability. By providing special education services in English, it is as if the disability only exists in one language—English. However, providing special education support in Spanish would address the ELs with disabilities' intersectional needs; if Spanish dominant, they have the linguistic support they need to understand content coupled with the accommodations they need to mitigate the learning effects of their disabilities, and if English dominant, the ELs with disabilities have the learning support they need to make Spanish more comprehensible. Ahmed also was at an "oppressed intersection" (Petersen, 2012, p. 801) where only learning needs that extend from one social category were acknowledged. ESL services were interrupted and infrequent at Williams Elementary, thereby limiting his opportunity to develop English proficiency with scaffolded, tailored support necessary to improve his social interactions with peers.

At both Williams Elementary and San Pedro School the services were not intended for the whole child but just a singular facet of the learners' identities. This was the very phenomenon Crenshaw (1989) noticed among African American women, whose identities and collective needs were subsumed by the Women's Rights Movement—largely dominated by Caucasian women—and the Civil Rights Movement, which was

dominated by African American males. She argued that social interventions set in place for women in general were futile in addressing the needs of African American women because they "face[d] different obstacles" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1246) as a result of their race and class. Drawing the comparison between Crenshaw's focal population and the students in this study, the services the ELs with disabilities received were intended for native-speakers of English with disabilities. They were subsumed into one particular population despite having different learning obstacles. And although being an EL with a disability is distinct from being a learner with a disability *and* an EL, these learners essentially were positioned as students with only disabilities, thereby losing their intersectional, multidimensional identities as learners. This is a practice that prevails for diverse learners who often are positioned by their teachers and schools in ways that proves limited, partial, and problematic (Martin-Beltrán, 2010; Reeves, 2009; Yoon, 2008). Yet Norton (1995, 2000, 2013) argues that ELs' identities are not composed of a singular dimension but embody complexity and multidimensionality. Further, by acknowledging just a part of learners' needs a series of contradictions surface. First, positioning the *ELs* with disabilities as *learners* with disabilities, ignores their fuller identities, and this unidimensional view of learners defies the very spirit of inclusion education whereby the *whole* learner is accepted and is included in the general education classroom. Second, if the multidimensions of the learners' identities are not acknowledged through the delivery of services, inclusion is in jeopardy, because inclusive practices depend on addressing students' educational needs through instructional supports and accommodations as well as fostering acceptance for all individuals, as they are (Wisconsin Education Association Council, 2014). Further,

without planned and differentiated L2 instruction while in the general education classroom, as demonstrated through the case of Bruno and Ahmed, ELs' language skills may preclude them from full inclusion.

One of the criticisms of intersectionality research is that the analysis frequently stops here—examining how the individual's overlapping minority social categories create unique experiences. For this study, however, expanding the analysis beyond the ELs with disabilities reveals how intersectional identities and needs are ignored through a complex set of practices and policies within the schools these learners attend. Indeed, school personnel were instrumental in carving the learning opportunities ELs with disabilities were afforded. Kramsch (2013) argues how for decades the works of sociologists and cultural theorists, like Pierre Bourdieu, Chris Weedon, and Benedict Anderson remind us that individuals are not necessarily in control of "carving his/her path to attain well-formulated goals in the future" (p. 197), as institutions and communities often play a dominant role in constructing individuals' trajectories. In the section that follows, I will delineate how learning opportunities for ELs with disabilities were "carved" by their schools.

Arenas of Influence

The second embedded layer in intersectionality analysis, *arenas of influence,* examines the contexts in which inequalities between social categories are created (Anthias, 2012), which for this dissertation includes two arenas—Williams Elementary and San Pedro School. The intersectionality founding theorist, Crenshaw, in an interview stated the importance of "introduce[ing] questions of how power gravitates around some social categories and creates them and how it polices others" (Guidroz & Berger, 2009, p.

74). The very focus of this layer in intersectionality is to understand how power gravitates to the social category of disability while simultaneously invalidating the social category of EL through (a) an organizational analysis, examining how ELs with disabilities were organized within their schools, and (b) a representational analysis, the discursive practices that school personnel produced about these learners' social categories. Through this power differential, learning opportunities were inequitably constructed.

Organizational

The ways in which San Pedro School and Williams Elementary organized ELs with disabilities revealed how at these institutions the social category of disability carried greater educational significance. First, at both schools was the physical organization of students, which held great sway at San Pedro in particular. From students' very first day of school at San Pedro they were placed in specific classes according to—what I will call—their institutional label of difference. If they had a learning difference based in a disability or L2 English proficiency, they were rostered in the inclusion classes and EL classes, respectively. This pattern held true for every grade, and in some instances there was more than one EL class per grade due to the large language learner population of the school. These classes were referred to benignly as *cohorts,* and their purpose was to maximize the number of hours specialists, such as special educators and ESL practitioners, could spend in the classroom providing mandated supports. Recall Mrs. Solis' concise explanation of the cohorts: "We have done is that we've tried to put as many of the students together would then allow a second teacher to be the coteacher in the classroom for at least, we try to do at least two hours or more in the day of coteaching happening." Even at Williams Elementary—a school with more resources than San

Pedro—ELs with disabilities were also physically organized into the same general education classrooms to streamline services. ELs were a smaller population in the school, so this practice was less obvious than at San Pedro School. Nevertheless, all ELs within the same grade were rostered in one general education classroom, so that when push-in services were provided the ESL practitioner could service groups of ELs, which allowed additional time in the ESL practitioner's schedule to travel to multiple schools each day. Both schools' rostering policies were meant to promote service efficiency; however, Shore and Wright (1997) caution that such policies are not as neutral as they appear: "It is a feature of policies that their political nature is disguised by the objective neutral, legal-rational idioms in which they are portrayed. In this guise, policies appear to be mere instruments for promoting efficiency and effectiveness" (p. 8). But, instead of being a means of efficient service provision, this practice further marginalized ELs with disabilities by elevating the importance of their disabilities while simultaneously ignoring their language proficiencies.

At San Pedro School the importance of the ELs' disabilities were revealed by the rostering practice where ELs with disabilities, regardless of their disability, were rostered into the inclusion classrooms. Even ELs, like Darell, who were not identified but were *suspected* of having a disability, were rostered into the inclusion rooms. His potential disability became so prominent in the eyes of his teachers that many did not know he was an EL. Disabilities were elevated, at the same time they were flattened. For instance, ELs with SLIs, such Alexa, Alonso, and Christian, were placed into the inclusion classroom despite the fact that they did not receive support from a special educator. Their placement into a reverse inclusion classroom did not consider their specific disability and debatably

qualified as the Less Restrictive Environment (LRE) because ultimately they had a specialized placement into a learning environment that had more limited access to peers without disabilities. But, "the aim of the placement should be to maximize the development and freedom of the child rather than to accommodate the regular classroom" (Council for Exceptional Children, 2012, p. 11). Not only do I question, the development and freedom that Alexa, Alonso, and Christian were afforded for their learning in the reverse inclusion classrooms, I aver that their placement was meant to benefit the regular education classroom, because by placing these learners into separate classrooms, the general education classrooms were void of learners who are different. Further, through an intersectionality lens, the physical organization of ELs with disabilities demonstrated a profound "conflation of intragroup differences" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242)—only having an IEP mattered.

The physical organization of students had the material impact of unequal allocation of resources (i.e., services). ELs with disabilities at San Pedro received 15 hours of support from a special educator while zero hours of ESL support, except for one first grade class that received 1.5 hours of ESL support per week. Resource allocation ignored intersectional identities for Williams' students Lula and Ahmed, despite the principal's proud proclamation of the school as resource-rich. As established, Lula and Ahmed received at least 50% less ESL support than recommended by the state, and this deficit in services was only exacerbated by the ELs' schedules in which special education or related services were slotted at the same time as ESL. The conflict in scheduling resulted in an unquestioned forfeiting of ESL services. In this way, at San Pedro and Williams power gravitated toward the social category of disability: Having a disability

(or even potentially having a disability) was the most influential factor in determining how resources were distributed.

But, as I argued before, it is just not a matter of quantity of services; the quality of learning environments also demonstrated inequity for ELs with disabilities. One of the greatest obstacles to student learning in the inclusion classrooms of San Pedro was the very composition of the classrooms itself. For ELs with disabilities, it is all to easy to assume the learning difficulty is a result of language proficiency and a disability without considering how the learning environment may contribute to academic performance (Harry & Klingner, 2006). With the number of students with disabilities approaching at times 50% of the class—qualifying as reverse inclusion classroom—and the antagonistic relationships between students who were rostered together year after year, it was difficult for actual teaching to occur. Most days the practitioners' focus was on behavior management, and as Mr. Alvarez shared a "good day" in his classroom was one where he actually could teach content. Further, the educational benefits of Alonso, Alexa, and Christian's (ELs with SLIs) placement in the inclusion classroom were not readily apparent. During the first and second trimesters they were not earning "Proficient" in a majority of their subjects in either language. During the second trimester all three students were not proficient for their grade level in English reading (see Table 15). In fact, both Alexa's and Christian's English reading grades dropped from the first trimester to the second.

