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UNDERSTANDING THE MULTICULTURAL EXPERIENCE
OF LEP ADOLESCENTS

by

SHARLENE SNEAD MONAHAN

(Under the Direction of William Reynolds)

ABSTRACT

This inquiry is a qualitative study of the multicultural experience of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students who are learning a second language in an inner-city high school in southeastern Georgia. The LEP students are enrolled or have been enrolled in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.

Using three strands of inquiry, critical phenomenological, narrative, and anthropological, I addressed three major issues. One, I examined the struggle of LEP students to learn English at a proficiency level to pass the state-mandated test for graduation and receive a high-school diploma. Not only must the LEP students learn a new language to meet the same requirements as mainstream students but also face the added adolescent pressure of a multicultural melting pot with a student population comprised 94% of African American students and the larger culture of a southern urban city in America. Two, I examined the meaning of multiculturalism in the school environment and its effect on the culture, curriculum, and the psycho-sociological well-being of the LEP students. Three, I examined my role and impact on these LEP students as a White upper-middle class foreign-language teacher.

My data collection methods included a history and a general portrait of the school, informal conversations and formal interviews, individual and group discussions,

and reflective journals, both mine and the participants'. The ESOL teacher, Magda, and the paraprofessional aide, Lan, are adult participants. Hector, Hiral, Juliana, Hai, Celine, Emiliano, and Seynabou are student participants.

The major contributions of my research to the field of education are:

1) identifying the struggles of LEP students to meet high-school standards; 2) giving LEP adolescents an opportunity to voice concerns about "fitting in;" 3) exploring the implications of LEP students' assimilation into this microcosm of America's multicultural society; 4) allowing the ESOL teacher and teacher aide to verbalize the state of the ESOL program and its status within the school environment; 5) allowing me to share my personal experience in foreign language and culture acquisition; and 6) opening the lines of communication among the stakeholders in the educational setting—parents, educators, students and support personnel—about the ESOL program.

INDEX WORDS: Index term, Dissertation, Georgia Southern University, Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Multicultural education

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OF “LEP” ADOLESCENTS

By

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B.A., Stetson University, 1973

M.Ed., Georgia Southern University, 1993

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2007

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OF “LEP” ADOLESCENTS

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Electronic Version Approved:
May 2007

DEDICATION

To my late father,
Edwin M. Snead (1920-2006),
for instilling within me
a sense of adventure
and the obligation that all of us share
to become world citizens.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the past 12 years I have taught with a person whom I admire and to whom I owe many thanks for keeping me focused on the important role of a second language in our lives. Magda Kahn, my friend, my mentor, my confidant, and my source of inspiration in the field of foreign language, has contributed immensely to the content of this paper. Her long-time dedication to the ESOL program and her devotion to the students who struggle daily to master a difficult language, English, have touched my heart. I chose to focus on the ESOL program at the high school where we both work, in part because of her example, and in part because I believe the ESOL students are often treated differently than their American counterparts. ESOL students not only face the difficulty of forced immersion to acquire a new language for survival and success but also the added strain of living in a new culture (America)—often in balance with their native culture at home—and a new school with a student population comprised 94% by African American teenagers from low-and-moderate income families. I have not observed nor experienced in my school Horace Mann's tome that education is the great equalizer, especially when I hear teachers bemoan the lack of training and added work to meet the challenges to teach effectively ESOL students. I am hopeful this research will prove an enlightening tribute to Magda's dedication and grim determination to prepare these newcomers for life in the United States and become the impetus for improving the education of ESOL students.

I would also like to thank my husband, Pat, for the countless hours he has spent guiding me through the winding pathways of the Internet, WordPerfect and Word. The ease at which he understands the nuances of computers and the world of knowledge at our fingertips never ceases to amaze me. On the occasions when I cursed the loss of work by computer gremlins, he simply made a few keystrokes to retrieve it.

I would be remiss not to mention my gratitude to the professors in the Curriculum Studies Program at Georgia Southern University. Through their eyes I have opened mine to the necessity to speak for the marginal individuals—those souls, often excluded from mainstream America, whose contributions build upon the foundation which built America. Thank you Dr. Bryan Deever (posthumously), Dr. William Reynolds (my advisor), Dr. Delores Liston, Dr. Natalie Adams, Dr. Ming Fang He, and Dr. Grigory Dmitriyev. A special thanks to Dr. Dmitriyev for guiding me toward the experience of writing a dissertation in the class, “Regional Issues in Multicultural Education”—hard, and sometimes tedious, work; innumerable hours interviewing, questioning, and transcribing; and searching for the most up-to-date information. The research for the class resulted in a “practice dissertation” and served as the springboard for this dissertation.

Also, I extend many heartfelt thanks to my Spanish professors, Dr. David Alley and Dr. Judith Schomber, who guided me through the M.Ed. Program at Georgia Southern University. Dr. Alley became the first to relate to me about plans to develop an Ed.D. in Curriculum Studies at the university and encouraged me to enroll. I appreciate and respect Dr. Alley’s friendship, kindness, and patience with “Una gringa.”

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: SHORELINES

The ESOL program at the high school where I teach provided me fertile ground to explore for my research and to develop a study of interest and with significance. The books and articles by Freire (1970, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000), McLaren (1997, 2000), Delpit (1995), Nieto (1996, 2002), Carger (1996), Soto et. al. (2002), Pinar et.al (1996), Greene (1995), and many other researchers in the field of critical, narrative, and anthropological inquiry became the basis for delving into the program and developing an area of study. Qualitative research methodology and a critical, phenomenological framework provided a structure which enabled me to initiate questions, develop findings, and reach important conclusions.

The foundation for my interest dates back to 1988, when I started teaching Spanish at River High School (a pseudonym referred hereafter as RHS). From my first day at RHS, I began to observe up-close the Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class and their struggle to command a new language and avoid a culture clash as part of becoming an “American,” hyphenated or otherwise (Donaldson, 1996; Nieto, 1995). The ESOL program began in 1980 at RHS, the only high school which offers the program among seven public high schools in the county. Besides the difficulty of learning a new language amid other educational challenges, LEP students at RHS also faced other unusual dynamics. Federal policy categorizes RHS, an inner-city school in a medium-sized city in southeast Georgia, as a Title I school since 66% of the students receive free/reduced lunch based on their household incomes. According to the Georgia Department of Education’s 2003

Profiles Report (2004), Black/African American students comprise 94% of the student population. The balance of the student population includes Hispanic, 2%; White/Non-Hispanic, 2%; Multiracial, 1%; Asian/Pacific Islander, 1%; and Native American, 0%.

Since RHS administrators placed the ESOL program within the Foreign Language Department, I began teaching in an adjoining class and developed a friendship with the ESOL teacher, who was born in Cuba. Our mutual interest in the Spanish language and culture, coupled with her and her family's personal experiences as a result of Fidel Castro's overthrow of Cuba's government, provided the basis for many hours of discussion about the issues affecting an individual's identity, self-concept, and place in society. Magda and her parents fled from the communist-governed island in 1968 after Cuban school officials expelled her from high school because of comments she made in history class about the textbook's biased slant on information. Her family's arduous journey from Cuba to Spain and then to the United States provided a lesson in courage and adaptation which resonates still in her professional commitment to teach LEP students. Magda inspired me to want to tell her story as well as the stories of the LEP students. Today, we remain close friends. Our informal conversations run as deep and as wide as the shorelines that once separated us. My personal journals, field notes, and formal and informal conversations with her reflect these interpersonal dialogues.

The LEP students at RHS intrigued me from day one because of my interest in their process to learn a new language and in their process of adapting to a culture new to them. Not only did LEP students face the difficulties of a learning English but also their inclusion into public schools exposed them to a medley of different customs, beliefs, and cultural practices. During my course work in the Curriculum Studies area of the doctoral

program at Georgia Southern University, two defining projects energized me to pursue my interest in LEP students. First, during Spring semester 1999, I completed an informal research study for Dr. Grigory Dmitriyev's course. The study focused on how well the educators at RHS understood and applied the curriculum to the relatively small group of LEP students in the ESOL program. This informal study involved elements of quantitative and qualitative research methodology, and because of it I became anxious to follow up the informal research project with a more formal study.

Second, during Fall semester 1999, in a course with Dr. He, I wrote an autobiography, another springboard for this research. In writing that paper, I came to terms with the concept of "Other." Writing my story and reflecting upon my personal journey from childhood to forty-something, I realized that my life's story affected how I internalized information in my graduate studies and as an educator. I also became more active in examining the various roles and responsibilities that I have assumed through the years—daughter, sister, babysitter, girlfriend, scholarly student (valedictorian/cum laude), traveler, wife, mother, blue-collar worker, Cub Scout leader, educator, aerobics instructor, graduate student, and doctoral student. This examination helped me to discover my situated self, my educated voice. Grumet (in Pinar et.al., 1996) identifies three elements or parts to educational voice: situation, narrative, and interpretation. She explains:

The first, situation, acknowledges that we tell our story as a speech event that involves the social, cultural, and political relations in and to which we speak.

Narrative, or narratives as I prefer, invites all the specificity, presence, and power that the symbolic and semiotic registers of our speaking can provide. And

interpretation provides another voice, a reflexive and more distant one ... None is privileged (p. 526).

Grumet's "interpretive" voice resonated throughout this study.

Central to my study was interweaving the struggle of foreign language learners with my personal experiences and the many roles I have assumed in part, but mostly, as an educator, the realm in which I have devoted half of my life. As a result of the impact from two courses in particular, I began to make sense of the cohesive nature of critical phenomenological, narrative, and anthropological inquiry—new ideas, new awakenings, new interpretations, and innovative strategies.

My Journey—The Inquiry Begins

English is my first language, which makes me a foreign language learner for any other language. I have acquired Spanish as a foreign language. Furthermore, I professionally teach Spanish as a foreign language educator. Despite this background, I do not consider Spanish a second language to me. I do not consider myself bilingual, nor do I consider myself as bicultural. Let me explain the difference in terms of the LEP students. These students learn English as a second language, but their acquisition of it directly affects their ability to graduate from high school, to advance to higher education opportunities, or to earn a livelihood. However, I acquired Spanish as a foreign language because of my interest in it. I do not depend upon Spanish to fit into American society, although teaching it has kept me employed for the past 24 years. Lambert (2002) states:

Distinction begins to emerge when one thinks of the United States, where English is the only national language and where, in oversimplified terms, if English isn't a person's home language then he/she is expected to make it his/her "second"

language, whereas if English is the home language, any other language one might learn is “foreign” (p. 1) .

Unlike LEP students, my family speaks only English. I was raised in a Southern, Euro-centric, upper-middle class socioeconomic family. My upbringing excluded multinational cultural awareness. My heritage can be traced back on both sides of the family to generations of Southerners—although my great grandparents on my mother’s side spoke Lithuanian as they entered Ellis Island after World War I.

My lifetime love affair with foreign language began in 1962, when my second grade teacher attempted to introduce the rudiments of Spanish to a rambunctious second-grade class. Unknown to the teacher, Mrs. Violet Felker, I was captivated by her stories of visiting Mexico. In my naiveté I imagined Mexico as an exotic, grand country on distant shores whose culture and language compared to the romantic setting of fairy tales. This romantic notion of Mexico served as a catalyst for me to become an avid reader at an early age. I read the volumes of *National Geographic* which lined the bookshelves at home. I marveled at the beautiful drawings of Tenochtitlan, the great city built on a lake and ruled by the Aztec Warlord Montezuma. I became in awe of the great pyramids of Teotihuacán, Uxmal, and Chichen Itza. I let my imagination transport me to Mexico City, Guadalajara, Veracruz, and the Yucatán Peninsula as well as to other lands such as the Dark Continent where my hero, Tarzan, swung through the trees; to Egypt amid the stifling, dusty burial chambers of the pharaohs; or to the Orient amid the colorful parades of the dragons.

Hearing my use of foreign words in class and practicing them at home fascinated me beyond my wildest dreams and further fueled my interest. A new world opened itself

to me. I embraced this new knowledge with utmost enthusiasm and profound interest. And it was fun! I became more delighted when my revered teachers continued through the years to introduce and expound upon the lives and language of our Spanish neighbors to the South. *Los mexicanos* became my newly acquired foreign friends. While never a substitute for my American pals, my foreign friends showed me new worlds and different customs and lifestyles via closed-circuit television, which was piped into the classrooms of Lenox Elementary School.

My father's stories of his travels in Mexico and South America further promoted my interest in Spanish. He practiced architecture in Daytona Beach for 35 years, but before he began his professional career and married my mother, he ventured to the pyramids of Mexico and to the Peruvian cities of Cuzco and Lima to study the ruins of Machu Picchu. The architectural accomplishments in the tangled jungles of the Yucatán and the cloud-shrouded altitude of the Andes Mountains fascinated him. He also collected ancient artifacts. His stories and my vivid imagination transported me to these places. Between my dad's stories at home and increasing exposure at school to new worlds, I became entranced with the wonders of foreign cultures and language.

World forces also helped to encourage my interest. In 1957 when the Soviet Union launched the *Sputnik 1*, the United States' nemesis did not realize the significance of this act to spur America's interest in its space program and foreign languages. As part of the United States' move to prove global superiority in science, America accelerated foreign language study to jog brilliant, complacent minds and expand global knowledge. Since this move took full stride during the same era of my awakening, I benefited from this national movement. Thus, my quest to acquire a foreign language began, and in

reflection long before the end, the journey can only be described as fruitful. New sights, new cultures, new experiences, a rewarding career, tolerance, patience, introspection, and a realization of my privileged opportunities make me the educator that I am today. In part, I have relied on a process of remembering and articulating my own experiences to create a “lens of empathy,” which has allowed me to discover that “[s]elf-knowledge is empowering” (Bateson, 1989, p. 5). My journeys to England, Israel, Mexico, Greece, Spain, and many parts of the United States have instilled within me an awareness of my role as a citizen of the world. Naussbaum articulates, “The task of world citizenship requires the would-be world citizen to become a sensitive and empathetic interpreter. Education at all ages should cultivate the capacity of such interpreting” (1997, p. 63). Therefore, my role as educator and language/culture interpreter has provided opportunities to empathize with students who are struggling to learn a second language—often times through no choice of their own.

Statement of the Problem

For the student with limited-English-proficiency (LEP) or non-existent English, the English as a Second Language (ESOL) classroom—the space where the student learns, practices, and improves a language other than the native tongue—has become the springboard for the awareness of and integration into a different culture. The TESOL Association defines an ESOL student as a learner in the process of acquiring English as an additional language. These are students who may not speak English at all or, at least, who do not speak, understand, and write English with the same academic success as their classmates because they did not grow up speaking English (rather they primarily spoke another language at home) (TESOL Association, 1998).

At RHS, these students are expected to assimilate as expeditiously as possible into “mainstream” regular classes with the goal of passing a state-mandated test for graduation. In my observation the obstacles which the students face in the assimilation process are several: 1) Stereotypical biases and prejudices often taint how mainstream teachers and students view LEP students; 2) LEP students generally feel isolated and alienated because they often times do not understand what the school’s educators, students, and staff are saying to them; 3) Few, if any, modifications for the ESOL student are being implemented and reinforced in the mainstream classrooms; and 4) ESOL students often fail their classes, which causes a stressful situation at school and at home. Schools such as RHS are “the inevitable assimilators” (Nieto, 1996, p. 348) of students, but schools should also recognize “the need to accommodate diversity in more humane and sensitive ways than in the past” (Nieto, p 348).

Purpose of the Study

As my research unfolded, I focused on accomplishing three major goals. First, I wanted to find out whether ESOL students received an equitable opportunity to attain educational success in school as their mainstream counterparts. I also intended to identify barriers to learning. While committing myself to remain objective, I also knew from many years of observation that the majority of teachers who taught LEP students had never received formal training to meet the educational, social, and cultural needs of LEP students—despite that the state mandated such training. Instead, the teachers focused more on trying to meet the needs of LEP students in the same way they taught all students. In other words, teachers succeeded at equal opportunity but what about

equitable opportunity? The ESOL teacher's and students' personal stories and journals proved valuable to accomplishing the realization of this goal.