Table 15

Summary of Focal Grade 1 Students' Second Trimester Grades

	Reading		Writing		Math	
	English	Spanish	English	Spanish	English	Spanish[a]
Alexa	Basic	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	N/A
Alonso	Basic	Basic	Basic	Below Basic	Basic	N/A
Christian	Below Basic	Below Basic	Below Basic	Below Basic	Basic	N/A

Note. At San Pedro a Proficient mark indicates a score of 85-96%; a Basic mark indicates a score of 70-84%; a Below Basic mark indicates a score of 69% or less.
[a] Math content was only delivered in English.

At Williams the classrooms were not marked by disruptions to learning but rather an unawareness of ELs' learning needs. General education practitioners were responsible for providing ESL support, despite never receiving any training to do so. Practitioners reasoned that because the ELs were not beginners and could hold a conversation, they did not need differentiated instruction. Consequently, content at times remained linguistically and culturally inaccessible to ELs, an established trend in general education classrooms (Hansen-Thomas & Caragnetto, 2010; Meskill, 2005). Further, in Ahmed's case, the learning environment proved to be a tug-of-war of sorts between the special educator and ESL practitioner who both pushed into the general education classroom at the same time. To make matters more complicated, the ESL and general education practitioners were given limited time to coplan their lessons, and so it was often the case that the ESL practitioner, Mrs. Franks, walked into the classroom without knowing what the students were learning that day. Undoubtedly then, identifying and targeting language learning objectives was an impossible task. It is the case that effective coteaching requires more than just two or three people occupying the same room at the same time; a number of resources, including the time to coplan, are inextricably linked to successful coteaching

(Dove & Honigsfield, 2010; Friend, 2008; McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010; Peercy & Martin-Beltrán, 2010). As it seemed, the trade-off for streamlining services was substantial; content teaching was limited or interrupted at best at San Pedro while at Williams L2 support remained on short supply both with and without the ESL practitioner present. Walford (2001b) acknowledges such policy trade-offs in educational contexts: "Schools are highly complex organizations, and it is often the case that a positive change to one part will lead to deleterious changes to others" (p. 3). The "deleterious" result Walford speaks of in this case is the inequity of opportunities for academic and linguistic development for ELs with disabilities. More simply, being an EL with a disability resulted in a "situation of disadvantage" (Yuval-Davis, 2009, p. 56). At Williams, the social category of disability resulted in a policy wherein the ESL services and supports ELs with disabilities needed for their academic development were severely restricted. Such was the case for ELs with disabilities at San Pedro where ELs (without disabilities) were taught in classrooms in which content learning occurred, ESL support was provided, and students worked cooperatively together. As described in Chapter 5, these learning environments were more conducive to the growth of content knowledge and English proficiency. Even the Special Education Coordinator reasoned that there were resources ELs with disabilities were missing by their placement in these learning environments: "The level service and support and kind of intentionality that the EL teacher brings through their lesson planning, many times supersedes what the special ed teacher is able to provide through small group instruction." Recall the statement one participant shared about the learning environments, saying bluntly "That's never gonna be successful." But, because the presence of a disability and the gravitation of power to

the label of disability, these ELs were further marginalized by their placement into classrooms with limited learning opportunities.

In part, the data and arguments about the organization and distribution of resources above demonstrate that there were general programmatic limitations for special education and ESL at both schools, affecting *all* ELs and students with disabilities, not solely those dually identified. For instance, Williams demonstrated a lack of concern for L2 education and, I argue, its entire EL population by underservicing these learners, relegating ESL instruction to the hallways and requiring its teachers to travel from school to school. In the same way, rostering students with disabilities into one classroom per grade at San Pedro was a decision that influenced the learning opportunities of *all* students with disabilities, not just those who are also ELs. Through these examples it is evident that individuals who embody a single minority social category (i.e., a student with a disability *or* an EL) also experience marginalization, but what occurs at the intersection for the ELs with disabilities is *multiple* oppressions. Take, for instance, Lula from Williams Elementary. Just like all the ELs in her school she was marginalized on the basis of her status as an EL by having limited L2 support as evidenced above. But, for her the presence of a disability resulted in multiple oppressions because she was afforded even less instructional support for L2 needs because of the scheduling of her services for her disability. Likewise, at San Pedro students with disabilities were marginalized by their placement into reverse inclusion classrooms wherein they were largely isolated from peers without disabilities and instruction was interrupted due to student-on-student fighting, but there were multiple oppressions at work for ELs with disabilities placed in these classrooms. They experienced the same oppression as their peers with disabilities

and also received minimal to no support for their English development. In this way, the intersection of language proficiency and disability created more restrictive learning opportunities than any one social minority category alone.

Representational

The discursive practices of Williams and San Pedro personnel demonstrate the same pulling of power around the institutional label of disability. Personnel stated very simply and directly that when a student was an EL and had a disability that resources were allocated to the disability. The following quote from an administrator at San Pedro captures the sentiment participants shared with me frequently for over a year of fieldwork: "Because I'm sure that you know by now that the IEP will supersede any-, basically anything really." She, like other participants, stated similar notions but always as matter-of-fact. Keating (2009) identifies how the distinction between beliefs and facts becomes blurred: "Generally, we don't even recognize these beliefs as beliefs; we're convinced that they offer accurate factual statements about reality" (p. 83). Presenting beliefs about service provision as abstract facts was a discursive norm at both schools. When I asked, for example, why the schedules at Williams were created to have special education or related services at the same time as ESL, the answer was "Special education takes precedence over ESL." When I inquired about ELs with disabilities' automatic placement in the inclusion classrooms at San Pedro, the answer was "Special education trumps ESL." This discourse produced about their practices illuminated a socialized script about service provision. One special educator identified how easily the script regarding ELs with disabilities rolls off the tongue: "So, we, we just very easily say, 'Well, special ed kind of trumps ESL because there's all of the, and I just heard this

yesterday. I just heard this!" With this socialized script, I posit that personnel positioned both themselves inside a macro education policy and the language needs of the ELs with disabilities.

Addressing the former, this discourse I argue reveals a positioning of the personnel as mere implementers of policy. They characterized their actions as acquiescing to an already existing policy wherein special education is more strictly regulated and ESL is highly interpretable. Indeed, the quotations shared above regarding the hierarchy of services demonstrated how they did not envision their own role as policy arbiters (Johnson, 2013; Menken & García, 2010). But, as Johnson (2013) attests "Local educators and especially school district administrators, play a powerful role interpreting and appropriating macro-level policy texts and discourses. They are not simply policy implementers" (p. 133). Take, for instance, the creation of student and practitioner schedules at Williams. These schedules were created by the special education coordinator, ESL practitioner, and school administrators, indicating an active interpretation and negotiation of macro-education policies. Also the decision to not provide practitioners ample time to coplan (e.g., 15 minutes every one to two weeks) was a decision by administrators that inhibited the quality of ESL push-in. At San Pedro, administrators were active in developing the cohorts that ultimately served as a sorting mechanism for resources with students in one cohort receiving a particular set of services and students in another cohort receiving an entirely different set of services. Furthermore, at both schools the decision to hire less ESL practitioners than were needed to adhere to the legal guidelines was an act of constructing a language policy (Menken & García, 2010).

The second reality revealed through the discursive practices at the schools was the minimizing of the ELs with disabilities' language learning needs. Disabilities were unquestioned and considered certain. For example, San Pedro's Darell, who had learning difficulties, was believed to have a LD, and the certainty of this reified in his placement in the inclusion class. Mrs. Solis, for example, spoke with certainty of the profound disability needs of the learners: "So, um, but a lot of time um, with a lot of the kids, their disability really supersedes what issues they have with the language." At Williams Elementary, Lula who had an orthopedic impairment but was being monitored for an emotional disturbance (ED), was characterized as "different" and "unique" along with a phrase equivalent to "Something is going with her," referring to the possibility of an additional diagnosis of ED. Both actual and potential disabilities were considered salient; L2 learning needs, however, were not. Lula was more advanced in her English proficiency (Level 5; see Table 4, p. 49); in fact, her ESL teacher projected that she would be able to exit ESL within the next year. Logically then, her language needs may not have been as profound as her physical and potential emotional disability needs, but Darell's proficiency was much lower (Level 2; see Table 6, p. 52). This suggests that regardless of the disability and proficiency level of the ELs with disabilities, the presence of language learning needs (whether L1 or L2) were constructed as less significant.