Second, I wanted to explore what types of assimilation and acculturation problems existed for LEP students. The problems that I observed included non-immersion of LEP students into the general student body, frustrated mainstream teachers who faced barriers in communicating with LEP students, a lack of positive administrative involvement when confronted with social and disciplinary incidents involving LEP students, and strained communication among the school, the community, and the parents of LEP students. Yet, the ESOL program generated a few success stories as told by the LEP students who managed to assimilate more easily. I planned to develop possible proactive approaches to begin creating a multicultural, diverse, and positive accommodating atmosphere in the school. For many of the ESOL students, RHS represents their first experience in America's system of education.

As an additional research goal, I wanted to examine my privileged position, my "Whiteness," as it affected and possibly caused bias in my search and subsequent research for an equitable opportunity, a more suited environment where the LEP students learned to live "the American Dream," but not be forced to forget their own heritage. I realized that my personal heritage might make it difficult for me to empathize with the numerous barriers and insecurities that the LEP students might be experiencing. I had only my experience as a dedicated foreign language teacher to support my desire that LEP students' voices be recognized and acknowledged in their new homeland.

To accomplish these goals, I critically examined the role of the educators in the school as facilitators and whether the curriculum reflected the national trend toward a

more inclusive multicultural perspective. I obtained insight from LEP students about the challenge to learn a language new to them for purposes of their future opportunities and also about their struggle to adapt to a new culture. I also examined critically whether my privileged background influenced any bias toward this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Are mainstream teachers adequately prepared to instruct LEP students in an equal and equitable manner which prepares them to pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test and to graduate on time, and are improvements necessary in the curriculum to address the needs of the LEP students, especially the preparation of mainstream teachers to present the curriculum?
2. Within the school does a multicultural, diverse and positive atmosphere exist which encourages acceptance of cultural differences and promotes assimilation into mainstream student life, and if not, how could a multicultural, diverse and positive-accommodating atmosphere be created?
3. Does my upbringing in a mainstream Euro-centric culture, and without the disadvantage of learning a second language as the basis for my education, create expectations about learning and possibly cause bias in my research?

I believe the answers to these questions will improve opportunities for LEP students to pass the state-mandated test for graduation and receive a diploma by improving the procedures and practices now in place at RHS and the school system.

Theoretical Framework

Public school students in the United States represent multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic backgrounds. This fact often becomes of foremost importance in political agendas and platforms of those whom we elect to be our “voices” in the democratic arena. My research proposes to (re)define the multi-isms as they relate to the curriculum and the dissemination of curricular content. I contend that most educators at RHS probably misunderstand the term multiculturalism and misrepresent its meaning. For nearly two decades, I have observed the teachers and students in my school and have focused on the plight of the LEP students and the ESOL teacher. I proposed this study to determine whether RHS met academically, socially, and culturally the needs of the ESOL students. I intend to explore and expose the various viewpoints of critical postmodern scholars, individuals who think, as I do, the marginalized “Others” are academically neglected and socially ignored, except when the school needed their (the ESOL students) talents during the annual “cultural diversity” week. Furthermore, I question whether the curriculum that measures success of studies and testing toward successful graduation adequately considers the LEP students’ cultural and ethnic identities.

When exploring the definitions of multiculturalism and multicultural education and its racial, ethnic, and political ramifications, I use a critical voice. Thus, despite that the LEP students, as marginal students with a silent voice, enter into the mainstream of classes at RHS, educators know little or lack experience about immersion and the assimilation process. The students lack any choice except either to assimilate quickly with high hopes or fail. No option exists at RHS for either a bilingual program, which would enable an ESOL student to learn subject matter in his/her first language, or a

sheltered program, which would pair an ESOL student with an English-speaking student for one-on-one help.

To exacerbate the situation further, all RHS educators participated in only one after-school ESOL in-service program, which occurred in 1999. The ESOL Program Specialist, at the Georgia Department of Education, presented the program, “Accommodating Limited English Proficient Students in Regular Education Classrooms.” The program took place in the school cafeteria from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Thursday, October 21, 1999. No other in-service has been offered during school hours since that time. In 2002, RHS’ ESOL teacher offered a week-long Summer workshop. She extended invitations to area schools and to schools in surrounding counties. To encourage participation, the Georgia Department of Education offered staff development credits and a stipend. According to the ESOL teacher (journal entry, August, 2002), three educators from the RHS faculty, five educators from within the county and 10 educators from other counties attended. The workshop was intended to familiarize educators with the ESOL program and to outline specific classroom modifications necessary to meet the needs of the ESOL students, academically, socially, and culturally. The poor attendance spoke volumes.

Since 1988, I have observed that the ESOL students are experiencing mainstream schooling which “reinforces the dominant culture’s way of producing subjectivities by rationalizing and accommodating agency into existing regimes of truth” (Sleeter and McLaren, 1995):

The “fitting in” process could be characterized as ‘Membership-oriented’ pedagogy which requires that teachers assist students in acquiring those necessary

interpretive skills and forms of cultural capital that will enable them to negotiate contemporary zones of contest—the often complex, complicated, and conflictual public spaces within the larger society. The dominant culture of schooling mirrors that of the larger culture in so far as teachers and students willingly and unwittingly situate themselves with a highly politicized field of power relations that partake of unjust race, class, and gender affiliations (p.10).

With a school student population of 94% African American, the ESOL students also became immersed into a culture that does not reflect the demographics of local, regional, state or national demographics (see 2003, School Report Card). The subject matter in the mainstream classrooms reflects dominant culture tenets; thus, European ethno-centric content becomes the basis for the curricula for ESOL students and their American peers. However, the socialization of these students mirrors minority culture norms and practices. Especially in the acquisition of American English, ESOL students absorb a linguistic style and vernacular, which are not standard.

Data Collection Methods

I conducted a qualitative inquiry into the multicultural experiences of LEP students who are enrolled in the ESOL program at RHS. I was interested in discerning how their immersion process was grounded in the concept of assimilation as understood in the United States. I followed three strands of inquiry for data collection: Critical phenomenological, narrative, and anthropological.

Research participants included seven LEP students: The students' emigrated from Africa, Argentina, Colombia, India, Mexico, and Vietnam. The ESOL teacher, an emigrant from Cuba, and the ESOL teacher's paraprofessional aide, an emigrant from

Vietnam, also participated in the study. I separately interviewed students and teachers. I tape-recorded and transcribed all interviews. As a follow-up procedure, I provided transcriptions to the interviewees for review and correction. In addition, I also initiated informal classroom conversations with the participants and maintained notes on observations during the year-long study. LEP students kept personal journals. While providing suggested topics, I also encouraged participants to write about other topics. I filed all recorded, transcribed, and written documents in a locked, safe location. All information will remain strictly confidential. To protect identities, the study does not use last names, and I used a pseudonym for the name of the high school.

Limitations of the Study

I acknowledge up-front my empathy for the plight of LEP students. Throughout the past 17 years, I have observed as LEP students in classes struggled to keep up with American students because of language barriers, and I have seen them ridiculed and teased by mainstream students and, in some cases, by teachers. My tone at times might be interpreted as negatively accusatory toward some educators at RHS, especially since I generally observed little interest on their part to attend workshops or meetings about LEP students' experience in our school. Yet, I have also witnessed success stories of motivated LEP students who, despite the struggles of learning a new language and dealing with cultural chasms, pass the state-mandated graduation exam and receive a diploma. Despite that this study often intersperses personal stories and reactions, I also believe they are justified in balancing my role as an ethnographer and a critical thinker. Dewey's notion of the goal of progressive education led credence to my research "to gain

command of oneself so as to make positive social use of one's powers and abilities" (in Kincheloe et. al., 1998, p. 20).

I acknowledge a second limitation. I might be biased because of my own culture-bound world view from my upbringing in a Euro-centric upper-middle class family. I have not personally experienced the same hardships as many students in the school, including the regular students (some 94% of the students are African American). Therefore, I closely scrutinized the previous research in these areas and attempted to ascertain the most helpful and most relevant material for my study. I have tried intentionally to avoid a critical reflexivity which was "devoid of any responsibility to understand one's own subject position in the web of reality in relation to where others stand" (Nakayama and Krizek in Kincheloe et.al., 1998, p. 48).

I also acknowledge a third limitation. I gathered the data through ethnographies. A tendency may be evident to overgeneralize the work, especially in the use of labels for groups of people. The selected LEP participants represented only a portion of the ESOL students, and I based their selection, in consultation with the ESOL teacher, on their advanced understanding of the English language. While they represent the views of selected LEP students, they represent more advanced learners and do not represent all of the LEP students.

Significance of the Study

I examined the ESOL program in an inner-city high school in southeast Georgia. At the school, LEP students generally emigrate from Central and South America, Africa and Southeast Asia. At any one time, the LEP population totals as many as 40 students. My interest in the LEP students stemmed from observing these students as they learned a

new language as well as their challenge to assimilate into a day-time social setting based on different customs, beliefs, and cultural practices.

I observed that some LEP students experienced difficulty in immersing academically and socially into mainstream classes. This could be attributed to the ESOL program's basic structure. Neither RHS, nor any of the elementary or middle schools in the area, offered any type of alternative ESOL program which would enable the students to learn subject matter simultaneously in "regular" classes in English and their respective language (Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992, p. 12). Many LEP students tried earnestly to learn as much English as possible in the ESOL class and move into mainstream classes to graduate on time. As with regular students, LEP students must also pass all sections of the Georgia High Graduation Test before they can graduate. Therefore, the LEP students faced a distinct disadvantage, a confusing one no less, because they struggled to learn the new language in a new culture in a "sink or swim" manner. Richard-Amato and Snow (1992) describe this initial exposure to English "...the schizophrenic period of culture shock and of language learning ... indeed a crucial period during which time the learner will either sink or swim" (p. 82). Limited support outside the ESOL classroom further placed LEP students at a distinct disadvantage. Also, limited training of the educators, or their unwillingness to participate, forced LEP students with minimal English-learning skills into the mainstream of the classroom without any safety net. While none could dispute that this system of education provided an equal opportunity to learn, LEP students lacked equitable opportunity because of the prevalent language barrier.

I also examined whether a multicultural, diverse and interdisciplinary education existed at RHS. My informal pilot study and my numerous conversations with

colleagues convinced me that a multicultural perspective on education and the modifications necessary to accommodate the ESOL students did not rate as a priority on their respective agendas. Equality and equity concerns surfaced as did issues surrounding the curriculum in place. Purpel and Shapiro (1995) explain the concept of cultural diversity: “Educators must recognize that meaning and fulfillment derive, in part, from cultural identity and [therefore] must strive to revere and respect, not patronize and romanticize, the ethos of particular cultural, racial and ethnic groups” (p. 154).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE QUEST FOR THEORETICAL GROUNDING

Don Quixote, the protagonist of Miguel Cervantes' (Cervantes, translation, 1967) world-renowned, 17th century novel by the same name, is undoubtedly my favorite fictional character. I have read the novel in Spanish and in English. The rusty old knight's errant quest was to right the wrongs of the world to win the love of his precious Dulcinea. His family considered him mad and irrational; his loyal and trustworthy sidekick, Sancho Panza, offered the voice of rationality and reason as he accompanied Quixote on his many missions; and the literary world exalted his triumphs in a bleak time in world history, the Spanish Inquisition.

This theme became especially timely during Phillip II's reign. The persecution of individuals for heresy against the Catholic Church occurred indiscriminately and often without just cause or with little regard for individual rights. Cervantes was jailed as a result of his expository flare with words. Critical scholars write that Cervantes' narrative tale was autobiographical, since they viewed Cervantes and Quixote as one. From an anthropological point of view, Cervantes, the artist, used Quixote merely to reflect through a critical lens, the social, religious, and political milieu in which the story unfolds. Like Cervantes, the scholars whose works I have read throughout my graduate studies have embarked on a "quest," a "journey," to inform, to converse, through their words, the world as it is. Thus, Cervantes' character provides the inspiration for my quest.

In “Pedagogy of the Oppressed,” Freire (2000) states:

Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only true words, by which men and women transform the world. To exist, humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it... Human beings are not built in silence but in word, in work, in action-reflection... Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression (p. 69).

Unlike Cervantes and the age in which he lived, enlightened, postmodern authors portray the world realistically and offer researchers the opportunity to use the material as a springboard to further thought. I have often used scenes from the *Don Quixote* in my classroom to emphasize the theme of following one’s dreams despite ridicule or criticism from peers or groups.

In the course of my graduate study experience, I have constantly noted the words “quest” and “journey” in books involving narrative, critical, and anthropological inquiry. Bateson says, “The pursuit of a quest is a pilgrim’s progress in which it is essential to resist transitory contentment of attractive way stations and side roads, in which obstacles are overcome because the goal is visible on the horizon The end is already apparent in the beginning [even though] the landscape through which we move is in constant flux” (1989, p. 6). Apple’s research during the 1980s in transformative education, “despite its quixotic nature” (in Pinar, 1996, p. 259) aroused hegemonic complacency. With a critical eye on the horizon, Sleeter (in Duarte and Smith, 2000) suggests that the quest is “a part of a larger quest for redistribution of power and economic resources” (p. 17). Educational theory is in a constant flux as I have discovered in my research. The

boundaries are fluid, but the students whom we educators serve provide the connectedness.

Through the writings and studies of qualitative researchers, I formulated the philosophical framework of my inquiry. The three strands of inquiry fueled and energized my journey. Initially, critical phenomenological inquiry educated me about the importance of recording the voices of the silenced, and along the way, flexing the “praxis” muscles of my body and stimulating the “*emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality*” [original emphases] (Freire, 2000, p. 62) of my being.

Critical phenomenological inquiry set the stage for my participants, the “Other,” to narrate their lived experiences in a new social, political, and cultural milieu. It became the foundation for my research and allowed me to explore the possibilities of systemic, progressive reform of the ESOL program in my school. Narrative inquiry allowed me to write the script for the screenplay in which my participants and I, as subjects, engaged in a collaborative and cooperative dialogue about school. The interweaving and interpretation of the storyline formulated the context of the plot. When discussing the narrative model, Denzin and Lincoln (1998) posit, “The researcher ... needs to provide some interpretive commentary framing the key findings in the study. In addition, the researcher should describe his or her own role thoroughly, so the reader understands the relationship between the researcher and the participants” (p. 46).

Also, through critical as well as narrative inquiry, I formulated definitions which represent terms used in a diverse school: accommodation, acculturation, assimilation, enculturation, ethnicity, multicultural education, pluralism, race/racism, and Whiteness.

Through anthropological inquiry my role as realistic ethnographer challenged me to reflect on all aspects of the educational community and culture in which my participants had been immersed and in which I was a key interpreter. As critical ethnographer, I observed and recorded the daily experiences of the participants as I immersed myself into and committed myself to “the field;” however I realized that I must not trivialize the study because “...the voice of the ethnographer is privileged, that of the Other is muted” (Denzin and Lincoln, p. 127). Rather this postmodern construction of ethnography explored “the discontinuities, paradoxes, and inconsistencies of culture and action ... not in order to resolve or to reconcile those differences” (Denzin and Lincoln, p. 127).

The three strands of inquiry I have incorporated in my study are profoundly interrelated and interconnected. The deeper I delved into the research and writing of the representative authors, the more the information overlapped, interlocked, and fused. In the area of critical phenomenological inquiry and the space that it created for the possibilities of pedagogical, curricular, and social and cultural change in a diverse educational system, I primarily relied on the works of Banks (1991), Delpit (1995), Freire (1994, 1996, 1998, 2000), Giroux (1992, 1996), McLaren (1997, 2000), Nieto (1992, 2002), Pinar (1998), Pinar et.al. (1996), Purpel & Shapiro (1995) and Shor & Freire (1987), and Sleeter & McLaren (1995). These authors not only opened my eyes to see the field of education as it occurred (i.e. established curriculum vs. hidden curriculum, silenced vs. voiced situatedness, Subjective vs. Objective identities), but they also reinforced my desire to analyze the anxiety and confusions created by these dichotomies among racial and ethnic minority students, the LEP students at RHS. These

authors helped me immensely in defining the terms of the study, especially those relating to race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism. These terms are oftentimes misunderstood and used interchangeably in an inappropriate, misleading manner.

As the stories in the study unfolded, I turned to the experts in the field of narrative inquiry for inspiration and guidance: Anzaldúa (1999), Carger (1996), Delpit (1995), Soto (2002), and Takaki (1993). The stories of “Others” are examined and interpreted by these authors. Following their lead, I was able to portray more authentically my participants’ lives. In addition, I believe these authors validated my research. Being ethnographer/researcher, I used anthropological inquiry in my quest to study and interpret the nuances of culture and identity within culture. I sought to define the racial and ethnic self (ves) of my participants and me. The words of Bateson (1989), Donaldson (1996), Frankenburg (1993), Kincheloe et. al. (1998), Nussbaum (1997), Richardson (1997), Spindler (1987), and Taylor (1994) echoed in my thoughts as I took the role of observer/participant in a world often defined using elusive terms.

The review of the literature included curricular development in the past 30 years. Interwoven within the review are the words of the authors whose works have focused on critical phenomenological inquiry. Their words helped to inform my study and offered reliability.

Another aspect of the review delves into the works of the authors who represent the area of narrative inquiry and also gazes within the classroom to see how multicultural education has been practiced and applied at RHS. The review also concentrates on developing the concept of identity, one that can be conceived through an anthropological inquiry into what informs an individual through cultural, societal, racial, and/or political

influences. Finally, I came to terms with my racialized Whiteness in the sea of faces of the “Other” whom I have taught and/or with whom I have come into contact in the past 25 years. By no means should these three strands of inquiry be considered mutually exclusive; their interrelatedness provided cohesiveness to my research and helped to shape my view about the meaning of multiculturalism. The participants echo this point:

“My culture, like I will think of Colombia, always, as my culture. In my house, we are still eating Colombian food, and are following the same customs and everything.” Juliana, age 17.

“Multicultural is, for example, people from different places all gathered in one place. For example, in this school, we have people from many different countries in the ESOL class, so I would define that as multicultural and diverse because people that come from different countries have different customs and speak different languages, and they, when we are together, we have the same ideas as to the differences of the places we come from.” Hector, age 17.

“Someone has more than one culture, like, in Vietnam I have the Vietnamese culture—what we eat, what we respect, the values we have—are different than in the U.S.” Celine, age 18.

“Multiculturalism...has become one of the buzz words in education and in society in general...That means you know of and you are in contact with and you understand real well different cultures of the world. Not just the one to which you belong, but many more than three.” Magda, ESOL teacher at RHS.

Takaki (1993) offered me valuable insight into the history of multicultural America. Being of Japanese descent (his grandfather came to the United States in the 1880s), he

begins his book with a story about being asked by a taxi driver how long he had been in the United States. In excellent English, his reply was “All my life. I was born in the United States” (p. 1). The driver was confused by Takaki’s “foreign” look. My husband, who is of Korean descent, came home one afternoon with a similar story. In 2001, a delegation from Taiwan was visiting Savannah and wanted to tour the new Trade and Convention Center. An English-speaking Taiwanese interpreter among the gentlemen provided the translation. As the group walked through the facility, several of the delegates kept looking at my husband for additional interpretation to their questions and comments. When my husband realized that they apparently assumed he could speak their language, he finally said to them: “I only speak English.” His “foreign” look had confused them. He, like Takaki, was “jarred” (p. 2) by the implied inference that he was not American. Morrison (1992) says: “Race ... functions as a metaphor so necessary to the construction of Americanness” (p. 47).

In our national anthem the words “land of the free and home of the brave” have resounding effect and reflection on the 281,421,906 (Census 2000) who live within the nation’s borders. During the past century, the United States has become the land of diversity—racially, ethnically, and culturally. A glance at the 2000 Census substantiates the breakdown: White, 75.1%; Black, or African American, 12.3%; American Indian and Alaskan, .9%; Asian, 3.6%; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders, .1%; Other, 5.5%; and two or more races, 2.4% (Census, Table DP-1). Almost half of the nation’s students will be of color by 2020 (Pallas, Natriello, & McDill in Banks, 1994, p. 4). In recent years, millions of foreigners flood across the United States’ borders, legally and otherwise, on a daily basis, and they emigrate primarily from Central America and

Mexico. The demographic data of the U.S. point to a society becoming increasingly diverse, and nowhere more evident than in our schools. The label “minority” applies to the majority of students in all but two of our twenty-five largest cities (Delpit, 1995). By some estimates, the next few years will show that as many as 40% of the students in American classrooms will be non-White. However, the teaching workforce continues to be, and even become more, homogeneously White. “African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American teachers now comprise about 10 percent of the teaching force, and that percentage is shrinking rapidly” (Delpit, 1995, p. 66).

Through its history, the United States has served as the destination for masses of people who leave native lands to avoid oppression, socially and politically, because of war, famine, pestilence, and religious persecution. These reasons are not buried in the annals of antiquity nor historicity. Today, the lure to the land of opportunity and freedom under a constitutional democracy remains an attractive alternative to the oppressed. Two centuries ago French immigrant J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur wrote in his book, *Letters from an American Farmer*, about the characteristics of this suddenly emergent American race, “the American ... new man, who acts upon new principles ... Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of man” (in Schlesinger, 1991, p. 14). Contrary to Crevecoeur’s ranting and raving about assimilation, in today’s America the contemporary ideal is shifting “from assimilation to ethnicity, from integration to separatism” (Schlesinger, p. 14). The turning tides have flooded into the school house. In liberal democratic societies, such as the United States, a government “by, for, and of the people” mandated compulsory schooling and guaranteed equality in the interest all. Education helped to prepare children for their future roles as democratic citizens, even

active, knowledgeable citizens of the world. Considering the high drop-out rate and the number of people who live in poverty, especially children, the true meaning of this entitlement must be questioned. Maxine Green poses the question, “What does it mean to be a citizen of the free world?” and she concludes:

It means having the capacity to choose, the power to act to attain one’s purposes, and the ability to help transform a world lived in common with others. An important factor that limits human freedom in a pluralistic society is the cultural encapsulation into which all individuals are socialized. People learn the values, beliefs, and stereotypes of their community cultures. Although these community cultures enable individuals to survive, they also restrict their freedom and ability to make critical choices and to take action to help reform society (in Banks, 1995, p. 1).

The tenets of a democratic, pluralistic society hold that individuals should work toward a common good and that the educational system should assist students in acquiring the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to engage in responsible civic action. Working toward a common good should make society more equitable and just; yet, this is not always the intended outcome. From a political point of view, Habermas states, “Constitutional democracies respect a broad range of cultural identities, but they guarantee survival of none” (in Taylor, 1994, p. x).

In the past three decades the nebulous term multiculturalism (Giroux, 1996; Glazer in Duarte & Smith, 2000; McLaren, 1997; Pinar et. al., 1996; and Sandoval in Duarte & Smith, 2000) has been coined to encompass reference to the categories of social identity, including culture, race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, and

disabilities. The ethnicity/race/culture matrix (Duarte & Smith, 2000) puts into critical perspective the concept of multiculturalism in its many nuances and as it relates to multicultural education. Many educators, including me, agree that multiculturalism relates to promoting an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Proponents may even label themselves as multiculturalists. For those asked to define the term (I often use this term as an essay topic for my beginning students), the answers certainly vary.

Duarte and Smith (2000) use the phrase *multicultural condition* to describe the demographic presence of different ethnic groups within a population. They write:

Multiculturalism has to do with how an individual *interprets* or *sees the world* and *perceives his/her place in it*—the world being a place characterized by the ‘multicultural condition.’ In addition, multiculturalism has to do with how one *evaluates this sense of place*, for oneself and for others, *and what one proposes to do in response* to the multicultural condition [original emphasis] (p. 3).

Duarte and Smith (2000) identify a critical “multiculturalist position,” (p. 4) as one that rejects the ideal of America as a “melting pot” (via Crèvecoeur). The assimilation of diversity in ethnicity, language, lifestyle, and tradition into a common culture is not acceptable. Also in question is the concept of pluralism, which inculcates postmodern America, and was originally the delectable and digestible selection from the many “isms” on America’s menu. As America’s reputation as a “melting pot” dissipates, other labels have moved to the forefront—“melted pot” (Anijar in Kincheloe et. al., p. 248), the Chinese hot pot (Wong, 1990, p. 110), the mosaic of diversity (Lee, Lomotey, & Shujaa, 1990, p. 48) and the salad bowl (Duarte and Smith, 2000, p. 6).

Multiculturalists embrace this latter label. The separate ingredients in the salad retain their flavor, yet they contribute to the overall integrity of the salad.

McCarthy (in Pinar et.al., 1996) finds problem with the term multiculturalism. He conjectures that a pluralism mode replaced the term to advocate cultural diversity, but it has failed to provide explanations or “solutions” to blatant problems of racial inequality in schools. Furthermore, “In abandoning the crucial issues of structural inequality and differential power relations, multicultural proponents end up placing an enormous responsibility on the shoulders of the classroom teacher in the struggle to transform race relations in American schools and society” (p. 327). Sizemore (in Pinar et. al., 1996) concurs that “the classroom teacher has not been prepared multiculturally” (p. 327).

Even so, the parameters of multicultural education have broadened to encompass a more equitable learning field inclusive and reflective of this diverse nation. Western civilization championed multi-cultural education, which “grew out of a struggle guided by Western ideals for human dignity, equality, and freedom” (Parker in Banks, 1994, p. 5). The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, spear-headed by leaders in the African American community, envisioned a multicultural education “designed to eliminate discrimination in housing, public accommodation, and other areas” and, by incorporating the Western ideals of freedom and democracy, “to justify and legitimize their push for structural inclusion and the end of institutionalized discrimination and racism” (Parker in Banks, p. 6). According to Banks (in Sleeter & McLaren, 1995), “multicultural education referred to demands articulated first by African Americans, then by other groups of color [Native Americans and Hispanics], followed by women, people with disabilities and gay rights advocates” (p. 5). What were called “cultural

revitalization movements” demanded that the nation’s schools and universities, noted symbols of structural exclusion, be more cognizant and inclusive of marginalized groups. These movements logically targeted educational institutions because they molded thousands of impressionable minds with Western democratic ideals and traditions. Multicultural education was not intended to repudiate the West and Western civilization, but rather “to create a nation-state that actualizes the democratic ideals for all that the Founding Fathers intended for an elite few” (p. 6).

Davidson (1996) concludes:

Fundamental concepts of multicultural education in the United States are that education concerning many world cultures is basic education; that is, it is a part of the core curriculum. Furthermore, curricula need to address inclusion of all cultures. Multicultural education addresses perspectives, learning and teaching styles, teaching strategies, and pedagogical and sociological issues (p. 28).

Gibson (in Donaldson, 1996) addresses the development of competencies in a multicultural curriculum. He advocates “multiple systems of standards for perceiving, evaluating, believing, and doing” (p. 29). That is not to say that groups (educators, students, parents, and community members) affected by new standards, objectives, and goals, such as those delineated in Goals 2000 and the “No Child Left Behind” legislation, have embraced these forward-thinking ideals. Rather, as Banks points out:

It has evoked a divisive national debate, in part because of the divergent view that citizens hold about what constitutes an American identity and about the roots and nature of American civilization. In turn, the debate has sparked a power struggle

over who should participate in formulating the canon used to shape the curriculum in the nation's schools, colleges, and universities (1994, p. 2).

A power struggle remains at the core of the national and divisive debate by those whose influence on decisions involving education are intellectually informed, yet, not always experientially, by being members of a school board or educators at the policy level. Former and practicing educators who have the children's welfare at heart are aware that the school house is open to the multitudes, despite their cultural, ethnic, political, racial, religious, sexual, or social affiliations. Their "multi-isms" precede them through the school house doors. Nieto (1996) defines multicultural education in a socio-political context essential to pedagogical reform efforts:

[It is] a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers represent. Multicultural education permeates the curriculum and instructional strategies used in schools, as well as the interactions among teachers, students, and parents, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (*praxis*) as the basis for social change, multicultural education promotes the democratic principles of social justice (p. 307).

In this all-encompassing definition, Nieto (1996) touches upon the three major inquiries of this study: critical inquiry as a process of comprehensive school reform and

use of critical pedagogy; narrative inquiry as the interactions among teachers, students, and parents; and, anthropological inquiry as the acceptance and affirmation of pluralism and promotion of the democratic principles of social justice. However, Nieto (1996) cautions that all educational problems will not be solved by ingesting the “magic pill” called multicultural education, but rather by the “emphasis on the sociopolitical context of education” (p. 307).

Banks (1995) similarly claims that the study of ethnic diversity does not threaten economic, social, and psychological national unity but, rather, racial and social-class schisms. He states:

The social-class schism has occurred not only across racial and ethnic groups but within these groups. Hence, the rush to the suburbs has not just been a White flight but has been a flight by the middle class of many hues. As a consequence, low-income African-Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanics have been left in inner-city communities without the middle-class members of their groups to provide needed leadership and role models. They are more excluded than ever from mainstream U.S. society (p. 6).

Duarte and Smith (2000) outline four foundational perspectives in multicultural education, four multiculturalisms to address two historical responses of the multicultural condition in the U.S. which “have hindered the realization of the democratic ideals of individual freedom and political equality ... racism and Eurocentrism” (p. 8). The four “multiculturalisms” that Duarte and Smith (2000) outline are: Ethnic Studies, Antiracist, Critical, and Liberal Democratic. The advocates of an Ethnic Studies Multiculturalism emphasize “the cultivation of a sense of collective group identity and pride around a

particular cultural heritage... and are committed to addressing such inequities among groups through equalizing access to resources such as knowledge and status at the institutional level, and educational opportunities and self esteem for individual students” (p. 14-15). The second, Antiracist Multiculturalism, targets “a specific antiracist posture.” Hooks (in Duarte & Smith, 2000) says, “The fundamental premise of this perspective asserts that racism is an institutional and not an attitudinal problem; the problem of racism is not prejudice but domination” (p. 16).

The educational perspective of Critical Multiculturalism emulates Freire’s provisional utopianism. Freire (Shor & Friere, 1987) explains this as “the possibility to go beyond tomorrow without being naively idealistic. This is Utopianism as a dialectical relationship between denouncing the present and announcing the future. To anticipate tomorrow is dreaming today” (p. 187). The idea of *borderland* and the *mestizo* (hybrid) mode of consciousness define this mode of consciousness. McLaren (1997) explains that the *mestizaje* identity “is meant to be a self-reflexive identity capable of rupturing the facile legitimization of ‘authentic’ national identities through an articulation of a subject who is conjunctural, who is a relational part of an ongoing negotiated connection to the larger society, who is interpolated by multiple subject positionings” (p. 210). Rosaldo (in Duarte & Smith, 2000) defines the U.S. cultural experience as a “porous array of intersections where distinct processes crisscross from within and beyond its borders” (p. 21).

Within the perspective of a Liberal Democratic Multiculturalism, important questions arise about how individual rights and equal citizenship can possibly apply to all in a diverse, disparate citizenry. In this light, Liberal Democratic Multiculturalism

“emphasizes potential conflicts between diverse *values* rather than implications of diverse cultural *identities* that have grown out of ethnic and racialized differences and attendant historical, social, and political experiences of *institutionalized inequities*” (p. 21). Anzaldúa (in McLaren, 1997) says that a *mestizaje* consciousness “...entails appreciation of the things people learn through struggle” (p. 89).

I, whose roles are “ethical agent and cultural worker” (McLaren, 1997, p. 238), view the multi-faceted prism, the crystalline facade of multiculturalism and multicultural education in the United States as a gaze of wonderment into the multiple possibilities for innovation, improvement, involvement, and ingenuity in the classroom. Immigrant students await their futures (verbatim quotes):

“When I moved to the U.S. I cannot understand anything because we don’t have English languages, or class in India. Some cities have few of classes of English, but it was very different from these country. Sometimes if I don’t understand I learn from other people, who speak my language.” Sonal, age 15.