Discourse about students being "true" ELs was particularly common at both schools but the reasons for this questioning of language needs varied widely. At Williams Elementary, L2 needs of ELs, in general, were rendered non-existent for the following reasons: (a) the ELs were not beginners, (b) the ELs were conversational, (c) the ELs' accents were comprehensible, (d) the ELs had legible handwriting, and (e) the ELs could

"go with the flow" of the classroom. From these descriptions a bias emerges that is based in assumptions of deficits. That is, "true" ELs have deficits in speaking, listening, and orthography. A deficit or problem orientation towards linguistic diversity is nothing new (Lippi-Green, 2012; Ruiz 1984); however, these particular perspectives of deficit were so prominent that when ELs with disabilities, such as Ahmed and Lula, demonstrated capabilities in English, their proficiency was deemed a category of less significance (Yuval-Davis, 2009).

The notion of "true" ELs was a part of the discursive norm at San Pedro as well, but unlike practitioners at Williams who minimized L2 needs because of the ELs' abilities, personnel at San Pedro questioned the L2 needs of ELs because they were believed to be semilinguals (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981)—proficient in no language. Commonly, in interviews practitioners and administrators shared about how ELs had deficits in both languages, often pointing to the limited opportunities in the students' families and communities. One ESL practitioner even claimed their ELs had "neither language." Ostensibly, having deficits or delays in both the L1 and L2 would only seem to reinforce the importance of language services and elevate the significance of the social category of native language. Ironically, their language needs instead resulted in the questioning of the institutional label of "EL"; they were regarded as children with widespread language delays, not "true" ELs. ESL services, therefore, were rendered inconsequential.

Here, it is imperative to identify the apparent contradiction in personnel's discourse across the two sites. For ELs at Williams, their skills in English minimized the need of ESL services and supports according to their practitioners; however, at San Pedro,

the perceived widespread language deficits of the ELs caused educators to question the veracity of the EL label and necessity of language services associated with it. The outcomes of this representational discourse were the same, though, as the perspectives of the personnel revealed how disability was constructed as the social category of importance (Yuval-Davis, 2009) while in contrast, L2 proficiency was considered a category of minimal, disputable significance.

Reconsidering the Role of School Culture

I have presented a case for how the personnel at both schools were, in fact, more than just implementers of a macro educational policy; they were instrumental in interpreting how the policy would play out within their schools. But, the intersectional analysis cannot remain at the meso, localized context (Anthias, 2012; Nuñez, 2014), attributing the provision of services at Williams and San Pedro as a manifestation of antonymous decision-making. In fact, it would be incomplete and incoherent to stop the analysis here, claiming that the schools did not provide adequate language services because they simply did not value language education. This was clearly not the case, especially when considering San Pedro School. In Chapter 4, I explained how school culture emerged as a significant factor in Williams Elementary's service provision practices for ELs with disabilities. In Chapter 5, I explicated how I tested this hypothesis at the second site, San Pedro School. What I found surprised me: School culture matters, but it is not the most influential factor in service provision. I came to this conclusion after discovering how a school that was, in the words of one of the participants, "built around language," obviated L1 and L2 services for ELs with disabilities. How could a school that has an entire identity and reputation subsumed by language, forsake language support for

arguably their most vulnerable, at-risk students? What could lead the school administration to negotiate and implement a policy antithetical to their entire purpose as a school? The answers to these questions can be found in the larger educational system in which the schools exist. Unlike Anthias (2012), who asserts that “it [intersectional analysis] also asks us to revise the idea that culture has less saliency in the production of inequality than economic factors” (p. 10), I found that economic conditions were more influential in service provision at both sites. That is, although school culture mattered, against the backdrop of the current educational context wrought with financial deficits and threats of additional financial loss, its saliency dissipated.

Historicity

The outer-most, macro-layer of intersectionality analysis is *Historicity*, which according to Anthias (2012), examines how both individuals with intersectional identities and the institutions that attempt to organize them are embedded in a larger context—a place and a time. The personnel at both Williams and San Pedro felt that their hands were tied; the practice of averting language services was really the only choice they had because of the climate of the 21st century American education system. I argue that it is the larger the educational climate within the United States marked by individualization, litigiousness, and more recent financial deficits as well as the perceptions of ESL as a profession that create a context in which these schools’ policies of service provision for ELs with disabilities were appropriated.

Individualized Education and Litigious Accountability

Shore and Wright (1997) assert that policies are a major part of our western culture. In the American education system, for students with learning differences—

whether based in ability or linguistic or cultural background—federal policies are characterized by an approach to educating that is individualized and customized. The driving force behind the tailored approach to educating students with disabilities is the federal legislation that created the ethical and legal imperative to modify the often unjust, dehumanizing practices of not educating those with disabilities. For instance, Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* established that *children* with disabilities have the right to be *students*, as in prior years disability was often the basis for denying educational opportunities, especially those opportunities that were characteristically inclusive. *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) further reified the educational opportunities for students with disabilities by creating a system of concrete accountability—IEPs. These individualized programs deny the premise that one-size fits all in education and assert that to promote learning for a student with disabilities instruction must be molded to the child. This same presupposition of individualized services takes form in ESL education with the codification of *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), mandating that tailored support must be provided to ELs to ensure their access to content instruction. Yet tailored instruction for learners who have disabilities and L2 learning needs created the logistical, financial, and ideological tensions present at both Williams Elementary and San Pedro School. Further, it is precisely the tailored approach to educating students with differences that resulted in the de facto hierarchy of resources (Yuval-Davis, 2009) with ESL and bilingual supports placed squarely at the bottom for both schools. I argue that it is apparent from this hierarchy that not all federal education laws are created equal. The critical question then is *why*.

In part, the answer to this question certainly includes the differential specificity of

the federal mandates of special and ESL education. *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) and *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981) are general mandates, requiring that supports in various forms must be provided and that there must be standards for evaluating the quality of these supports, respectively. With this, schools can decide, for instance, whether services are delivered in the L1 or L2, whether ELs are grouped together or with English-proficient peers to receive content instruction, and whether support is provided by a specialist or a general education practitioner. The freedom to create a system of language supports that best fits the demography and needs of the students is the advantage that is offered through these general federal mandates; however, for ELs with disabilities this potential advantage has become a gaping loophole. The legislation is so interpretative that when juxtaposed by special education, which carries with it a specificity that extends to the level of each pupil, it looses its legislative force. Significantly, in early 2015 the Obama administration issued guidelines reminding schools of their legal obligations to provide quality education for ELs and clarifying the frequent compliance issues that arise in ESL education (U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The guidance begins with the following stern reminder:

> Forty years ago, the Supreme Court of the United States determined that in order for public schools to comply with their legal obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), they must take affirmative steps to ensure that students with limited English proficiency (LEP) can meaningfully participate in their educational programs and services. That same year, Congress enacted the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA), which confirmed that public schools and State educational agencies (SEAs) must act to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by students in their instructional programs. Ensuring that SEAs and school districts are equipped with the tools and resources to meet their responsibilities to LEP students, who are now more commonly referred to as English Learner (EL) students or English Language Learner students, is as important today as it was then.

These guidelines were the first major effort in addressing the ambiguity of EL education law since their codification over three decades ago.

Despite this recent development, the systems of accountability weigh heavy in the hierarchy of services. For students with disabilities, because IEPs are contractual, any violation of the contract on behalf of the school can result in varying levels of legal action. Such legal recourse includes due process hearings, mediation, and formal complaints (Mueller, 2009). With 4,893 written complaints, 8,533 mediation requests, and 14,319 due process complaints filed alone in 2011-2012 school year (The National Center on Dispute Resolution in Special Education, 2014), the American education context for students with disabilities is highly litigious. As such, the potential for accumulating exorbitant legal fees is certifiable. The participants at both schools cited the serious nature with which they treated IEPs; hence the frequently uttered phrase amongst the participants, "It's legal" (i.e., referring to special education). Along with this rationale, participants expressed concern over the actions of parents and potential for legal proceedings, all of which harken back to the contractual underpinnings of special education and related services. To provide insufficient services would violate the contract. As such, special education and related services remained more protected through the scheduling and rostering practices at the schools.

In comparison, ESL or bilingual services in Pennsylvania are guided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), which supplies schools with recommended hours for language services that meet the mandates stated in *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981). As described in the results chapters, hours of service should be

determined by proficiency level. At both schools proficiency levels did not drive the allotted hours of ESL and bilingual services; instead ELs received uniform hours of support—and often lower than the guidelines—as a result of their grade level or placement in a particular class. This practice is problematic, but possibly less so than the substitution and negotiation of ESL services. The guidelines at both school were on face value were met, as the hours the ELs were in the general education classroom were counted at Williams as well as the hours student received instruction in Spanish at San Pedro. However, as demonstrated, the general education practitioners were not trained to provide language support and English frequently replaced Spanish instruction. In the recently released guidance, the Departments of Justice and Education (2015) stipulate that if the school's language program includes instructional supports provided by general education practitioners, these personnel must be ESL certified. The integrity then of the language support services at the schools was diminished through practices of technical counting and bartering, and more critically, ESL educational laws were violated.

What is more significant, I argue, to this discussion is understanding why such illegal, unethical practices persist in ESL education. Unlike special education and related services, there is no contractual documentation stipulating how language services should be provided, but rather the Office for Civil Rights (ORC) at the United States Department of Education oversees the implementation of and adherence to educational law for ELs. The complaint process for a violation of services is dubious: involving an online or paper complaint filing, a review of services by the OCR after a complaint is filed, an investigation which can be composed of a variety of data, possibly including an on-site visit to the school, and the resolution of the complaint (Office for Civil Rights, 2014).

Although a process is in place and complaint forms are available in a variety of languages, the schools in this study were not worried about ELs' parents filing complaints.[10] That is, English-proficient parents are more likely to advocate for their children than EL parents. In fact, De Gaetano (2007) found that ELs' parents do not possess the requisite linguistic skills and knowledge of the school system for parental involvement, let alone advocacy. In Mr. Holloway's words:

> You know, but someone who has a child with a disability can pretty much run the gamut. They can kind of do whatever they want. They can demand whatever they want from the school. They can demand whatever they want of local municipalities, you know, strictly based on the, the disabling factor of their particular, there's a lot of rights, you know associated with students with IEPs compared to, well, you're just learning English, you know?

He described EL parents as disempowered and "not very defensible" quite possibly because of their immigration status, but even more likely because of their lack of linguistic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Filing a complaint with the OCR requires a clear understanding of your child's actual services, ESL/bilingual education law, the BEC Guidelines, language as an inseparable facet of national origin (which is a guaranteed civil right), educational accountability being enforced by OCR as well as documentation of underservicing, and then access to and the ability to complete a form about the services delivered. Without question, all of these steps require linguistic and cultural capital from the parents of ELs, who have varying levels of English proficiency, familiarity with the American education system, and education background.

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[10] Despite this, both schools did not support the interviewing of parents for this study; in fact, Williams Elementary prohibited it as a condition of granting me access to their school.

Thus far, I have juxtaposed special education and ESL as distinct services; however, PDE required a more integrated, intersectional approach to educating ELs with disabilities. PDE stipulates that IEP teams must indicate whether a student is an EL under the special consideration in Part I of the student's IEP. The team must check "yes" or "no" to answer the question "Does the student have limited English proficiency?" Further, PDE states this special consideration must be more than a checked box; it be *addressed* within the IEP (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2001). This stipulation—albeit vague—requires that the language needs and goals of ELs with disabilities be considered as part of the Specifically Designed Instruction of the IEP. In a recent release of clarified guidance on ESL services, the Obama administration stipulated how IEPs must address EL needs:

> Once a school district determines that an EL student is a child with a disability under the IDEA and needs special education and related services, the school district is responsible for determining, through the development of an IEP at a meeting of the IEP Team (which includes the child's parents and school officials), the special education and related services necessary to make FAPE available to the child. As part of this process, the IDEA requires that the IEP team consider, among other special factors, the language needs of a child with limited English proficiency as those needs relate to the child's IEP. (U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2015, pp. 26-27)

Despite this requirement, when I asked participating practitioners to what extent EL needs were and can be included in IEPs, the responses varied from confusion to incredulity. San Pedro's Ms. Calderon explained that goals in the IEPs only focus on the disability for the ELs with disabilities on her caseload: "Well, for my kids, yeah, I mean if they have a specific learning disability, like my, in, in that classroom, they'll have SLDs in reading and math and, and in particular if it's reading, it's reading fluency, um

math calculation, so the goals are based on that." Further, she reasoned that the ESL practitioner is the one to establish and progress towards goals that are based on the L2 needs of the learner separate from the IEP: "I believe in general, they do have goals, and I'm assuming that, that's with the, um, ESL [teacher]." The school psychologist, Dr. Dalton at San Pedro contradicted Ms. Calderon's assertion: "We do try to kind of look at the ESL standpoint of it and even what are their ESL goals. And those can be included in an IEP." Although they *could be* included, they were not included in the IEPs of the focal learners, as reported by the practitioners. The same held true at Williams Elementary. In fact, Miss Avery who was the ESL teacher was not included in the IEP team meetings at one point and shared that she barely knew more than the basics about the ELs with disabilities (i.e., the learner's disability).

With PDE's stipulation, there is an interpretative aspect of the creation of IEPs for ELs with disabilities to address the exceptionalities of the learners as well as their L2 proficiencies—the embodiment of intersectional practices. However, the reality is that this policy is not consistently or at all implemented; instead the IEPs focus on one aspect of the ELs' learning needs. The possible origin of a lack of intersectional practices in developing the IEP could be attributed to the long existing "professional schism" that exists between ESL practitioners and their colleagues in general education and special education (Hamann & Reeves, 2013). Teacher-educator programs are highly discipline specific, and pre-service ESL practitioners often do not have the "room" in their degree requirements for special education courses and likewise pre-service special educators often do not receive training in ESL. This lack of interdisciplinary knowledge further

ignores the intersectional needs of ELs because the creators and implementers of IEPs for ELs with disabilities are a part of a system that does not foster interdisciplinary training.

Financial Deficits

The larger fiscal educational context in which San Pedro School and Williams Elementary are situated proves significant in understanding the particular service delivery policies and practices fleshed out in the results chapters. San Pedro, a school built around language, both underserviced ELs with disabilities in terms of language services and provided detrimental special education services for students with disabilities. In part, the reason for these perplexing and contradictory practices can be attributed to money. Of the two sites, San Pedro School faced greater financial constraints. Charter schools are funded in the same manner as public schools, receiving per pupil funds from federal, state, and local municipal governments (Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools, 2014), but a recent survey by The Center for Education Reform (2014) found that charter schools typically operate with 64% of the funding as local public schools—a discrepancy mostly attributed to state charter laws. Further, charter schools may be financially disadvantaged according to the populations they serve. Although charter schools in Pennsylvania receive additional federal, state, and local funding for students with disabilities, they only receive Title III funding for ELs, creating an additional fiscal burden when these charters have a large EL population. For example, as of 2014, San Pedro reported receiving approximately $380 in additional funds from federal Title III assistance for a total of roughly $11,300 per EL student but received a total of $15,000 per student with a disability. Moreover, for charter schools, especially relatively newer

ones like San Pedro that are still attempting to establish an armature of resources (e.g., a school library and technology center), there are never enough funds. Most charter schools receive no start-up funding, so many begin at a deficit in terms of available resources. Indeed, during my fieldwork I observed small groups of donors ushered around the building by the principal. The biggest cost savings then that charter schools can institute are in their operational costs (The Center for Education Reform, 2014). Operational costs were managed frugally by the administrators of San Pedro through the following: not providing special education support in Spanish; rostering students by institutional label into the same classroom; only having four teachers to instruct 143 ELs; and replacing Mrs. Neal with a student-teacher when she went on maternity leave—after weeks of debating whether to replace her at all. All of these were discussed in interviews as ways to "streamline" services, making the most of the human and fiscal resources they had. Dr. Dalton spoke of how the school's limited human resources prevented having bilingual special education services:

> Well, I'd say from a, from a personnel standpoint, there, we just don't have the personnel. Um, cause every special ed teacher does more than one grade. So, there was one grade half the day, one grade the other half of the day. Um, so just from, you know, an ideal world, we could have the special ed, you know, for every class that needs it. Um, from a, the reality of personnel, it can't be done.

Mr. Holloway corroborated the issue of human resources in providing services: "One roadblock would be staff shortage." He discussed, though, how just one additional special educator could make a difference in student performance:

> Even if they were able to add one more service provider. I would even say one more kind of intervention specialist who is trained very specifically in certain interventions and just all day pulling groups of students, giving them that consistent intervention. The research speaks for itself. It's gonna capture most of those students and close a lot those deficits.