“[I speak] Vietnamese. French. I learned German, too. I took Latin for 3 years and Greek for 6 months. I have U.S. History, 12th grade English, Biology, Chemistry.” Celine, age 18.

“English, it is very hard, but I try to memorize words to catch on. I take Chemistry, U.S. History, Economics, Algebra 2, and Computer Applications. It is different; here, we move to our classes. In Colombia, the teachers, they come to our classrooms. They [Colombian teachers] expect more from you. You work harder. You have to work more. Here you have more opportunity to rest. It is easier.” Juliana, age 17.

“I have taken most of the classes to graduate, but right now, I’m taking AP [Advanced Placement] Lit/Comp. I’m taking French 2A. I’m taking Advanced Algebra and Trig. I’m taking Economic and Personal Fitness and AP Biology.” Hector, age 17.

As can be ascertained from these LEP students’ remarks, the educational level of children moving to the United States varies. Immigrant students bring to the classroom a wide array of cultural and lingual experiences that educators must use as a rich source of additional curricular content (Delpit, 1995; Donaldson, 1996; Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992; Nieto, 1996, 2002). Educators must recognize the “brilliance the students bring with them in their blood” (Donaldson, 1995, p. 182). The ESOL teacher, Magda, succinctly stated to me: “With the level of education you have right now, if I were to take you to Beijing, and I put you in the first grade class, you would not feel very comfortable, even though you have this high education.” (Interview, November 2003). Richard-Amato and Snow (1992) point out,

We must be careful not to confuse the limitations of language with limitations of cognition... language minority students ... differ not only in such outwardly evident characteristics as ethnicity, age, gender, and language background but also in their communicative needs, their opportunities to use the second language, their attitudes toward it, their cognitive styles, [and] their personalities (p. 8-9).

It is in the classroom where all students, not just those with immigrant status, formulate opinions and make discoveries about the world in which they live; blinders built of stereotypes, monocultural/lingual instructional methodologies, ignorance, social distance, biased research, and racism must be destroyed. The “codes of power” (Delpit, 1995; Kinchloe et. al., 1998) must be deciphered and political maneuvering must be

bridled. Dismantling such blinders must begin in the teacher-education programs across the United States.

In Spring 1977, I completed my undergraduate teacher education requirements by entering the “Competency Based Student Teaching Program” at my alma mater, Stetson University, a small, privately-funded school in DeLand, Florida. Stetson University began the practice of internships for teachers in the State of Florida. My new title was “Education Intern,” and I embarked on a journey to practice my career choice as a “real” teacher among “real” students. Flipping through the pages of my intern manual, which the director of student teaching wrote (Horton, 1975), I found no reference to any word or concept preceded by the prefix “multi.” The 360 pages of the manual contained the usual teacher-oriented information-behavioral objectives, Bloom’s taxonomy-based lesson and unit plan format, rules and regulations advising future teachers of their rights and the law, and how to become experts in testing analyses.

In review, I found three items that might have prepared me for what I would face in a diverse world. First, in reference to teacher accountability, the manual stated, “It is no secret that the tax-paying public is insisting upon accountability in the public schools of the U.S., and we teachers, in order to be effective in the teaching-learning situation, and yes, to save our professional necks, must plan thoroughly” (p. 60). Second, in referring to uses of instructional television in the classroom, and its impact on American children’s lives, only with “Sesame Street” did educators realize the potential impact. “Sesame Street” began as a series of programs to provide “compensatory, ‘head-start’ experiences for under-privileged minority-group children” (p. 155). Third, in the section outlining classroom management procedures, the manual noted that whereas “Discipline”

was the number one problem in public schools according to a 1970 Gallup Poll, the 1971 Gallup Poll “dropped discipline to third place behind the problems of finance and integration” (p. 195). Upon entering the classroom for a nine-week practicum, I was overwhelmed due to the omission of information, especially in the area of teaching for diversity in integrated public schools.

In retrospective, I can offer one last word about the manual. Freire would reincarnate in winged fury and his followers would grimace about the statement from the section, “Action Research.” The manual stated, “It is obvious then, that action research is the least rigorous type of educational research and is a good place for the student teacher to begin using the scientific problem solving method in the classroom or working-world setting” (p. 270). The manual served as my “Bible,” and I was instructed to follow its tenets with utmost devotion, or flunk for the semester. I did not flunk, but my longevity in the profession can be attributed exclusively to hard work, trial and error, flexibility, tolerance, and continued action research.

Over the years, I have served as mentor to several student teachers from Armstrong Atlantic State University and Georgia Southern University. They are much better-prepared than I was as far as dealing with a diverse population; however, my experience and observations lead me to conclude that teacher-education programs do not incorporate within the curriculum ample time in the classroom for novice teachers. I have also witnessed what I call the “fish out of water syndrome.” Like immigrant students, new teachers also experience the “sink or swim” challenge. The culture, language, politics, religious-related, and socio-economic issues that educators and

students face together are intra-cultural in nature—a realization that has gained unprecedented attention in the past two decades.

On many university campuses (many of which were the sites for teacher-education programs) during the 1990s, the issues surrounding diversity and multicultural education moved to the forefront of discussion (Takaki, 1993). In New York, the Task Force on Minorities emphasized the importance of a culturally diverse education. Commenting on this task force, an article in the *New York Times* purported, “The issue is how to deal with both dimensions of the nation’s motto: ‘*E pluribus unum*’—Out of many, one” (Takaki, 1993, p. 3). Across the nation universities established American cultural diversity graduation requirements in order to educate those who labeled themselves American about the origins and history of the “Others” with whom they would interact in the classroom and society. A critical look at teacher education programs and pre-professional experience in the classroom causes concern in the United States (Nieto, 1995; Goodlad, 1997; Pinar et. al., 1996; Pinar, 1999). Quality and qualified teachers are dependent largely on pre-service programs, even though, as was my experience, few external models exist on which to base techniques and knowledge base for engaging students.

Upon arriving on the high school campus where I interned, I subsequently met my “mentor” teacher (she was a middle-aged “Cubana”). She escorted me to the classroom, dropped me off, and told me that I could find her in the teacher’s work area should any problems arise. I was on my own for the next six weeks. At the end of my “service,” I received a fine evaluation, the students learned Spanish, and I considered myself a “good” teacher (Journal entry, 1998). I often re-evaluate my notions of the portrait of a

“good” teacher, especially as the public school teacher’s role has evolved in recent years.

Delpit’s (1995) lists the qualities of a “good” teacher. The same pre-service teachers, whose answers to a survey prompted the list, commented more personally that they learned how to write lessons plans, gave tests, learned some jargon, gained an understanding of mainstream values, learned how to “act like a teacher,” and even “learned to bullshit” (Delpit, p. 121). These remarks among teachers in training are not exclusive to a “training” situation. Nieto (1996) comments:

Teaching can be a lonely and isolating profession ... the teacher [is] a solitary figure facing either engaged and diligent, or noisy and uninterested children. Our most cherished images of teachers reinforce this picture of struggling or heroic individuals on a lonely journey... Popular media have done little to dispel [this] myth, and this has resulted in unrealistic portraits of teachers as indefatigable miracle workers or burned-out former idealists. (p. 362)

Inadequate teacher-preparedness in the area of multicultural education for pre-service, new, and experienced teachers proves detrimental to teacher and LEP students alike, since second language learners are held to the same academic standards as their American counterparts. Tollefson (in Valdés, 1998) points out, “[M]ost teacher education programs in ESL have focused on second-language acquisition, teaching methods, and linguistics without placing these fields in their social, political, and economic contexts” (p. 15). Teacher education programs must be emancipatory and effective in “transcending the Eurocentric school curriculum in today’s public schools” (Kharem & Villaverde in Soto, 2002, p. 9)

The works of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, a pioneer and “champion of third world voice in pedagogy” (Carger, 1996, p. 93) and “the driving force behind North American efforts at developing critical pedagogy” (McLaren, 2000, p. xx-xxi), inspired me to study the interrelated themes affecting pedagogical curricular transformation and action research in the classroom: stereotyping (Delpit, 1995; Nieto, 1996; Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992; Soto, 2002), monocultural/monolingual instructional methodologies (Carger, 1996; Cummin, 1989; Delpit, 1995; Nieto, 1996, 2000), relative ignorance of the needs of LEP students (Collier, 1995; Greene, 1995, 1970; Nussbaum, 1997), social distance in the form of LEP students’ invisibility in the classroom and the school population (Richardson, 1997; Watkins-Goffman, 2001), racism (hooks, 1993; Kinchloe, et. al., 1998), and dynamic political power plays (Freire, 2000; Donaldson, 1996; Frankenburg, 1993; Giroux, 1996; McLaren, 1997; Shor & Freire, 1987) on LEP students and the ESOL program.

In Summer 2002, my family and I spent two weeks in Madrid, Spain. One morning my husband made this personal observation: *“Look at me. I’m Asian. I’m wearing a Tommy Bahama shirt with palm trees on it, shorts, and tennis shoes. A camera is around my neck. I might as well have a target painted on my back.”* (Journal entry, Summer, 2002). He had jokingly stereotyped himself as a foreign tourist, as a “target,” in a negative sense, who might be taken advantage of in the street, in a shop, or on the Metro, because of U.S. State Department advisories about attacks on East Asian-looking tourists in Europe. Of course, we all laughed. However, to students, stereotyping whether positive or negative is no joke. (Delpit, 1995; Nieto, 1996; Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992). In my foreign language classroom, stereotyping others

often becomes a focus for debate. Mainstream students are quick to judge “foreigners” by their physical attributes and the commonality of their social and cultural habits. Few of my American students have traveled beyond the borders of their city, much less their state. What exists in my school is what Greene (1997) refers to as “provincialism” (p. 27).

Freire and Macedo (in Carger, 1996) suggest that educators “need to use their students’ cultural universe as a point of departure in the sense of a point from which students can take off educationally and soar and grow in cultural pride rather than disdain for their own physical features” (p. 148). Richard-Amato and Snow (1992) explain, “In the bias of our culture-bound world view, we picture other cultures in an over-simplified manner, lumping cultural differences into exaggerated categories, and then we view every person in a culture as possessing the same corresponding stereotypical traits” (p. 75).

The language that LEP students bring to the classroom serves as their only means of communicative survival, but it also serves an important symbol of cultural identity. The conservative English-only movement in the U.S. undermines the lingual-rich heritage of immigrants. Kharem and Villaverde (in Soto, 2002) point out that “conservative school reformers want to prohibit teachers and students from speaking their native tongues” (p. 7). This reflects the mono-cultural and mono-lingual curriculum of RHS and the methodological approach which teachers follow. Many of the educators I spoke to related only a limited exposure to a foreign language—principally secondary school foreign language, which consisted mainly of verb conjugations and memorizing

lists of vocabulary. Few of my colleagues have traveled to foreign countries, and, if so, they communicated almost exclusively in English and through gesturing.

LEP student placement in mainstream class remains a contentious issue. At RHS, since the inception in the program in the early 1980s, more than a dozen guidance counselors in the guidance department have served the school. The lack of clear placement and sequence guidelines for LEP students, compounded with limited flexibility in graduation requirements, has caused confusion, conflict, and inconsistencies through the years. Official documents (i.e. transcripts, immunization records, test scores) often arrived at the school months, if at all, after the student enrolls. In the case of some students, documents have been destroyed, the government of the emigrant country would not release them, or the student had been out of school for so long, the documents were out-dated (Journal entry, Fall, 1999). Therefore, some LEP students' permanent records on file at RHS are incomplete. The burden of work of sorting out all contingencies became shouldered by the ESOL teacher; students and their families are often bewildered and left feeling powerless.

Furthermore, school administrators placed LEP students in classes because of age and not educational attainment. A 16-year-old LEP student lacks the academic capability in English; however, administrators and teachers would not consider enrolling him/her at an elementary or middle school (Journal, Fall 1999). This gap sets up LEP students for failure in some academic areas until English language skills improve. The immigrant student and the ESOL teacher work together on class schedules in an attempt to minimize serious conflict because of language challenges.

Mainstream teachers are affected throughout the year when LEP students suddenly appear in their doorway with inadequate English skills. For the most part, teachers continue to follow the regular curriculum. Valdés observes, “[T]he teacher’s goal is to cover the material, not uncover what students want to say or what is important to them.” (p., 15) Nieto (2002) describes a monocultural/monolingual school environment: “[There is] scant reference to the experiences of others from largely subordinated cultural groups ...[L]ittle attention is paid to student diversity...[Because] the ultimate goal is assimilation, differences in language and culture are replaced as quickly as possible” (p. 262).

Besides scheduling and placement concerns, socialization issues surface. The LEP students acquire a second language and a second identity in the new culture. Understanding the nature of acculturation, culture shock, and social distance (Richard-Amato and Snow, 1992, p. 79-85) is crucial to the integrating LEP into the school environment. Adapting to the new culture, acculturation, and effectively integrating target and native culture, social distance, are contingent upon the LEP student overcoming cultural shock. The participants in my study express feeling “invisible.”

In extreme terms, “[C]ulture shock is a mental illness, and as is true of much mental illness, the victim usually does not know he is afflicted. He finds that he is irritable, depressed, and probably annoyed by the lack of attention shown him” (Foster in Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992, p. 81). Watkins-Goffman (2001) points out the sociocultural factors that affect a non-linear acculturation process. According to Schumann (in Watkins-Goffman, 2001, p. 9-10) the sociocultural factors include: social dominance, integration pattern, cohesiveness, attitude, intended length of residence, size,

and social distance. Intercultural communication and cross-cultural learning (Adler in Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992, p. 83) are two positive means to absorb the shock of clashing cultures.

Of equal importance in the ESOL classroom are identity issues based on racial and ethnic considerations and the dynamics of power that permeate the school and community environment. Watkins-Goffman (2001) explains that “Identity is a complex ongoing mental process influenced by one’s experiences. One’s history and experiences are key to the sense of self. Someone who has emigrated probably has a more complex sense of identity than does someone who has lived in the same place since birth” (p. 1). Critical pedagogy and multicultural education (Freire, 2000; McLaren, 1997; Shor & Freire, 1987) question how we name and construct ourselves as well as others. McLaren and Sleeter (1995) say that “[N]aming brings to visibility and existence that which was formerly hidden or kept silent... Subjectivities are produced in public and private arenas.” (p. 18-19). The participants of the study talked about their public and private selves in their journals and during formal interviews, primarily when referring to switching languages and cultural patterns from school to home. Fishman (in Watkins-Goffman, 2001) notes: “These selves and their corresponding codes can exist in separate domains or overlap” (p. 13).

Individuals identify themselves in multiple ways and in multiple roles.

Throughout history in the United States, the label American connoted an Anglo, male or female of European descent who was born in the United States. However, in the past three decades, the reconceptualization of identity (Freire, 2000; Kinchloe et. al., 1998; McLaren, 1997, 2000; Pinar, 1998) demands major reconsideration of what constitutes an

American identity in a multicultural society. Nieto (1996) states, “Americanization can no longer mean assimilation to a homogenous model; consequently, to continue to use *American* to refer exclusively to those of European heritage makes little sense” (p. 347). Howard (1993) presents a new question concerning the role of white Americans: “How do white Americans learn to be positive participants in a richly pluralistic nation?” (p. 38). Progressive forms of multiculturalism provide “a space for Whites to rethink their identity around a new, progressive, assertive, counterhegemonic, antiracist notion of whiteness” (Kincheloe and Steinberg in Kincheloe, et. al., 1998, p. 20). In the realm of multicultural education, a critical pedagogy of whiteness emerges. Its key goal is to create a “positive, proud, attractive, antiracist white identity that is empowered to travel in and out of various racial/ethnic circles with confidence and empathy” (Kincheloe and Steinberg in Kincheloe, et. al., 1998, p.12).

Whiteness is a socially constructed racial category. Likewise, Americanness is also a social construct. There is no biological category into which these two terms fall. The two terms are not mutually exclusive, nor are they complicit by definition. If anything, they are problem-posing. The reconceptualization of whiteness opens a space for marginalized groups to create an American identity which mirrors cultural diversity. The “white identity crisis” (Delpit, 1995; Kincheloe et. al., 1998; McLaren 2000) in America leads to the reconstruction of white identity and the construction of transformational white identities. Kincheloe and Steinberg (in Kincheloe et. al, 1998) point out the importance of the reconstruction of white identity and its affects on everyone:

Dominant white culture imposes cultural meanings on Blacks, Latino/as, Asians, and Native Americans and, in the process helps to shape self images and consciousness. As a pedagogy of whiteness moves individuals past the quixotic quest for racial authenticity and purity, the analysis of the meaning and pitfalls of hybridity ensues. The term, 'cultural *mestizaje*,'... can be employed as a heuristic device that induces teachers, students, and cultural workers to study the ways cultural interaction and exchange take place. In a critical context, *mestizaje* becomes not an education goal as much as a category for careful scrutiny into the forces that reshape culture and influence identity (p. 25).

The racial and ethnic make up of RHS is majority African American among administrators, teachers, students, and support personnel. The LEP students at RHS, especially those who are recent immigrants, formulate an American identity which is strongly influenced by a population that does not proportionately represent American society. RHS has its numerous problems and "at risk" factors (Nieto, 1996, p. 34): students from families at the poverty level, large numbers in the free/reduced lunch program, high drop-out rate, low standardized test scores, disciplinary infractions, and few students who enter post-secondary institutions. The same factors are evident in the LEP population. However, the differences between home and school cultures, which are often drastic, compound problematic issues. Also, the expectations of teachers and parents for LEP students differ.

The negative effects of racism and discrimination are prolific within schools. Nieto(1996) states, "When we understand racism as a *systemic* problem, not simply an individual dislike for a particular group of people, we can better understand the negative

and destructive effects it can have” (p. 37). Racism and discrimination are manifested in three ways—individual, institutional, and dyconscious. (Donaldson, 1996; Nieto, 1996; Kincheloe et. al., 1998). Dyconscious racism is probably the least well-understood of the three and is generally associated with white educators. King (in Kincheloe et. al., 1998) asserts that putting on a “good front” when confronted by issues of racism can lead to dysconsciousness, “an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given ... It is not the *absence* of consciousness but an *impaired* consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race” (p. 79). Donaldson (in Nieto, 1996) found that students were affected by race in three major ways: White students experienced guilt and embarrassment when they became aware of racism to which their peers were subjected; students of color sometimes felt they needed to compensate and overachieve to prove that they were equal to their White classmates; and at other times, students of color said that they themselves were badly damaged (p. 41).

My personal observations at RHS led me to recognize the dyconscious racism evident in the school. I have also seen what Rains (in Kincheloe et. al., 1998) calls the “vaccination effect.” As soon as issues arise dealing with racism “an inoculation of distancing” (p. 78) neutralizes the impact.

The dynamics of power in all arenas eventually filter down to students in the classroom (Delpit, 1995; Donaldson, 1996; Kinchloe et. al., 1998; McLaren, 1997; Nieto, 1996; Pinar et. al., 1996). During the 1980s, the “New Federalism” policies of the Reagan administration removed much of the power and funding from the U.S. Department of Education and transferred it to state departments and local boards of

education. Educational initiatives and learning organizations touted their philosophies (i.e. Total Quality Management, High Schools That Work, America's Choice). Funds became allocated for staff training and visits to sites where "things were happening." Site principals advised the attendees to present detailed reports on the findings. I was trained by TQM specialists. Though I volunteered, no one ever asked me to present my findings. Grant, Shani, and Krishnan (in Kincheloe, 1998) explain that progressive programs "conflict with the traditional hierarchical, patriarchal Eurocentric model of management ... and keeps power in the hands of the few at the top" (p. 294).

A staff development program, "The Effective Schools Staff Development Program Phase IV: Multicultural Education" (1992), which James Banks authored, was delivered to RHS, but it was never implemented. The School Board and Superintendent gave school principals more autonomy over "their" schools, and students, teachers, and parents became included in school councils and on committees. However, the cultural, curricular, and power dynamic (top/down) remained stagnant. Delpit (1995) refers to this phenomenon as the "culture of power:" "The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power" (p. 25). Shor (In Shor & Freire, 1987) notes: "Teachers are at the bottom of this great chain of elite power, one link up from the students" (p. 76). Yet, teachers have an enormous responsibility. McCarthy (in Pinar, et. al., 1996) observes:

Schools, for example, are not conceptualized as sites of power or contestation in which differential interests, resources, and capacities determine maneuverability of competing racial groups and the possibility and pace of change ... In abandoning of crucial issues of structural inequality and differential power

relations, multicultural proponents end up placing an enormous responsibility on the shoulders of the classroom teacher in the struggle to transform race relations in American schools and society (p. 327).

Multicultural education is not a unitary concept. It does not have a prescribed script. A critical look at multicultural education reveals that the teacher and the students must consciously and pro-actively start the transformation. The challenge of transforming schools should be directed at overcoming socioeconomic injustice which is often linked to society's political and economic structures. Freire (2000, p. 90) conceives of *conscientização*, the development of critical consciousness and the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence. To become a multicultural teacher first requires that I become a multicultural person. Nieto (1996) outlines three steps in the reeducation process that "we" need to do: 1) to learn more; 2) confront our own racism and bias; and 3) see reality from a variety of perspectives (p. 353). "Multicultural education is not easy; if it were, everyone would be doing it" (Nieto, 1996, p. 357).

Reconsiderations of power relations (Cummin in Nieto, 1996; Nieto, 2002; McLaren 1997, 2000) are fundamental to developing a multicultural education and curriculum. Cummins (in Nieto, 1996) concludes that teachers need to develop "collaborative" rather than "coercive relations of power" with their students... the remedy lies not in tinkering with technical or artificial aspects of education, but rather in a redefinition of teachers' and students' roles in the classroom that challenges students' devaluation ... in order to reconstruct it in a more equitable and affirming way" (p. 363).

Conclusion

A review of the literature has offered me valuable insight into the history behind the many racial and ethnic groups that are woven into the fabric of the United States, a culturally-rich nation. In my research, I traced the beginnings of multiculturalism and multicultural education in the United States. During the turbulent and radical years of the 1960s and 1970s, the nation underwent major transformation in the educational, social, and political arenas. Desegregation became the focus and goal of the struggle for civil rights. African Americans took the lead on the front line of offense. Latino Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans and other disenfranchised groups soon joined the march toward equal and equitable treatment under the laws of the land.

Furthermore, these groups insisted upon equal and equitable representation in the dynamics of schooling, then, now, and in the future. Banks (1994) states, “Although the school and university curriculum remains Western oriented, this growing number of people of color will increasingly demand to share power in curriculum decision-making and in shaping curriculum canon that reflects their experiences, histories, struggles, and victories ... their voices, visions, and perspectives” (Banks, 1994, p. 4).

Almost all children of school age who cross the borders of the United States eventually cross the threshold of the school building. The academic and social needs of this polyglot population must be addressed and fulfilled. Institutionalized racism and discrimination are major obstacles which inhibit personal and collective growth and development as well as suppress ideologies which champion progressive transformational change. The pathway of least resistance avoids and resists change.

Reconceptualizing and restructuring efforts are difficult, time-consuming, and vulnerable to planned obsolescence. Pre-service teacher education programs and staff development in-service seminars which address the looming issues surrounding multicultural education must avoid quick fix solutions. Multicultural education is a process which will continue to undergo change and will never be finished. Nieto (1996) states, "Given that multicultural education is critical pedagogy, it must also be dynamic. A static 'program-in-place' or a slick-packed program is contrary to the very definition of multiculturalism" (p. 349)

The classroom serves as the microcosm of the implementation of multicultural education. Transformation at the school level begins in the classroom between teachers and students. Experiences in the classroom through language and culture help minority students formulate an American identity. Tolerance, acceptance, respect, affirmation, solidarity, and critique (Nieto, 1996) are keys to mutual understanding and a symbiotic relationship between educators and students. From there, the meaning of multicultural education infects the building and the community, and the multicultural experiences of language minority students are valued and celebrated. Freire (1997) stated:

With progressive education, respect for knowledge of living experience is inserted into the larger horizon against which it is generated – the horizon of cultural context, which cannot be understood apart from its class particularities, and this indeed in societies so complex that the characterization of those particularities is less easy to come by. Respect for popular knowledge then necessarily implies respect for cultural context. Educands' concrete localization

is the point of departure for the knowledge they create of the world. Their world, in the last analysis, is the primary and inescapable face of the world itself (p. 85).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY: THE SHORELINE DISAPPEARS – BON VOYAGE

Introduction

In this study the theoretical framework consisted of three strands of inquiry: critical phenomenological, narrative and anthropological, as the foundation for data collection and an approach to research the question. Critical phenomenological inquiry set the stage for my participants, the “Other,” to narrate their lived experiences in a new social, political, and cultural milieu. This first strand of inquiry served as the foundation for my research into the possibilities of systemic, progressive curricular reform in the ESOL program. Narrative inquiry allowed me to interweave my personal story as a foreign language learner and teacher with that of my participants who were learning a second language. This second strand of inquiry provided the means to offer personal insight into the definition of multiculturalism. Anthropological inquiry permitted me to look at all aspects of the educational community into which my participants had been placed. This third strand of inquiry delineated my boundaries as cultural researcher/ethnographer within the context of this study.

This study’s purpose was to demonstrate whether participating Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students within the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program received equal and equitable opportunities through the educational system to prepare them for standardized tests, which they must pass in order to receive a diploma. Deever (1994) explains: Equality refers to quantitative aspects, things that are evenly proportioned. Whether it be material or symbolic resources, the key to the term is distribution ... Equity in education is an essentially different concept referring to the

qualities of impartiality and fairness in the spheres of daily schooling ... To say that equality of access under the law guarantees equity of treatment... may inadvertently camouflage and legitimize continuing relations of oppression and subjugation (p. 275).

The LEP students attended the only high school that offered the ESOL program among seven public high schools in a county in southeast Georgia. Through the use of critical theory, I analyzed the cultural influences of an inner-city high school on the students' immersion into a new culture as well as the effectiveness of the educational system on their success toward high school graduation. The participants' stories provide insight into how an educational setting affects their becoming part of a culture new to them and their ability to learn so that they can attain the important academic milestone of high school graduation.

Critical Phenomenological Inquiry

Critical phenomenological inquiry set the stage for my participants, the "Other," to narrate their lived experiences in a new social, political, and cultural milieu. This first strand of inquiry served as the foundation for my research into the possibilities of systemic, progressive curricular reform in the ESOL program. The second focus of this study involves an in-depth reading for understanding of the critical pedagogical issues surrounding multicultural education and its implementation in the ESOL class and in the school. I am interested in the lived experiences of the LEP students to the extent to which an extended opportunity to an equal and equitable field of learning in the assimilation process is recognized and acted upon. My personal perspective and experience as a foreign language teacher are a crucial element to my research and deliverance thereof. I am also interested in how the educators in the building are

modifying lessons to help the LEP students prepare themselves to pass the state tests. I believe that it is assumed that while American students in my school need remedial help, the LEP students are often not aware of the remediation groups because of the lack of communication between the school and the home.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is defined as “the reconstruction of experience” (Pinar et. al., 1996, p. 558). The researcher seeks to obtain information by keenly listening to the participant and participating in the details of the storytelling whether written or verbal. Through these recollections, participants use personal experience to provide the data of qualitative research. In this study, narrative inquiry provided an effective means of eliciting participants’ personal information and views.

Connelly and Clandinin provide a three-step process for narrative inquiry in Short (1991). Step one starts the process with collaboration by the researcher and practitioners. Step one of my work began with a pilot project I authored in Spring 1999 as a student under the tutelage of Dr. Grigory Dmitriyev at Georgia Southern University. The purpose of the study was to acquaint graduate students with the rigor necessary to complete a formal study, perhaps one that led to a higher degree. The process was arduous; the end results were gratifying. My project involved questioning ESOL students and their teacher and aide about their experiences in a multicultural nation and their preparedness to face the challenges of a new country. I also interviewed American teachers in the building to inquire of them how prepared they considered themselves to teach students whose first language was not English. The results of this informal and non-approved study (through the IRB program) served as the major impetus for me to

pursue a more formal inquiry into the lived experiences of LEP students and adults.

Thus, I began a collaborative effort among the students and teachers in the building to reach out to the ESOL department.

In step two of Connelly and Clandinin's process, the researcher collects data (in Short, 1997). According to Marshall and Rossman, "Narrative inquiry may rely on journal records, photographs, letters, autobiographical writing, and other data" (p. 87). In this study, narrative inquiry provided an effective way of eliciting participants' personal information and views. Through personal exchange, participants became comfortable with my role not only as a teacher but also a researcher. Marshall and Rossman note that narrative inquiry "...should be a mutual and sincere collaboration, a caring relationship akin to friendship that is established over time for full participation in the storytelling, retelling, and reliving of personal experiences" (p. 86). Their personal accounts through phenomenal/in-depth interviews and keeping journals provided data which helped to describe their lives within the context of this study.

In step three of Connelly and Clandinin's process (in Short, 1997), the narrative becomes written through the researcher's interpretation. Shaping the stories and views of the participants begins the process of culling the data. During the year when I observed and talked with my participants, I realized that I was one of the laborers building a bridge to connect the lives of the LEP students, the ESOL teacher, the ESOL aide and me.

According to Connelly and Clandinin (in Short, 1997), the final step of the narrative inquiry becomes the filtering of what to include but also the continuing process of adjusting the new information or allowing the information to lead in a new direction. The narrative should remain flexible and subject to the researcher's changing views as

the experience becomes altered by new information. Connelly and Clandenin contend three responses: “first, broadening it to generalize; second, borrowing it to focus more narrowly; and third, restorying to reconsider the material and possibly revise the meaning of the event” (cited in Short, 1991, p. 144). Such responses define the interactive process that can evolve with new information. This makes incumbent upon the researcher the need to remain alert to new avenues of information to explore.

In this study, narrative inquiry allowed me to interweave my personal story as a foreign language learner and teacher with that of my participants who were learning a second language. The collaboration with participants continuously added individual insight to reach the sum of the whole. I do not believe any other methodology could have proven more purposeful to my research. Narrative inquiry became an effective way to tell my participants’ stories, and to the same extent, tell my story, too. Through the narrative method, the outcome proved productive in the evolution to my reaching conclusions. “Its strength is the elicitation of voice, with a lessening of the researcher’s framework and interpretation” (Marshall and Rossman, in Short, p. 87).

Personal experience should be acknowledged as a starting point of any narrative inquiry. The researcher begins with an educational background, beliefs, and professional experience which serve as the backdrop of study. Connelly and Clandenin (in Pinar et. al., 1996) define personal practical knowledge as:

...that body of convictions, conscious or unconscious, which have arisen from experience...and which are expressed in a person’s actions. The actions in question are all those acts that make up the practice of teaching, including its planning and evaluation. Personal practical knowledge is

knowledge which is imbued with all the experiences that make up a person's being. Its meaning is derived from, and understood in terms of a person's experiential history, both professional and personal (p. 557).

For a researcher, personal practical knowledge provides the advantage of a baseline of information that can be applied to the area of study. Nonetheless, it also provides a disadvantage of subjectivity, whether intentional or not, based on the same experiences. Any study, including this one, should acknowledge this presumption.

Anthropological Inquiry

Anthropological inquiry permitted me to look at all aspects of the educational community into which my participants had been placed. This third strand of inquiry delineated my boundaries as cultural researcher/ethnographer within the context of this study. Heron (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998) presents co-operative inquiry as a means to delve into the lives of subjects that are self-determining and participate in research on their own accord. He says:

So in co-operative inquiry all those involved in the research are both co-researchers, whose thinking and decision making contribute to generating ideas, designing and managing the project, and drawing conclusions from experience, and *also* co-subjects, participating in the activity being researched (p. 264).