Human resources remained a real cause of concern. By the winter months of my fieldwork, two practitioners resigned from the school, leaving these positions vacant for the remainder of the year and by the end of the school year specific talks of cutting several positions occurred. As the ESL Coordinator reported more generally, "The budget is tight," and their most recent release of financial expenditures showed that San Pedro's per pupil spending (approximately $11,000) was 12% lower than the national average of $12,608 and for further comparison, was 26% less than Williams Elementary with a per pupil funding of $14,700. Operating with less per pupil funding while also having 65 students (11.8%) receiving special education services and 143 students (26%) receiving ESL support—a sum total of more than a third of the entire school—it is not difficult to comprehend why services required streamlining in the first place at San Pedro.

Inseparable from charter school funding—and educational funding more largely—is the significant decrease in school funding post the Great Recession. Lasting from 2007 to 2009, the Great Recession was the most significant economic downturn since the Great Depression with unemployment rates peaking over 10% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012), and such decreases in taxable income affect public school funding. According to the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center (2014), in the past several years 294 million dollars of Pennsylvania state funding were cut from public schools. Pennsylvanian urban schools, such as San Pedro, were the recipients of the greatest state funding cuts with 35% of the state's education funding rescinded, which was a total of

$1,351 per pupil. Although privy to a plethora of resources, Williams Elementary had its own budget crisis during my fieldwork. The Cedar View District, in which Williams Elementary belonged, was in the thralls of reducing their annual financial deficit of nearly 5.5 million. When the district released a financial report detailing the reductions in expenditures the district would enact in the following year, many practitioners were emotionally on edge. In fact, the ESL practitioner often nervously discussed the pending budget cuts, worried that because ESL was purportedly provided by general education practitioners, she would be one of the first to lose her job. But, even with Mrs. Franks' job remaining intact by the end of the school year, "streamlining" of ESL services at Williams Elementary was already commonplace; the number of hours ELs, especially those with disabilities, received ESL support was at least 50% less than the BEC Guidelines, and in Mrs. Avery's words "they could have stood to gain . . . having three or four teachers in total to just meet the needs and not have to travel," instead of two ESL practitioners providing services to ELs at seven different schools. But, money was a contributing factor in service delivery decisions in the case of both schools—albeit more profoundly so for San Pedro School. To make each dollar count required making sacrifices in resource allocation. When an educational service, like ESL, is understood to have "loose" interpretations and essentially less legal clout than special education and related services, it is not difficult to imagine why this would be among the first types of services to be streamlined, negotiated, and even more obviously, reduced.

ESL's Professional Standing

Relevant to historicity in the provision of services for ELs with disabilities is the professional standing of ESL or TESOL as a field. Johnston (1997) asked a critical

question—whether English language teachers have careers—after examining how in their professional circles, English language teachers were marginalized. Professional marginalization was certainly evident at Williams Elementary where Mrs. Franks felt isolated and unsupported as a language teacher who travelled between various school buildings throughout the day. And further, the ceaseless cycle of ESL being shoved onto various administrators' proverbial desks (i.e., having several coordinators in just a few years), left the ESL program in flux, always starting over, and never progressing forward. Further, the substitution of general education support (by those with no training in ESL) for ESL services at both Williams Elementary and San Pedro School suggests that Johnston's question is still relevant though over 15 years has passed. If untrained practitioners can provide ESL support then being an ESL teacher appears superfluous. Indeed, the assumptions about a practitioner's ability to provide ESL support can often be attributed to their status as native speakers of English. But, according to Muchisky and Yates (2004), a language practitioner approaches instruction from an entirely different perspective: "An L2 teacher analyzes a classroom situation differently than a teacher of another discipline, considers a different range of options than those available to a teacher of another discipline, and defines the most effective alternative differently than a teacher of another discipline" (p. 139). In both the classrooms of San Pedro and Williams, the range of pedagogical options was the most apparent of differences. For instance, the comparative observations at San Pedro of the EL classes and the inclusive special education classes revealed different instructional foci. Mrs. DiLella's instruction, for example, included vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation skills. Likewise, at Williams, Mrs. Franks' instruction included Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) while general

education practitioners assumed that their students, regardless of language and cultural background, shared the same knowledge base.

Harper and de Jong (2009) are the most outspoken about what they call the "deprofessionalization" of ESL. Citing a more recent example from the state of Florida where several years ago all pre-service practitioners were required to have ESL training. Universities were permitted to integrate ESL "themes" and "issues" into already existing courses instead of creating a separate course. That is to say, everything a practitioner needs to know about ELs can be taught during a week or two of the semester. With practitioners receiving limited training in ESL, Harper and de Jong (2009) strongly assert:

> In many cases, this has resulted in the displacement and deskilling of ESL teachers and dependence on the instruction of minimally prepared mainstream teachers who are equipped with scripted materials and a generic toolkit of teaching strategies presumed to be effective for all students. (p. 147)

Although I will not claim that the general education practitioners at both schools had "generic toolkits"—as many practitioner exhibited creativity in teaching—there was the presupposition that differentiation of instruction was often unnecessary because the strategies used in the classroom for elementary-age students were equivalent to ESL instruction. This belief manifested at Williams with practitioners opining that because ELs were conversational and not beginners in English, they were just like every other native-English-speaking student. Furthermore, Mrs. Roberts believed quite strongly that young learners require similar supports to ELs, so instruction did not necessitate differentiating. Also, at San Pedro the ideologies that small group instruction was the same for ELs as students with disabilities and that all students were language learners led

to a one-size-fits-all approach to instructing students with various language and learning differences. Replacing ESL with general education instruction at both schools resulted in what Harper and de Jong (2009) call “diluted” and “dissolved” language services and further communicated a powerful message of deprofessionalization of language teaching—that anyone can do it without training.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion of Findings

The analysis revealed how at three distinct levels minority social categories intersect for ELs with disabilities, but against the backdrop of macro educational policies for special and EL education this intersection is wrought with inconsistencies, contradictions, and ethical dilemmas as it negotiated in two schools. Despite how disability and language proficiency mutually affect one another in the learning environment, *disability* is a minority social category that possesses greater clout. As such, resources were inequitably apportioned to the 10 focal ELs with disabilities in this study for services pertaining to their disability and L2. Their educational services mirrored those provided for students with disabilities who were native speakers of English; that is, their linguistics differences were deemed insignificant in comparison to their disabilities and consequently, these differences were dissolved and even erased during service delivery. The enactment of these ideologies surrounding disability and native language are a microcosm of the larger landscape of education policy in the United States, where special education is privileged with specificity and legal authority in a way that eclipses EL education law which, in contrast, is marked by ambiguity in interpretation.

Through these findings this dissertation is the first study of its kind to provide an in-depth examination of how services are provided for ELs with disabilities. Prior to this study, research has focused on referral rates and practices as well as specific interventions (Artiles et al., 2005; Denton et al., 2008; Kamps, et al., 2007; Klingner & Harry, 2006;

Ortiz, et al., 2011; Samson & Lesaux, 2009; Viel-Ruma et al., 2010) with only one large-scale survey conducted on service provision for ELs with disabilities over 12 years ago (e.g., Zehler et al., 2003). The significance of this study is further reinforced by the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education (2015) identifying service provision for ELs with disabilities as one of the 10 most common noncompliance issues in EL education. This ethnographic study illuminates both how and why noncompliance in service provision for ELs with disabilities is occurring in American schools. It is through understanding the underlying factors contributing to noncompliance that educators and researchers can then move toward developing a framework of best practices in service provision. The implications and recommendations provided below will serve as an initial critical step in remedying unethical and illegal service provision practices to inch towards this direly needed framework.

Implications and Recommendations

There are a number of broad implications derived from the findings of this dissertation that can be best summarized thematically as *Crossing Disciplinary Divides* and *Confronting Perceptions of EL Education*. Each thematic implication has nested within it additional specific implications and recommendations for teacher training and practice.