This type of inquiry goes hand-in-hand with how my participants and I dedicated ourselves to this study. I always informed participants as to the process and procedure of the study. Their input proved invaluable.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

Richardson (1997) views qualitative research/researcher as a means by which the author can be creative and dynamic when writing about the world as it is perceived. The researcher, not the documents compiled through research, serves as the instrument by which discovery can be made, stories told, and the world perceived. She notes:

Experience is thus open to contradictory interpretations governed by social interests rather than objective truth. The individual is both site and subject of discursive struggles of identity. Because the individual is subject to multiple and competing discourses in many realms, one's subjectivity is shifting and contradictory, not stable, fixed, rigid ...Writing is validated as a method of knowing (p. 89).

In traditionally-staged research, social scientists use multiple methods, triangulation, to validate findings. Richardson (1997) prefers the method of "crystallization" (p. 92) and surmises that multi-faceted prisms more genuinely reflect how experiences in the world play out. Furthermore, crystallization "provides us with deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know" (p. 92).

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) use the analogy of a *bricoleur* to create a bricolage (p. 3) when describing the role and methodology of the qualitative researcher. Becker (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) observes that the qualitative researcher-*bricoleur* "uses the tools of his or her methodological trade, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand" (p. 3). This is certainly not a *laissez-faire* commitment by the researcher. The many methodologies which the qualitative researcher chooses

from only make it more important to ensure quality, trustworthiness, and legitimacy in the research. Scheurich (1997) believes that new imageries of validity are necessary to emphasize “dialogue and collaboration between the researcher and the Other” (p. 88).

Triangulation, the use of multiple methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998a), is well-suited in this qualitative study since personal perspectives of the participants are understood in multiple ways. Wolcott (1994) says, “As a qualitative researcher, I was not concerned with validity so much as with understanding” (p. 367). Triangulation, prolonged and persistent observation, and analysis of the data contribute to the understanding and credibility of the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Rich and thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the experiences of the participants adds rigor and reliability to the study. Such description also allows for transferability of information within the study to future studies. In this study, I obtained thick description through analysis of the transcripts of the taped interviews and review of personal journals. Also, my personal observations, journals, and field notes added depth to the study.

Participants

This study engaged seven Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in the English for Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL) in a public high school (RHS) in southeast Georgia. The school system totals 50 schools with about 35,000 students. Only RHS offers an ESOL program among the county’s seven public high schools. The student population of RHS averages about 1,000 annually, and the administrative and teaching staff number about 70. The city where the study took place has a population of

approximately 140,000. The majority of the ESOL students do not live in the school district and must ride the school bus or provide their own means of transportation.

The following characteristics describe the participants:

1. The LEP students in the study had resided in the United States from two to seven years. RHS was the only American school that five of the participants had attended. One participant had attended a middle school in New Jersey, and another had been enrolled in the ESOL program in the middle school in the same city before entering the program at RHS.

2. Two of the participants had finished all requirements for the ESOL program and moved into mainstream classes. Both were seniors.

3. None of the students participated in the federal Free/Reduced Lunch Program.

4. All of the participants held jobs after school, although one of them worked for her parents and did not receive any wages.

5. Five of the participants are females and two are boys.

6. All student participants and their parents signed release and consent forms.

7. The ESOL teacher has taught in the school for 19 years and has lived in the United States for 34 years.

8. The paraprofessional aide graduated from RHS in 1997 after she had successfully completed the ESOL program and all other local and state requirements.

She has worked as an aide for the ESOL teacher for five years.

Data Gathering Procedures

I observed participants in the study for one year. Detailed, long-term observation and interaction permit the researcher to develop an intimate relationship with participants so as to best present their lived experiences. The multiple qualitative techniques used in this study included: (a) a history and general portrait of the school; (b) audio-taped formal interviews with the participants; (c) informal individual and groups discussions with the participants; (d) informal observations of participants in academic and social settings; (e) student participants' journals with scripted questions and a place for open-ended remarks; and (f) researcher's reflective journals and field notes. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) corroborate that "the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (p. 4). Over time, the critical ethnographer gathers all of this data, this "purposeful sampling" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) and compiles it into a textual product. Wolff (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) observes:

The image—often, the reality—of prolonged immersion in 'the field' and the emphasis on participant observation commit the ethnographer to a shared social world. He or she has become a 'stranger' or 'marginal native' in order to embark upon a process of cultural learning that is predicated on a degree of 'surrender' to the 'Other' (p. 126).

I noted regular daily observations and recorded informal conversations in personal journals and field notes. I paid special attention to record the voices of student and teacher participants truthfully and in detail. Each student's interview lasted approximately one hour during the lunch period or after school in my classroom. I

interviewed the ESOL teacher and her paraprofessional aide after school at pre-arranged times. Each interview with an adult lasted approximately one and one half hours in length. After formal interviews with all participants, I observed them informally in the ESOL class and in the mainstream classrooms as scheduled. The processes of interviewing, transcribing and correcting transcriptions, and reading journals took about 25 hours. The voices of the students and their ESOL teacher and the paraprofessional aide resonate throughout this study, which interweaves their views with my observations and findings. I transcribed their interviews verbatim to maintain the integrity of their responses and discussion. Their answers are not always spoken or written in perfect English, which proves their continued struggle to learn and develop fluency in the second language.

Data Analysis and Management

Upon completion of the data collection, I transcribed all interviews and returned a hard copy to the participants for review and correction. I then re-read the participants' interviews, my personal journals and field notes/ informal observations and students' journals, and categorized the information based on the research questions. I color coded the information based on the participants' responses to themes framed in the research questions as presented in Chapter 1 and referred to throughout the study.

I secured all information gathered through interview, journal entries, field notes/informal observations, and student journals in a location known only to myself as the researcher, my supervisor, and the Institutional Review Board. Throughout the study, I gathered information (transcripts of interviews and research materials) and stored it on a computer hard drive with disk back-up to ensure technological reliability. I periodically

printed hard copies of information as a secondary back up to protect against loss of data from any computer malfunction. To protect further confidentiality, I locked the students' handwritten student journals in a file cabinet in my office. The use of direction quotation in this study represents the only reproduction of handwritten journals. I also kept tape-recorded interviews in a locked file cabinet in my office.

CHAPTER 4

HORIZONS: TERRA FIRMA

Reflections and Findings

In reflecting upon the reasons for my conducting a study which centered on students who were learning English as a second language, I realized a strong link between these students and me. Learning a language other than one's native tongue takes courage, determination, and a concerted effort not only to think differently but also to embrace, sometimes reluctantly, a whole new perspective of life. I remembered the countless hours which I devoted to looking up words in the dictionary as I diligently tried to make meaning of the Spanish language. During many casual observances of LEP students at work in the ESOL classroom, I noticed their concentrated effort, the furrowed brow, and the body language of those who struggled to make meaning for themselves of a language foreign to them. These students realized that their adapting to a new land depended upon their ability to grasp a new language, and their success depended upon perseverance.

The purpose of this study was to examine the lives of seven LEP students and gain knowledge of their experiences as they assimilated into life in the United States and whether the course of study in a public high school provided them with a suitable foundation. Through lengthy guided and taped interviews of students and their participating teachers, field notes, personal journal entries, and formal and informal observations and discussions, I attempted to capture the essence of each individual's lived experience. The ESOL teacher's and her paraprofessional aide's contributions to the study offered a professional perspective as well as voices of experience similar to the

students' since they had also learned English as a second language and experienced America as a new culture.

The impetus for the study began in 1999 when I was taking a course with Dr. Grigory Dmitriyev at Georgia Southern University. I was teaching Spanish at the same high school from which I developed the context of this study. I received permission from the site administrator and all participants involved in this informal study. I distributed a questionnaire to ESOL students and subject-area teachers to ascertain their awareness of the ESOL program and its impact on their learning and teaching. The results laid the groundwork for this qualitative study. The responses I examined and compared indicated a lack of understanding about the program from the majority of participants, students and teachers alike. This initial study piqued my interest, and I became interested in finding out more about the ESOL program and to discern whether the program provided LEP students with as equitable an education as their American counterparts. As a related interest, I also wanted to draw conclusions about the immersion of LEP students from different countries and cultures into an American high school, which was predominantly comprised of students from lower-income families.

In the beginning, I conferred with the ESOL teacher to determine which students might best respond to my inquiry. The ESOL teacher and I realized that the students chosen to participate would probably be the best students academically and with the most experience living in United States. The selected participants agreed affably to participate. I believe that my close working relationship with the ESOL teacher and her paraprofessional aide fueled the students' willingness to be observed and interviewed. The ESOL teacher and I had taught together side-by-side for more than 12 years. The

camaraderie that she and I experienced on a professional and personal level contributed to the comfort level of the students, and in turn, their candidness and honesty in responses.

I conducted all interviews in an informal manner with questions which I had developed. I interviewed the ESOL teacher in her classroom several days after school. The paraprofessional aide wrote her answers to the questions because of her busy after-school schedule at a local university. I asked both of the adult interviewees 20 questions (see Appendix I), which they reviewed before the interviews. I also encouraged impromptu dialogue during the sessions on the questions and invited open-ended comments.

I provided 37 specific questions for the students (see Appendix J). The students also received eight thematic questions to guide them in keeping a journal (see Appendix J). I provided the journal notebooks and instructed the participants to make journal entries as they felt compelled to do so. I wanted the students to see interview and journal questions beforehand in case of the need for clarification to avoid any possible barriers in their translation of words and terms. Students chose to be interviewed either in my classroom during my planning period, after school, or during their lunch time in the school's patio area. All of the ESOL students ate lunch at the same time and generally sat together. This casual setting proved to foster interaction among them. Sometimes as I taped one student's responses, another ESOL student commented on a question or clarified a point to the interviewee or to me. While typing transcripts of the recordings, I noted the "asides" in my field notes and journals. The group dynamic which evolved

during the interview times demonstrated an intense interest by the students in the portrayal of their lives in America.

I also talked to most of the ESOL students on a daily basis because of the proximity of their classroom next to mine. This provided an additional opportunity to observe their interaction with mainstream students during the change of classes as well as in some of the mainstream classes. I also spoke with mainstream classroom teachers about ESOL students in their classes. As I have stated previously, the ESOL teacher often chose to enroll her students in mainstream classes taught by particular teachers—those who might more easily identify with and be patient enough to work with LEP students. On many occasions, the mainstream teachers visited the ESOL teacher during the day to confer on the needs of the ESOL students or to send a student to the ESOL class for further instruction, explanation, or translation.

In the sections which follow, I have selected responses to certain questions from the ESOL teacher, ESOL paraprofessional, and students and placed them into groups according to their validation of my three research questions. While the complete questions and responses can be read in Appendix J, I present this summarized version to selected responses as a way of presenting findings which became evident from my research. My findings from the course of the interviews, reading student journals, and observations are noted in italics after each research question. The teachers' and students' voices resound clearly and identify some deficiencies in their learning process, some problems with their preparation to pass the state-standard Georgia High School Graduation test and graduate from high school on time, and some difficulties in the

students' adapting to American culture. [Note: Only first names of participants are used. I refer to myself as SSM].

Research Question 1

Are mainstream teachers adequately prepared to instruct LEP students in an equal and equitable manner which prepares them to pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test and graduate on time, and are improvements necessary in the curriculum to address the needs of the LEP students and in the preparation of mainstream teachers to present the curriculum?

Summary of Findings Related to Research Question 1:

1.1 Those who teach LEP students do not believe that mainstream teachers are adequately prepared to instruct LEP students in a manner equal and equitable to other students for preparing them to pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test and graduate on site.

1.2 Most LEP students expressed feelings of anxiety about the state-standard exam and did not consider themselves adequately prepared to pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test. Most LEP students showed a high level of motivation in learning and preparing to take the test by participating in training sessions to improve their knowledge and test-taking skills.

1.3 Improvements are necessary in the curriculum to address the needs of LEP students, especially in their learning in mainstream classes, and to prepare them better to pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test and graduate on time.

Selected Responses from ESOL Teacher (as related to Research Question 1 and the Summary of Findings to Research Question 1)

Note: Responses are presented as spoken or written without editing. I have noted points of clarification in brackets []. As a reminder, I am SSM.

SSM: In working with teachers, as the only ESOL teacher who teaches at the high school level , do teachers have special training before accepting these ESOL students into their classrooms?

Magda (ESOL teacher): No, I wish they did, but they don't.

SSM: Has it [accepting these children into mainstream classes] gotten a little more stringent in the past few years?

Magda (ESOL teacher): No.

SSM: How do you match the students with the teachers?

Magda (ESOL teacher): I try to find a teacher who would like to teach my students rather than them being dumped into any classroom. As you know, our schedules don't allow that to happen and usually the kids get dumped wherever there is an available class.

SSM: After I have interviewed the seven students for this research paper, I have noticed that the ESOL students say the teachers and students are actually very nice to them. Is that your opinion also? Do the teachers work with you?

Magda (ESOL teacher): As far as being friendly, they are friendly. I think that at the beginning, the teachers are very reluctant to have the ESOL students in their class because they see it as extra work coming into them—more work that they have to do. But the reality is that, except for two teachers who I have actually seen them do extra work for my students, it's usually the opposite. The ESOL kid is the one who does everything that he is told to do, and he doesn't make any waves, so after awhile teachers get to know him because they know that he is not a discipline problem.

SSM: Do you feel like there are enough or any curricular modifications used for ESOL students?

Magda (ESOL teacher): They are supposed to have. Each discipline is supposed to have modifications for ESOL students. But what I find is “No.” Definitely not enough. Teachers have a difficult time with making rules with a group of students and then exempting or changing the rules for the ESOL students in their class. Because, just like you, they feel that making the rule for one is making the rule for everyone. The reality is, number one, the quantity of work and timing, is a big difference with the ESOL student. The ESOL students are supposed to be allowed, by law, to have extra time to turn in work. And you [the teacher] are supposed to reduce the quantity of work by modifying the number of assignments to just the most important ones rather than all of them.

SSM: When ESOL students leave your class to take regular classes, what are some of the concerns that they bring back to you—their home base class?

Magda (ESOL teacher): One of the concerns, of course, is that they don’t understand what is going on in the regular class—that they don’t know what to do. Very often I have to call the teacher to explain the project or whatever homework they have because they didn’t understand it. Many, many times, they are very lost. They don’t really know what is going on in the class. They are going through the motions, but it [content] doesn’t really sink in. Another big complaint that I get is that teachers don’t teach. They just put the work on the board. They [ESOL students] can’t follow directions. They can’t read it. They [teachers] just don’t teach. Another thing is discipline problems. The other [American] students are so undisciplined, they are so disruptive, that my students can’t hear the teacher. We do have a good teacher, like Mrs. Wing. My students tell me that

they feel horribly sorry for her because the students are so mean to her. She is such a nice person. And my kids are the only ones that actually listen to her. The other ones are like in La La Land. Or screaming or jumping. She is always having problems with discipline.

SSM: What have your students voiced as their fears and concerns about the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT)?

Magda (ESOL teacher): One of their fears is that they can't pass it. The biggest problem about them not passing it is that they can't use dictionaries. I really believe that if they were allowed to use dictionaries, that many more of them would pass it because often it is a word in the question that they don't understand. When they don't understand a word in the questions, especially on the writing test, they can't do it at all. So they can't even get partial credit because they do it all wrong.

SSM: What would you like to see implemented in the ESOL program in this county, if anything?

Magda (ESOL teacher): In my program? Or for the students?

SSM: In the general ESOL program itself.

Magda (ESOL teacher): What [changes] I would most like to see are not for myself, but for the students. I would like to see sheltered classes in the different disciplines—like Science, Social Studies, and Math, especially Science and Social Studies more than anything else.

SSM: If we had to make two implementations to our curriculum that would affect ESOL students, involving teacher training, etc., what would they be?

Magda (ESOL teacher): Making teachers more aware and more sensitive to what it entails to learn the regular academics in a totally different language. I really believe that if I put a bunch of teachers in a classroom and teach them the whole concept of something really easy in a discipline in a different language they would have a tough time.