Crossing Disciplinary Divides

I have established that ELs with disabilities were at an intersection of special education and ESL, but significantly their teachers were not. In fact, only one of the 10 focal practitioners specialized in special education and ESL, and even she was rather sheepish about her qualifications to support ELs. Fundamentally, the focal practitioners'

abilities to support ELs with disabilities were contingent upon their professional expertise, which was highly discipline specific. Interdisciplinary knowledge among practitioners is on short supply; Hamann and Reeves (2013) identify this very gap that persists between practitioners as the "professional schism." Resulting, is what Yoon (2008) discovered—that as practitioners position themselves, they position their students accordingly: That is, I am a special education teacher, so you are a "special education student." For ELs with disabilities, interdisciplinary knowledge is crucial in dismantling the current tension between services. It is true that there are only so many given hours per school day and when a student requires multiple services, there can be a push and pull between these services. However, if personnel acquire interdisciplinary knowledge, ELs with disabilities can begin to receive integrated services wherein both special and linguistic needs are met. To cultivate interdisciplinarity, the onus falls on primary and secondary schools as well as teacher education programs. In short, although the education community and students need their teachers to be highly trained and qualified, there needs to be a balance between breadth and depth of knowledge. Teaching ELs with disabilities, I argue, requires both. Pre-service special educators need to take courses in ESL education and vice versa; ESL practitioners need foundational, working knowledge of special education and disabilities to support ELs with disabilities. Teacher education programs, therefore, should facilitate this interdisciplinary training by permitting inter-program course electives and when possible offering courses in educating ELs with disabilities. For primary and secondary schools, interdisciplinary professional development is paramount for in-service practitioners. Professional development typically trails far behind demographic changes (Meskill, 2005), so much in fact, that it is

often the case of "too little, too late." Practitioners urgently need professional development opportunities to support the diverse learners of their classrooms, especially those with EL and special education needs. These opportunities can range from formal (e.g., workshops and conferences) to informal events, for example, in which practitioners and paraprofessionals are the source of expert knowledge, developing opportunities for their colleagues to grow in their understanding of other disciplines' pedagogies, instructional approaches, as well as teaching and learning theories.

Effective collaborations between practitioners is another key component of acquiring and implementing interdisciplinary knowledge. Despite this fact, coteaching relationships between general education, special education, and ESL practitioners are characterized by a host of complications and limitations—some of which are institutionally created. Although practitioners are charged with the task of coteaching by their schools, the limited time allotted for coplanning only serves to undercut the effectiveness of their coteaching. Schools, however, cannot responsibly and ethically ask their teachers, whether general education, ESL, or special education, to coteach without providing sufficient, designated time for them to coplan together. As many studies have shown (e.g., Dove & Honigsfield, 2010; McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010; Peercy & Martin-Beltrán, 2010) coplanning and coteaching are inseparable facets of effective inclusive practices. Further, coplanning will foster the sharing of knowledge about the students themselves. Zehler et al. (2003) identified that data sharing was a roadblock to educating ELs with disabilities. The student data ESL practitioners had were often not shared with special education and general education practitioners. One such example could very simply be the language proficiency of the ELs with disabilities. This

information should be more than a piece of paper filed in a desk drawer. ESL practitioners need to share these data and explain what proficiency levels mean in a day-to-day sense. These descriptions, referred to as Can Do Descriptors (WIDA, 2014), are readily available and will benefit general education and special education practitioners as they work with ELs with disabilities. Other important data sharing includes very basically the disability of the EL. Although obvious, some of the practitioners in this study could not determine who was an EL (and who was not) and who had a disability (and who did not). Sharing assessment data on developmental progress in reading, such as the Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) for English and the Evaluación del Desarrollo de Lecto-escritura (EDL) for Spanish, is also significant for all practitioners in understanding the abilities of the learners.

To build interdisciplinary knowledge and form effective coteaching partnerships amongst practitioners, one critical ideological barrier in general education must be overcome—that students with linguistic and ability differences are the responsibility of specialists. At both San Pedro School and Williams Elementary, special educators were deemed the implementers of IEPs. For instance, Mrs. Harris, the third general education practitioner at Williams said, “I don’t really work with him,” referencing her role in teaching Ahmed. Instead Mrs. Motts, the AS special educator was the differentiator of instruction. The sentiment was pervasive at San Pedro as well. Students were grouped into EL and inclusion cohorts precisely for the reason that specialists could provide tailored instruction according to language proficiency and disability needs, respectively. The school psychologist shared a sentiment that was widespread: “I think in my mind when I think ‘service’ I kind of think of that classroom with that extra teacher in there,

that special ed teacher who's really delivering that extra instruction that those kids need specifically." Ms. Calderon echoed this division in roles, she said: "At the end of the day what I'm really responsible for are my kids with IEPs." Indeed, at both schools a sense of collective responsibility for students with differences was lacking—a finding corroborated by Frankl (2005), who identified that discrepant perceptions of professional roles between general and special education are prevalent. But, the CEC (2010) explicates how special education is not merely the presence of trained specialist:

> Education for children and youth with exceptionalities requires the well planned and purposeful coordination of many disciplines. Special education is a cross-disciplinary, problem-oriented field of services which is directed toward mobilizing and improving a variety of resources to meet the educational needs of children and youth with exceptionalities. (p. 12)

Indeed, included in the "variety of resources" is a team of personnel. Emphatically, the ideology at the schools that the special educator was the provider of specialized services was not nefarious, but meant to be a cogent division of labor and expertise. Nevertheless, students with disabilities' instructional supports vacated the room with the specialists. With roughly 80% of all children ages 6 to 21 spending 40% or more of their day in the general education classroom (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013c), these students' needs cannot only be the responsibility of special educators. Similarly, as ELs are estimated to constitute 25% of all students in American public schools in just ten years (U.S. Department of Education, 2006), cultivating shared responsibility amongst general education practitioners is imperative. Teacher education programs needs to address the professional implications of inclusive educational practices and create opportunities for pre-service general educators' "buy-in." Also, administrators need to do their part in creating institutional mechanisms for sharing the responsibility of

differentiation. At both schools, special education services were primarily conceptualized as a person (i.e., special education services happen when the special educator or related service provider is present). This narrow conceptualization minimizes the role of the general education practitioner in implementing mandated supports of student's IEPs and can promote the wrongful impression that general education practitioners are "off the hook" in service provision.

Another significant implication that can be gleaned from this dissertation is the implementation of bilingual special education, when feasible. There are numerous academic benefits for students educated in dual language programs, such as higher rates of EL-reclassification (Umanksy & Reardon, 2014), higher academic achievement in both languages, and lower drop-out rates amongst ELs, whereas program models that are English-only are considered remedial, resulting in the lowest academic achievement for ELs (Collier & Thomas, 2001). In fact, the achievement gap for ELs educated in these remedial programs widens upon their reclassification, suggesting that even when ELs are proficient in English, their learning has already been comprised due to the "watered down" instruction often found in English-only programs. More succinctly, "Bilingually schooled students outperform comparable monolingually schooled students in academic achievement in all subjects, after 4-7 years of dual language schooling" (Collier & Thomas, 2001, p. 7). With bilingual programs yielding preferable academic outcomes for ELs, implementing bilingual special education practices has the potential to increase academic achievement for ELs with disabilities. The CEC (2010) calls for "language-appropriate special education programs," such as bilingual special education and special education programs that integrate ESL instruction (p. 32). In the case of Williams

Elementary, bilingual special education was an impossibility because its EL population did not have homogeneous L1 backgrounds. But, for San Pedro where all of the ELs with disabilities in the school were L1 Spanish speakers, the omission of bilingual special education was antithetical to linguistic theory. Bilinguals have a Common Underlying Proficiency, or CUP, (Cummins, 1981) in which the two languages form an integrated, shared language system. As such, knowledge and skills in one language are transferrable to the other. However, by not providing special education services to ELs with disabilities in both languages, San Pedro's practices implied that the disabilities of the learners were only present in English. Further, the practice ironically promoted the theoretical orientation of a Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP; Cummins, 1984), wherein language systems are deemed separate and knowledge in the two languages is not transferrable but remains fixed within each language. Bilingual special education presents many cognitive and linguistic benefits for ELs with disabilities (Orosco & O'Connor, 2014). In short, it disrupts the "situation of disadvantage" (Yuval-Davis, 2009, p. 56)—regardless of the ELs' dominance in the L1 or L2—by eliminating the compounding nature of language proficiency and disability interacting together to create an additional learning barrier. For ELs with disabilities who are dominant in the L1, providing specialized instruction through their dominant language will lessen the cognitive burden of learning language, while also providing greater access to content. For ELs with disabilities who are not dominant in the L1, providing bilingual special education services would also lessen the burden of learning because additional, individualized supports would be provided to assist the students as they are learning in a language that presents greater difficulty to them. Thus, schools with ELs of the same L1

background should initiate the convergence of bilingualism and special education through hiring bilingual special educators, using the L1 to support learning, and making bilingual special education services a permanent fixture of the school. As bilingual special education services are provided, an intersectional educational practice is achieved and the service hierarchy that disvalues language collapses.

Confronting Perceptions of EL Education

One significant roadblock in ethical service provision for ELs with disabilities is the pervasive perception that ESL is not legal. Recall the words of an ESL practitioner: “Because they [students with disabilities] have the IEP which is legally-bound document. They don’t have IEPs for ESL, so therefore special ed becomes more of a preference, more of a priority because it is legally bound.” She later pondered in the interview the implications of the day when ESL “becomes legal.” What became salient in this interview as well as others was the misconception of ESL’s legal foundation—even an ESL practitioner did not fully understand the legal imperatives connected to ESL. In service provision for ELs (with and without disabilities) there is the critical first step of disabusing the education community of the notion that ESL services are not legal or not as legal. Surely, when one service is perceived as optional or negotiable in terms of the law, there will hardly be an effort to provide that service in the face of other pressing educational needs. The burden of informing in- and pre-service teachers about EL education law falls on both teacher education programs and ESL practitioners. It should be of no surprise that ESL practitioners often are advocates for their students and this advocacy includes informing administrators and colleagues of their legal and ethical duties to provide ELs language support. The recent reminder from the federal

government (i.e., U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2015) bespeaks of the faulty perception of ESL as voluntary and its need for correction.

In overcoming the perception that ESL services are negotiable, finer distinctions need to be drawn for what constitutes "language services." For example, supports provided in general education do constitute part of a viable language program for ELs. However, if schools assign general education practitioners with the task of providing support for ELs, they must adequately be trained to provide that support. It is illogical and more importantly, unethical to claim ESL services are being met in the general education classroom when these practitioners have no training in and limited knowledge of ESL. The Departments of Justice and Education (2015) identified utilizing general education practitioners instead of ESL-trained specialists is in noncompliance with the federal law. Categorically, ESL services are not provided just by the presence of the English language alone or—as Harper and de Jong (2009) argue—the availability of comprehensible input (i.e., modified language) and a culturally friendly atmosphere. Specialized knowledge and training are imperative for services to be provided in the general education classroom. Similarly, services provided in the L1 are also part of a viable language support program, but this is contingent upon the ELs having a dominance in the L1. Claiming that ELs are receiving "language services" during L1 instruction is illogical and unethical when the ELs are not dominant in the L1. If nothing else, their learning barriers intensify. As such, schools need to consider the individual linguistic abilities of the ELs in their service provision practices, so that ELs actually receive language support that enhances, not hinders, their access to curriculum.

It is not just personal perceptions of ESL that require transformation: Policy at the federal and state levels requires reform. I argue that categorically the existing laws offer little protection for EL students. For instance, the state of Pennsylvania utilizes the Basic Education Circulars (BEC) Guidelines for ESL education, but even the word *guidelines* connotes not a legal requirement but rather a set of flexible recommendations. At the federal level, the noncompliance evaluation process overseen by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) offers more bark than bite for schools that are underservicing their EL population, as the evaluation process is intended to be corrective, not punitive (Gellman-Beer, 2012). Thus, I argue that the legal stakes require heightening for ELs and even more so for those additionally identified with a disability. Although the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education (2015) released a letter clarifying common issues in ESL education with specific guidance for their remedying—which is a significant step towards protecting ELs with disabilities—this letter, too, further positions ESL as a "flexible" and "loose" service, not governed by laws that offer specificity. First, by presenting these policies in the form of a letter, the Departments have inadvertently reinforced the notion its content is merely intended to offer assistance, not to explicate the interpretation of federal policies. Furthermore, the extent to which this letter is making its way to desks of administrators and practitioners who negotiate these policies in their schools in uncertain. As such, the policies in the letter regarding ELs with disabilities' rights to dual services must be specifically codified to receive recognition as legally legitimate. Otherwise, these policies remain an ideal—not a legal imperative—and the educational rights of ELs with disabilities remain dubiously protected.

Suggested Future Research

In recent years long-term ELs (LTELs), those who have been receiving ESL services for more than six years, have gained attention in research (Kim & García, 2014; Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2012; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Some studies have found that approximately 60% of ELs do not exit ESL programs in sufficient time (Olsen, 2010; Umansky & Reardon, 2014), which becomes critical for ELs gaining access to more advanced academic classes (Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). To what extent ELs with disabilities are able to exit ESL programs remains unknown. Despite much attention given to how ELs become identified with disabilities (Esparza Brown & Doolittle, 2008; Orosco & Klingner, 2010; Ortiz et al., 2011), research has yet to explore how and under what circumstances ELs with disabilities are reclassified as learners with disabilities.

A majority of extant research on ELs with disabilities has included elementary ELs with disabilities (Hardin, Roach-Scott, & Peisner-Feinberg, 2007; Klingner & Harry, 2006; Samson and Lesaux, 2009) with secondary grade students only examined to determine referral trends to special education (Artiles et al., 2005; De Valenzuela et al., 2006; Hibel & Jasper, 2012). Many ELs, though, remain dually identified with LDs into their middle school years (Zehler et al., 2003) and the landscape of their education remains unexplored. As such, future studies should investigate how ELs with disabilities receive all of their educational services in the presence of more cognitively and linguistically demanding curriculum, complicated student schedules, and additional course offerings. Also, with no studies including ELs with disabilities' perspectives on their own education, the teaching and research communities would gain from hearing the

voices of ELs with disabilities as they share about their lived experiences of their educational settings.

In my dissertation I found that school personnel's perceptions of parents was influential in service provision: Parents of students with disabilities were believed to be more informed about their children's educational services whereas parents of ELs were thought to have limited knowledge of their children's mandated services. Future research should include comparative studies of parents' perceptions and knowledge of their children's educational services and rights to understand whether these alleged differences between the two groups exist.

Finally, this dissertation illuminated the tensions that arise when schools attempt to provide services to meet the complex needs of ELs with disabilities, resulting in the limiting or relinquishing of ESL and bilingual services. Future research should explore successful school models of service provision where educators are able to appropriate macro educational policies to deliver ESL, special education, and related services. Specific attention should be given to questions of how service provision practices target the needs of students while also adhering to educational law. Surely, investigating effective, balanced systems of service delivery will benefit the educational community by supplying exemplary models to emulate.

Limitations

Despite the significance of the study's implication for educational practice and teacher training, there are a few methodological and theoretical limitations of this dissertation study that must be addressed. One limitation of the study is the absent voices of the focal ELs with disabilities. This study focused largely on the institutional factors at

play in service provision for ELs with disabilities and as such these factors were foregrounded throughout data collection and analysis, while the focal ELs with disabilities were often backgrounded. In part, this focus was tied to my research questions, but also there were several practical operating rationales: (a) the learners' ages, (b) the learners' statuses, and (c) the schools' stipulations. The focal learners of this study ranged from age six to eight. The questions I had as the investigator pertained to institutional and legal matters (e.g., How were ESL services provided?) of which they as young learners may not be aware. Second, the intersection of the focal learners' disabilities and language proficiencies also made me reluctant to interview them. To what extent they were even aware of their disabilities is not clear to me even having spent months with these children. The presence of a disability was not the only determiner: The schools' expressed preference for me to not interview the focal ELs was the most consequential. Williams Elementary did not want parents involved in study; in fact, the district administrator made it a condition of the study. Consequently, without any contact with parents, I was unable to obtain the parental approval necessary for student interviews. To keep the methodological design and research focus in alignment with Williams Elementary, I did not interview the focal ELs with disabilities at San Pedro School.

Further, because parental consent is also required to access IEPs, I was not able to examine the IEP documents first-hand, although throughout fieldwork administrators and practitioners provided key student data, such as diagnosed disability, proficiency level, linguistic and national background, learning needs and goals, and even measures of academic performance. Therefore, I cannot determine to what extent the practitioners

implemented *all* of the accommodations, modifications, and supports identified in each student's IEP.

Since Williams Elementary stipulated that parents were not to be involved in the study, I did not interview the focal ELs' parents. I attempted to gain access to the parents of the ELs with disabilities at San Pedro, but because this was not included in my original proposal to the Board of Directors, the administrators at the school were unable to grant me access. Further, one administrator in a meeting shared that parents are often unaware of the specific services their child receive; they tend only to know that their child participates in a dual language program, again reinforcing the importance of future research including parental knowledge and perceptions of educational services.

Another limitation of the data I collected was that one focal practitioner at Williams Elementary declined to participate in any interviews. Mrs. Harris, Ahmed's general education practitioner, said, "I don't really work with him" as the reason for not wanting to participant in an interview. I explained that I would ask questions not just relating to Ahmed, yet she reasoned that she did not have anything helpful to offer me. This was a disappointment, but she was willing to participate in informal conversations and allowed me to observe in her classroom, which proved significant, as this was the location for general education, AS, and ESL services. Without interview data, Mrs. Harris' perspectives cannot be fully represented in the data.