Selected Responses from ESOL Paraprofessional Aide (as related to Research Question 1 and the Summary of Findings to Research Question 1)

Note: Responses are presented as spoken or written without editing. I have noted points of clarification in brackets []. As a reminder, I am SSM.

SSM: When ESOL students leave your class to take regular classes, what are some of the concerns that they bring back to you, their home-base class?

Lan (Paraprofessional Aide): After leaving the ESOL classes to attend regular classes, most students would come back to complain that the other [regular education] teachers speak too fast and they [ESOL students] don't understand what's going on. They also complain that the regular students tease them when they talk and interrupt the class while the ESOL students were paying attention. This occurrence interferes with student's learning process. Because of the uneasy feelings when attending regular classes, many of them ask the teachers for passes to come back to the ESOL class just to hang out and to do their work.

SSM: Are non-ESOL teachers prepared to accept ESOL students into their classes? Explain.

Lan (Paraprofessional Aide): Some are very much involved and cared. They called and very concerned about the ESOL students. Some even have target dictionary

language to help ESOL students. Some even send ESOL students to come back to ESOL class to do their work. Others show intrigue in finding out more about the students' background and cultures.

SSM: Are curricular modification made for ESOL students?

Lan (Paraprofessional Aide): I think so; I think there modifications for ESOL students. Exactly how, and what I am not sure.

SSM: What do your students tell you about the Georgia High School Graduation Test?

Lan (Paraprofessional Aide): Most of them said that they wish they could use the dictionary while taking the GHSGT. They said that they would be able to do better with the dictionary. Especially with writing test because sometimes they don't have enough words to express what they really want to say.

SSM: What are some of your students' successes and fears?

Lan (Paraprofessional Aide): We have a lot of successive students. For instance, two years ago, the salutatorian was an ESOL student, third place was also another ESOL student. Many ESOL students were in the top ten and graduated with honors. This year, we have Hector [also research participant] who is involved and actively a member of at least seven clubs, National Honor Society, ranked 7th place in the senior class. Karla ranked 3rd place. This is a true success. I don't think the ESOL students have any fears toward reaching their goal. I would say that they are afraid of being bothered or teased by the non-ESOL students.

Selected Responses from Students (Findings from Research Question 1)

Note: Responses are presented as spoken or written without editing. I have noted points of clarification in brackets []. As a reminder, I am SSM.

SSM: You know that you must pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test before you receive a high school diploma. How did you prepare for this test, and how do you feel about the test?

Hai (student): I studied extra, and feel, not unfair, but I feel that ...that's it's not unfair or fair ... it's a requirement that you take it. [student's journal entry] This test is not about being fair or not. Is about what you've learned from the past years. And this for all students not only us (who doesn't live in this country). Well, it can't be fair when a student just came here one or two years and have to take that test of course is not fair. Because, sometimes different country teach different skill, like languages.

Hiral (student): [Hiral had not taken the test as of this interview] It's really difficult to pass that test. My brother took it last year. He has to take it again. He failed social studies. Then he had to take it again. He doesn't know his results yet.

Seynabou (student): I don't like that test. 'Cause it's too difficult. [student's journal entry] It is a fair test in my opinion, but the only thing I think is they suppose a special correction for the ESOL and know that they was born in these country so might not know everything about the Social Studies. Because it a subject that you need to know a lot in order to pass it so they should do something.

Emiliano (student): I don't know how I am going to take it because I am a little bit scared. I know that if I don't pass it the first time, I can take it over again. Yes, but, I am trying to take some information. [student's journal entry] Because will be a way to prove that I have been successful in this country and that I'm smart enough to learn another language and pass the GHSGT.

Celine (student): I thought that it would be more difficult, but it was not. Except for the Science—we did not have the same program in France. There are a lot of things that I don't know. Sometimes the vocabulary was different. That's why I had to take it over.

Juliana (student): It scares me 'cause they say it is difficult.

SSM: Did you pass it the first time that you took it?

Hai (student): I passed the English and the math the first time. I'm still trying to pass my Science and Social Studies. The writing? I still have to wait for the results.

Hiral (student): [Has not taken test, yet]. Next year.

Seynabou (student): I took all of them, but I just passed the English and the math. I have the Science and the Social Studies to do again.

Emiliano (student): I took the writing test the other week. I feel that I did OK. I don't know.

Celine (student): Well, I took the graduation test a week after I started to go to school. I thought I was going to fail it, but I didn't. The first time I took the Writing was a week after I came to school, and I passed the writing test, the math, the English. I had to take social studies and science [again]. Social studies—I passed it the second time. And this time, the third time, I took the Science. I am waiting for the results.

Hector (student): Well, I have already taken the test. I passed all of the sections of the graduation testing the very first time I took them. And I did prepare. I came to all of the tutorials every day when they were offered so that helped me a lot to pass that test.

Juliana (student): I don't know [yet]. I guess I did alright.

SSM: Have the teachers prepared you for the test?

Seynabou (student): One. Just my social studies teacher. He used to prepare us, but the rest, no.

Celine (student): I asked my biology teacher to give me a booklet to study with, and she gave me the GHSGT book that had some questions in it and the answers too. So I looked them over.

Juliana (student): Some of them. In chemistry the teacher is helping us. I do [extra] questions for the graduation test.

Research Question 2

Within the school does a multicultural, diverse, and positive atmosphere exist which encourages acceptance of cultural differences and promotes assimilation into mainstream student life, and if not, how could a multicultural, diverse, and positive-accommodating atmosphere be created?

Summary of Findings Related to Research Question 2:

2.1 LEP students generally felt comfortable in their mainstream classes and considered the mainstream students as friendly and occasionally helpful in their mainstream classes; however, some LEP students felt self-conscious about their differences, and their feelings became heightened because mainstream students occasionally ridiculed them.

2.2 A particularistic setting better describes the school's cultural environment. LEP students did not generally assimilate into the general school population and generally did not become involved in school activities. For example, by choice, the LEP students ate lunch together but apart from mainstream students.

2.3 *Mainstream teachers generally attempted to help the LEP students, but only a few teachers followed simple techniques such as pairing an LEP student with a mainstream student. The LEP students generally found that mainstream teachers took the time to provide extra help, but the ESOL teacher did not believe mainstream teachers followed requirements in the selection of work or the amount of work.*

2.4 *All LEP students recognized the cultural differences between home and school. All LEP students acknowledged their adapting certain American ways as influenced by mainstream students and living in America. Most of their parents tended to remain less influenced.*

Selected Responses from ESOL Teacher (as related to Research Question 1 and the Summary of Findings to Research Question 2)

Note: Responses are presented as spoken or written without editing. I have noted points of clarification in brackets []. As a reminder, I am SSM.

SSM: Over the years as you teach ESOL, what has been your reaction to, let's say, to the number of kids coming into the program, the make-up of students coming into the program—what have you seen as the trend over the years?

Magda (ESOL teacher): In Chatham County, the original ESOL program was for Vietnamese and Lao children after the Vietnam War. And that made up the largest amount of ESOL kids. I've always had another array, just a few students from different countries. At one point we had an influx of Russians coming in. I didn't have many Hispanics. As you know, we now have 95% Hispanics.

SSM: Is there assimilation, acculturation or enculturation, or a combination thereof, going on at RHS?

Magda (ESOL teacher): When I first came to the US, one of the things which was very amazing to me was just to see how many people from other parts of the world were here, especially in New York. We arrived at Kennedy airport and everyone was wearing something weird that didn't look to me Western. So there were people from all over the world. Throughout the years, I've met and known and have as friends people from different backgrounds, different cultures. It was especially shocking to me because I thought that all American were blond with blue eyes. Actually when I came here, I was pretty shocked. I was very amazed by the number of cultures and the number of religions. One culture that I experienced, especially living up North and then moving to the South. It's a totally different life. When I came to the South, everybody asked me what church did we belong to. No one had ever asked me that question before. What do you mean what church to I belong to? What does that mean? No one in my country [Cuba] or in Spain or in the North had ever asked me that question. I didn't understand for awhile what they meant. I thought that when you are in the South, you have to belong to some kind of church. That was pretty culturally different to me. And then another thing being here at SHS, is that most of the kids here are Black—a different culture altogether. So between the ESOL students, my family, and my friends, I am constantly bombarded with multi numbers of cultures.

SSM: In your opinion, how well do the ESOL students assimilate into the general school population?

Magda (ESOL teacher): They don't, usually. They pretend. If they can make it to the senior year, and they have been here for four years, they pretend to assimilate towards the end. Especially in the last semester to make it through the senior activities. In reality,

none of my students visit American kids. None of them call each other on the phone. There is really no assimilation going on.

SSM: So instead of a pluralistic setting where cultures are blending together, you see a very particularistic setting. For example, when I interviewed students they tended to hang out with the other ESOL students, no matter the nationality, because they didn't feel that they were so different from one another.

Magda (ESOL teacher): Yes, that is right. I think it is because they all have something in common. In this class, even though we laugh a lot about differences and things that happen to each one of us, there are still respectful of themselves. I can make fun of any of my students. It's not the same as anyone else making fun of them.

SSM: It isn't offensive.

Magda (ESOL teacher): Right, exactly. We can just make fun of something funny that happened. Most of the time the other kids in the school are either offensive to my students or my students pretty much blend into the walls, like they are not there. Especially if they are good students, for some reason, the better students are least wanted. The better their grade, then nobody pays them much attention.

SSM: Do your students say to you that they witness a lack of achievement in the school's general population? Do they find that they are not challenged or that they are not praised for achieving well?

Magda (ESOL teacher): No. For my students, they don't see that is such a big deal because learning English is so strong. They just concentrate most of the time on the subject [not on the praise]. If they go to a class and they are not being challenged, it's

not a big deal because they are still learning English. But what I hear are complaints when they get to college. They just aren't prepared.

SSM: What are the [ESOL] parents' attitudes toward public schooling in our district? What feedback do you get back, if any, from the ESOL parents generally?

Magda (ESOL teacher): The poor parent has no choice. So they don't even think about any other choice. But, as a matter of fact, I had two students pulled from my program to go to private school. If they can afford a little bit, especially the parents of girls who come here, they see that buses are a pain in the neck. Some of my students are on the bus for an hour and a half before they get here. That's a problem. But if a parent has no money, and all they know is public school.... What is interesting though is that in other countries, private schools are way superior to public schools. The kids who come to me from public schools, in small towns especially, they really have no education at all. The kid who comes to me with the best schooling have attended private school in their country. I think that what most of my parents don't understand is that we are all paying for school either way.

SSM: As I mentioned before, the laws of our country dictate that the students must be in school until a certain age. They have got to be in school until they are 16 no matter what their background is. Are the ESOL students placed in the middle or high school program according to their age and not their ability?

Magda (ESOL teacher): Our school system does [places them according to age and not ability]. The parents don't want that. They want to keep them in the level that they should be. Parents come to me all the time and say 'I don't think my son knows that much. Can you put him down [into a lower grade]?' They will come, let's say, with a 9th

grade diploma to go into the 10th grade. They'll say, 'Put him in the 9th grade. They [the children] don't know the language.' Parents have a different conception or idea than the American parents. American parents want to push that kid to pass whether they know it [the material] or not. I think that a lot of my parents, not all, but a lot of my parents are more interested in, 'Teach the kid. Let the kid learn first.' It doesn't matter what age he is. Americans are very concerned with age.

SSM: You mean age-specific grade. You are 15 so you should be in this grade.

Magda (ESOL teacher): Yes, whether the kid knows anything or not. Therefore we have a lot of 19 year olds that are out there and they are dummies. And they have diplomas. I don't know how they get them. I just had that conversation with Cynthia today. I was doing pre-registration and I said, 'Cynthia, you are in the 11th grade. If I put you in 11th grade English, you are going to fail it. Are you sure you want me to put you there?'" She replies, 'No, don't put me there.' I say, 'You won't graduate on time.' She says, 'That's OK. I don't want to be pushed.'

SSM: That is to say that the ESOL students have a personal conception of their own competence?

Magda (ESOL teacher): Yes. Sharlene, you know, with the level of education that you have right now, if I were to take you to Beijing, and I put you in a first grade class in Beijing, you would not feel very comfortable. Even though you have this high [level of] education. A lot of times our school system does not realize, or doesn't give the idea, that you have to learn the language before you can pass the class. Because if you are passing the class [and don't know the language], it isn't authentic. You are not learning. You might memorize A, B, C, D, E, but you are not really learning it. When I got the

memo from Mrs. J. [the current principal], it was really unrealistic about ESOL kids.

How could LeWu pass biology? I can't get him to say 'My name is....' Or 'I live on...'

SSM: Several of the students I interviewed are seniors. How did they get that far especially when they no longer have an ESOL class—they have been mainstreamed in to general population? How are you doing with your English? How are you doing in your English class?

Magda (ESOL teacher): They do great.

SSM: How is that? Is it because they memorize things? Are they speaking the language?

Magda (ESOL teacher): Well, first of all, most of the kids that you interviewed are very good students to begin with. They are the doers. You've got Hector, Randy, and the kids who are really hard working. Those kids are going to survive. You know, the "swim or sink" philosophy. They will swim. You throw them in the water, and they will swim. But not everybody swims. If I take a child, and I throw them in a swimming pool and I give them a little bit of a life jacket to help them tread water, that's a lot easier than if I throw them in a swimming pool, and there's not even salt, and they sink down to the bottom. I think that is what we do with these kids. We'll immediately spring them out automatically. You know last semester I couldn't even put my students, if you ever look at any other ESOL programs in other cities, basically when you have systems that require you to mainstream the child immediately, you mainstream them to art, to music, physical education—easy things that they can't really fail, and they are learning singing, they do a lot of speech, drama. Here—biology, algebra—you dump them right into the hard classes the first day they come here. It's just impossible. I'm teaching them the English

as fast as I can, even then, they can't take too much time to learn English because they have to study all of these things. Most of them are not really understanding it [the material in the academic classes]. They just memorize it. They look in the book and quickly try to find out the word that is in the questions which will help them get the answer. If you noticed, the questions that come with the book, it is very easy to find the answer. You don't really have to understand to find the answer. You can just find that key word. Believe or not, there is a philosophy out there that is how they are teaching kids to read today. They tell them to find the key word and find the answer based on that key word. That really doesn't teach them anything. I think that is a mistake, but that is what we are teaching kids.

SSM: Do you see your students becoming more and more American, every day, every year, every month.

Magda (ESOL teacher): Yes, immediately start sagging the pants, start wearing the jeans... but a part of them is still their culture. Like Soang [a former ESOL student from Korea who now goes to private school] says that he will never date a Korean girl, only an American girl. I said, Why? He said the American girls give you more and it's true.

Selected Responses from ESOL Paraprofessional Aide (as related to Research Question 2 and the Summary of Findings to Research Question 2)

Note: Responses are presented as spoken or written without editing. I have noted points of clarification in brackets []. As a reminder, I am SSM.

SSM: In your opinion, how well do the ESOL students assimilate into the overall student population?

Lan (Paraprofessional Aide): Not very well. It doesn't matter how well the ESOL students assimilate into the other student population, there's always a gap and tension that they perceive when hanging out with the other students unless they were born, raised, or tried to fit in the group. This includes dye the hair colors, talk, and dress in America's style.

SSM: What are the parents' attitudes toward public schooling in our district? What feedback do you get from them generally?

Lan (Paraprofessional Aide): Generally, parents think that public schools have a better environment for their children. I agree with them. At RHS, the ESOL students don't have a comfortable environment to learn. There's tension when they walk in the hallway. They are perceived as "Different" [interviewees' emphasis] because they look different and are able to speak another language. I have a personal experience with the regular students in this school. When I walk in the hallway and they happen to walk across me or behind me, they would assume that I speak Chinese and mimic Chinese by making funny or nonsense sound. I am calm and I see beyond this childish behavior. Therefore, I'd ignore it. Now, if it was for some other ESOL students, they [ESOL students] would immediately say something back, could be positive or negative. Still, if this is going on continuously, I don't think the students will be able to stay focused in school.