Finally, one theoretical limitation must also be acknowledged. By narrowing the study to focus on disability and language, other minority social categories, such as race and socioeconomic status were not included in the analysis. Through focusing on language and disability, in some ways I inadvertently flattened other significant

differences (Crenshaw, 1991; Guidroz & Berger, 2009). All of the focal ELs with disabilities were racial minorities—either Latino/a or Asian—and for 9 of the 10 students socioeconomic status was also a significant factor. Although this dissertation did not investigate all of the focal students' intersectional social categories, that is not to claim that these social categories were inconsequential to the learners and their educational experiences. A more comprehensive intersectional investigation should consider how, for example, poverty, race, language, and disability intersect to inform the opportunities ELs with disabilities receive.

Final Conclusions

This study contributes to area of educational research that is sorely underresearched. To date, no studies have qualitatively explored how services are provided to students dually identified for ESL and special education services. In doing so, the findings uncover how schools ironically circumvent some federal education laws as they try vigorously to uphold others. The federal government determined, however, that service provision that creates "either/or" dichotomy is in violation of the law:

> The Departments are aware that some school districts have a formal or informal policy of "no dual services," *i.e.*, a policy of allowing students to receive either EL services or special education services, but not both. Other districts have a policy of delaying disability evaluations of EL students for special education and related services for a specified period of time based on their EL status. These policies are impermissible under the IDEA and Federal civil rights laws. (Department of Justice & Department of Education, 2015)

I posit this is one of the most significant determinations in service provision for ELs with disabilities, albeit, further specific laws for these learners will be imperative to protect their educational rights. In the end, this dissertation at its core is about what ELs with

disabilities need for their academic success. One of their greatest needs is for educators and researchers to continue to wrestle with, question, and contest policies that subordinate aspects of these learners' intersectional needs. Yet the status quo of only providing one service is tempting, offering efficiency and logistical simplicity. Keating (2009), however, offers some cautionary words about the appeal of residing in the status quo. She remarks, "Status-quo stories train us to believe that the way things are is the way they must be. This belief becomes self-fulfilling: we do not try to make change because we believe change is impossible to make" (p. 83). Admittedly, providing dual services for ELs with disabilities will be a daunting task, requiring additional resources and the willingness to return to the drawing table to reconstruct service delivery practices. Although a great challenge, for ELs with disabilities it is the first critical step in ensuring equity and opportunity in learning.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: PRACTITIONER INTERVIEW ONE

During the next 30-45 minutes a semi-structured interview will be conducted. The investigator will ask the following questions but is not limited to this question set.

Experience and Background Knowledge:

1) When did you begin teaching?
2) Describe your history as a teaching professional.
3) What types of degrees have you earned?
4) During your teacher education program how well were you prepared to instruct students in special education?
5) During your teacher education program how well were you prepared to instruct ELLs?
6) To what extent were you prepared to teach ELLs with special needs?
7) How would you describe the extent of your knowledge of disabilities? (developmental, learning, etc.)
8) How would you describe the extent of your knowledge of second language acquisition or the process of learning a second language?
9) To what extent have you received professional development in topics relating to special education and ESL?
10) In your years of teaching have you encountered many ELLs with special needs? If so, what kinds of special needs did they have (LD, emotional disturbance, etc.)?
11) Please describe your history teaching ELLs with special needs.

Population:

12) As an ESL teacher, what is the greatest challenge to teaching this unique group of students?

13) In your opinion what do we, as teachers and researchers, still need to know about ELLs with special needs?

14) What are the greatest needs for this population of students?

Program Model:

15) What program model do you think is the most beneficial for ELLs with special needs (e.g., pull-out, inclusion, push-in)? Why?

16) How would you characterize the program model used at this school?

17) What are the advantages and disadvantages of the current model?

Pedagogical Approaches:

18) How would you describe your pedagogical approaches?

19) Please describe your rationale for the pedagogical approaches you employ.

20) What factors do you consider when deciding which pedagogical approaches to *not* use?

21) Are there any additional thoughts you would like to share on the topics we discussed? If yes, please share.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: PRACTITIONER INTERVIEW TWO

During the next 45 minutes a semi-structured interview will be conducted. The investigator will ask the following questions but is not limited to this question set. Questions may be adapted to more specifically target the approaches used by practitioners during the observations.

Observations

1) When I have observed sometimes you are bouncing around checking in the students and sometimes, like the other week you were taking a more primary instructional role? How do you and Mrs. H make that decision?
2) When you are providing more of the scaffolding for the ELLs, how would you describe this interaction? What are looking to accomplish?
3) How do you negotiate getting ESL instruction in when Lauren is already there, keeping Ahmed on task and monitoring his progress?
4) When we both went to the TESOL session on co-teaching we heard about teachers who have a lot of co-planning time, how much time per week do you spend "co-planning" with Mrs. H. would you say?
5) The 3rd graders – what are their linguistic needs, especially Ahmed?
6) The 1st graders – what are their linguistic needs, especially Lula?
7) When you are working with Fredo, Marti, and Lula it seems to me that you are trying to push them to produce language through writing and speaking. Is this your primary goal?

8) Would you describe the three students as having higher BIC skills than CALP skills?

ESL vs. Special Education

9) At one point you mentioned to me that special education trumps ESL? What makes you come to that conclusion? Legalities? ELL population is new to the school?

Advocacy

10) Recently, you mentioned the difficulty of balancing advocacy with flexibility. I have been thinking about that a lot. Can you tell me about that?
11) What else do you think you need to advocate for?
12) You said that it's important to be flexible with your colleagues, so that later they will work for you. Has this experienced happened in the past? What did your flexibility accomplish?

Positioning

13) I have noticed some interesting observations throughout my time here. Ahmed it seems it treated by the other teachers as if he is only a student with Autism and not an ELL. Why is that do you think?
14) Also, I have noticed that Lula is essentially treated as if she is a regular education student who is "different." Why is that?

Next steps

15) Would you mind sharing some of the ideas you had about improvements or changes?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: KEY SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL

During the next 45 minutes a semi-structured interview will be conducted. The investigator will ask the following questions but is not limited to this question set. Questions may be adapted to more specifically target the particular aspects of the professional's role within the school.

Professional History

1) Please describe your history as an educator.

2) Why did you want to become a principal?

School

3) If you were to describe this school if someone who has never been here, how would you describe it?

4) In your years here, have you noticed any change in the student population? If so, how?

5) What are the greatest attributes of this school?

6) In my time here, I see smartboards, ample books and supplies in the classrooms, would you describe this school as being "rich in resources"? If so, how?

7) Are there specific challenges you find this school and/or school district is facing? Could you please describe them to me?

Autistic Support Program

8) Teachers here at Williams Elementary have told me that you brought in the AS program. Can you tell me about how and why you made this decision?

9) Why was your ultimate goal in bringing the AS program here to Williams Elementary?

10) Would you say that the program has changed the culture her at Williams Elementary? If so, how?

Professional Development

11) Teachers have said they have received PD, especially relating to disabilities when the AS program was brought here, to what extent are you involved in making the decisions about PD?

12) If you are involved in PD decision-making, can you describe how you evaluate the options?

13) Since now there is inclusion for students with disabilities and ELLs, how have the teachers been prepared for more of a co-teaching model?

ELL Population

14) What do you foresee happening to the ELL population here in the school district? Do you see it increasing, decreasing, and why?

15) What challenges do you think educators face when teaching ELLs?

APPENDIX D

ALL CODES PRIOR TO REDUCTION

ambiguity/uncertainty about disability/language
co-planning/co-teaching
communication between teachers
description of behavior management
description of classroom
description of instruction
description of materials/supplies
English instead of Spanish
IEPs
instructional priorities
interactions with peers
language proficiency
legalities
mislabeled
off-task/disruptive
parents
Positive Behavior Support (PBS)
professional development
professional support
program model
resources
rostering
rostering effects
schedule
school culture
service delivery location
service delivery through a language
service delivery through general education
small group instruction
small number of ELs
time
two-way bilingual education program

APPENDIX E

FINAL CODEBOOK

Table 16

Final Codebook

Theme	Code
School Culture Matters	practitioner role and responsibilities
	professional development
	professional support
	resources
	school culture
Logistics Matters	co-planning/co-teaching
	mislabeled
	program model
	rostering
	rostering effects
	scheduling
	service delivery location
	time
Some Services Are (Not) Negotiable	English instead of Spanish
	IEPs
	legalities
	parents
	service delivery through a language
	service delivery through general education
	service delivery through small group
Some ELs Need ESL, Others Do Not	language proficiency
	small number of ELs