Selected Responses from Students (Findings from Research Question 2)

SSM: Do you feel comfortable in the classes that you take that aren't with the ESOL teacher?

Hai (student): I feel comfortable in them.

Hiral (student): Yes.

Seynabou (student): Yes, I feel comfortable, but I feel more [comfortable] when I am in my ESOL class. Because like in my ESOL class we are all the same. I don't know, but I feel better over there.

Celine (student): Well, the first time when I came here ... the first days and the first week, I didn't feel comfortable.

Hector (student): No, it [the language] does not sound alike. I think the teacher is always trying to teach us the right way to speak English. And in the hallways, you hear all kinds of things. You hear the English that is commonly spoken. It's alike, but it's not the same; it's not the correct way of speaking it.

Juliana (student): No, I don't think so. Because when you make a mistake or something, they laugh.

SSM: Do other students accept and make you feel comfortable in the school?

Hai (student): Yes, but not all of the time, but then I don't always feel comfortable, but it's just normal.

Hiral (student): Not almost. In two or three classes I don't have no friends, so I feel alone in there.

Seynabou (student): Yes...Maybe because I am African.

Emiliano (student): Yes, they are friendly.

Celine (student): I feel more comfortable now than when I just arrived. They didn't bother me; they just didn't pay attention to me. If it was something I asked them, they would answer me.

Hector (student): Well, that's a big concept because everybody is different. Some people, for example, are prejudice and have different thoughts about Hispanics but after all I do feel that I am welcome at this school. It's been good.

Juliana (student): ...not at Savannah High School. At work.

SSM: Are students friendly toward you?

Hai (student): Yes, m'am.

Hiral (student): Yes.

Seynabou (student): Some of them ... I don't like them because they don't like me. I don't know. Maybe it is because I am not friendly to them. I don't want to be friends with them.

Emiliano (student): I can be friends to anyone. I don't mind to have many friends.

Celine (student): Yes, most of them.

Hector (student): Well, I am a person that has different opinions about people and I can be very choosy about who do I want to be my friend and I feel that I don't have to prove myself to anyone if they want me as a friend, they will have to accept me like I am.

Juliana (student): No. Like when you can't explain something you want to say... when I first came here, it's like your invisible or something.

SSM: Do American students offer to help you if they see you are having difficulty with the material in classes which aren't with the ESOL teacher?

Hai (student): Yeah.

Hiral (student): Not really. They just laugh about it, especially when I say something wrong.

Seynabou (student): Yes.

Emiliano (student): Yes, sometimes they give me help.

Celine (student): Yes.

Hector (student): Well students always tend to do their own work and if you ask them to help you they would help you, but then they'll expect you to do something for them.

Juliana (student): Yes. Just this week in Chemistry we had a project, and I was trying to do it myself, and a girl asked me if I understand it, and she helped me. She is very friendly.

SSM: When do you help the American students?

Hai (student): I help them when they sometimes talk and don't do their work - I have to tell them to do their work. I help them in math when they really need it.

Hiral (student): No.

Emiliano (student): Yes. In a Spanish class, they sometimes ask something. I tell them how to pronounce a word, or something like that.

Celine (student): Like when they see that I have a good grade, they ask me how ... like... last semester, I had really good grades in Math, discreet Math, and they would be asking me how I would do it, so I explained it to them.

Hector (student): Yes, because I speak Spanish so they ask me to help them, and, of course, I help them. Of course I won't do their work, just help them understand.

SSM: In classes in which you aren't in the ESOL class, does the teacher pair you with a student whose first language is English?

Hai (student): They give me extra help when I need it. They are extra nice and sweet.

Hiral (student): No, in New Jersey [Hiral previously attended school in New Jersey].

Seynabou (student): No. [Seynabou noted some teachers worked individually with her].

Hector (student): Yes the teacher would mostly pair me up with someone that speaks English.

Juliana (student): No.

SSM: Because English is not your first language, do you feel that other students and teachers treat you differently?

Hai (student): No. They treat me more special. They treat me in a good way, special way.

Hiral (student): Not really. Sometimes, some teachers do, but I talk to them privately and they help me. It's easier for me when they explain it. It's not difficult.

Seynabou (student): Yes. Like when they speak to me, they have to do some gest for the things I don't understand, but sometimes I understand. It sounds funny to me when they do that because I know what they are telling me. But they have to do some gest.

Emiliano (student): Because sometimes they think that we don't know that much English so that we cannot sometimes understand the words. So like they tell you words that you do not understand. Like you don't know - you don't know what they say.

Hector (student): They do not have to treat me differently. Most of the times they treat me the same just like any other student. But when it comes to something about my country they would ask me questions and sometimes they expect me to know everything about my country.

Juliana (student): Sometimes...Like when you can't explain something you want to say... when I first came here, it's like you're invisible or something.

Research Question 3

Does my upbringing in a mainstream Euro-centric culture, with some limited opportunities to learn a foreign language as the basis of my education, create expectations about learning and possibly cause bias in my research for the educational opportunities of LEP students?

Summary of Findings from Research Question 3

3.1 *In retrospect, I would ask questions differently of the teachers and students now than when I began my research based on my recognition of some bias in the delivery of those questions. For example, in some of the questions, I assert an opinion as part of the question.*

3.2 *The research has provided me with a broader context of how LEP students learn and a greater appreciation of their higher level of motivation and persistence. While I learned a foreign language to become a teacher and to appreciate better a foreign culture, they learn as the foundation to their expectations of success, especially economic well-being.*

3.3 *The ESOL teacher and paraprofessional and LEP students have a better appreciation for cultural differences than their mainstream counterparts, including me.*

Selected Responses from ESOL Teacher (as related to Research Question 3 and the Summary of Findings to Research Question 3)

Note: Responses are presented as spoken or written without editing. I have noted points of clarification in brackets []. As a reminder, I am SSM.

SSM: These two terms are often used synonymously and they shouldn't be. In all of the research and reading that I do, people cannot pinpoint a definition of race and ethnicity.

Magda (ESOL teacher): Race has to do with the color of your skin as far as the four major races of the world which are Mongoloid, Negroid, Caucasian, and Indian [native]. Now that has nothing to do with your ethnicity which is your cultural background. You can be a Mongoloid, for example, from South America, and you are of the Mongoloid race and your ethnic background is South American, whatever that country is, let's say Brazil. You are a Mongoloid Brazilian. Or you could be a Negroid Brazilian. Or you could be a Caucasian Brazilian. But I have problems with, in the US, especially in the South, I never experienced that in the North, because I come from Cuba, I must, therefore, not be White, or I must not be Mongoloid, or I must not be Indian. I must be quote, unquote 'Other,' people of color. And I resent that because I know a lot of Cubans who are White Caucasians, who are Black, people who are Chinese who come from Cuba. And one thing does not have anything to do with the other. So, ethnicity has to do with your cultural background. The other thing that is confusing is nationality. And that's a third thing. Just because you come from, let's say Puerto Rico, and you are Black, that's doesn't make you African at all. You are Puerto Rican. That is your nationality. Your ethnic background might be from Spain. It might be of Spanish descendent. It might be just Puerto Rican. And your race might be Black, or White, or Chinese, or 'Other.' You might be a mix. Those are the differences.

SSM: So going right into hyphenated race. African-American, Cuban-American...

Magda (ESOL teacher): That's a lot of bullshit. That is just a way to explain why someone is Black who is here. We know that. Anyone who reads history knows why

Blacks are in the New World. You don't need to know that. So what do you do when you have a Black person who lives in Germany? Afro-Germanic? There are a lot of Blacks who live in Germany.

SSM: Do you think that this [sheltering] is something that our Superintendent might listen to if you made a plea to him?

Magda (ESOL teacher): The problem is that we have such few ESOL students that when you start going 'out of the box,' I feel that people think, 'Oh, here come the ESOL students,' and they kind of black list us. It happens. And unless you have someone [in the Superintendent's office or in the site Administration] who has worked with ESOL in other counties or in other states, this county is just not ready for any change.

Selected Responses from ESOL Paraprofessional Aide (as related to Research Question 3 and the Summary of Findings to Research Question 3)

Note: Responses presented as spoken or written without editing. I have noted points of clarification in brackets []. As a reminder, I am SSM.

SSM: Tell me about your background as an educator/paraprofessional aide.

Lan (Paraprofessional Aide): Originally, I am Vietnam. I was an ESOL student for four years at RHS, and this is where I got my high school diploma in 1997. A year later, I decided to go back to work in the ESOL program. And then I decided to attend college to further my education.

SSM: Why did you decide to become an ESOL teacher's aide?

Lan (Paraprofessional Aide): The reason why I decided to become an ESOL aide is because I have always enjoyed learning. Also, I know that by exposing to the school's

environment, I will gain more general knowledge by interacting with students from different countries.

SSM: What can you tell me about the history of the ESOL program at Savannah High School?

Lan (Paraprofessional Aide): When I first enrolled in the ESOL program, Ms. K. was my teacher. Mr. H was the prior instructor. And I think the program is established 15-17 years ago.

SSM: What was your experience as an ESOL student?

Lan (Paraprofessional Aide): As an ESOL student I had many experiences, good ones and bad ones. I remember my math teacher who said something to me in English and I had no idea what was going on. She then spoke louder as if I was hearing impaired. I thought that was funny because I did not understand what she was saying, not because I could not hear what she was saying. I also remember being laughed at by other American students when I gave my speech in Literature class. One of the most memorable moments of being an ESOL student for me is when my project was graded as the best in the Literature class. We had to make a scrapbook to celebrate Black History month. I worked days and nights for months to put together the scrapbook. And hard work was finally paid off. My scrapbook was the best compared to the whole class body. And my teacher showed mine to all the students in her classes. To me that was something that I am really proud of.

Selected Responses from Students (Findings from Research Question 3)

Note: Responses are presented as spoken or written without editing. I have noted points of clarification in brackets []. As a reminder, I am SSM.

SSM: This is probably one of the most important questions. What is your idea about being in a multicultural country? Do you practice your culture at home and something different at school? Or does it all blend together?

Hai (student): It all blends together. My parents still follow the Vietnamese culture pretty much. I live between Vietnam and being Americanized. When I speak to my parents, I speak just Vietnamese to them, because we are Vietnamese. And I speak English when I see American people. So I am living between two cultures.

Hiral (student): Always they want to watch Indian channels, but I switch to English channels. That's why they say that. All the time. Then my cousins from America came to India, and they gave me jeans pants and that stuff, but I don't wear them. I tell them that I'm not going to wear them. Now I have to wear them.

Emiliano (student): They [America] do have many cultures. They do have many religions. So, yeah, I think I "fit in." play video games, go to play soccer, things like that. I don't know. It's strange for me. I don't understand. What does that mean? Multicultural? What does that mean?

Celine (student): It's more comfortable than in France. Americans are more tolerant. In France, where I lived, it's like a little city, and the people aren't friendly. When you go to shop or to the supermarket, the people are not friendly. I feel uncomfortable. Still, maybe it's just the way I feel, not the way they do.

Hector (student): Multicultural is, for example, people from different places all gathered in one place. For example, in this school, we have people from many different countries in the ESOL classes. So I would define that as multicultural and diverse because people that come from different countries have different customs and speak

different languages, and when we are together we have the same ideas as to the differences of the places we come from. Yes, I would call the whole country as multicultural. Because right now the Hispanics are the biggest minority in the United States and every day we are growing more and more so, yes, I would define this country and community as multicultural.

Juliana (student): You know that you come from your own culture and that you have come into the American culture, and even when you come in to Savannah High School, it's very different.

SSM: Do you live in a community which is mostly families [of same nationality]?

Hai (student): Not really, because where I live there are Americans all around us. I speak Vietnamese when I see Vietnamese people. The young people like me that are American, we speak American.

Hiral (student): Like 100 go to the same place of worship [Hindu]. They would not let me marry [an American]. They would tell him that he could not come to my house again.

Emiliano (student): Yes. I have a lot of friends, and I go to different houses, and go shopping, or play.

Celine (student): I'm happy because I have more opportunity for my future, to do what I want even though I don't have my parents. When I left France to stay here was because I wanted to be more independent, more autonomous. [Celine lives with her aunt].

Hector (student): And that's what I mean by they don't feel welcome in the United States because they are gathering in groups, like where I live is mostly Mexicans. We try to keep our traditions too. I go to church every Sunday. I am Catholic. And we try to

keep our customs too. And even though people look at us different, we try to stay together. As I said, where I live, there are mostly Mexicans, people from Central America, and more Hispanics from other countries. Everybody tries to stay together and help one another when we cannot find any help with Americans.

Juliana (student): Cause they understand that we are here; we have to change a little bit. We try always for a better life. We work hard.

SSM: When you go home, do you feel like you are leaving a different culture at school or when you go home do you experience the same culture as at school?

Hai (student): I live different when I get home. I'm free to talk to my Mom. At home, it's like Vietnam. When I go to school, it's another place.

Hiral (student): Like my parents told me every day, like your are not Indian anymore; you are getting American now.

Emiliano (student): [Laughs]. I don't know. I don't know because... I don't know if I am getting more American, but... I'm neutral right now. I'm not from Argentina; I'm not from the United States.

Celine (student): In France, children cannot work, and we cannot drive before 18. Even though you are over 18, they don't hire you because they don't want to waste time training you. There is high unemployment and the state won't hire younger people. So the children there are really spoiled. They don't know the value of money. They just buy things at a very expensive price. They don't think about it. When I was still in France, I was that way. My parents bought me many things that were expensive. I didn't work, so I didn't know the value of a dollar. Now I do.

Hector (student): I become more American each day because of the holidays and the customs that people have here. I do miss my country because I don't get to celebrate the holidays of my country—how they celebrate everything - how they look at everything so differently than here. So we try to keep our traditions. I know that everybody is not the same, but multiculturalism is becoming more and more in the United States and more people from different countries are coming to the United States. Americans have a different point of view. If I would ask an American, if I would ask him/her what does he, she think or what is his point of view, it would not be the same as mine because I have been through a lot. I know how hard life can be here and also in my country. And I know that they have not experienced the same things that I have they were born here and they have been here all of their lives. They haven't got the need to move or to go to another country in search of successfulness. Most people in here are capable of doing everything they want to in terms of succeeding and having a true American dream. We instead have to come from our country in the search of that dream because we cannot find it in there so we are here. Right now there are protests to the Congress and to the President to give us Mexicans the amnesty or the residency, I think that we should get it because as much as we need from this great country this country also needs from all of us multicultural.

Juliana (student): My culture, like I will think of Colombia, always, as my culture. In my house, we are still eating Colombian food, and are following the same customs and everything.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION: IN THE SCHOOLHOUSE

Introduction

The inspiration for this qualitative research project came from the subjects of my inquiry, the educators and students who were involved in changing their lives after they arrived in the United States. Upon conducting extensive personal interviews and observing the participants' daily routines, I soon became empathetic with their willingness to make sense of the differences between their native culture and an American culture—often times with little help from their immediate family, their school, or their community.

The theoretical framework upon which I based this research involved critical phenomenological inquiry, narrative inquiry, and anthropological inquiry. The use of critical phenomenological inquiry provided a way for the participants in this study to relate their personal experiences in a country new to them. The nine participants, two adults and seven students, answered personal questions willingly and honestly with humor and candor. In his personal journal, Hector writes: “Having a life in a different country is very hard. You have to overcome obstacles and barriers, as language and customs. Me, for example, I had to struggle in my classes because I didn't know any English.”

Narrative inquiry allowed me to interweave my personal story as a foreign language learner and teacher with that of the participants who struggled to learn a second language. Also, the use of this strand of inquiry allowed me to offer personal insight into the definition of multiculturalism. I found that the trials and triumphs experienced by the

participants overlapped, which helped to create a strong bond among these individuals. I experienced a strong bond forming between the participants and me because they knew that my interest in their respective stories was genuine and heartfelt. When the participants asked me about my background and discovered that I was not from a Spanish-speaking country, yet taught Spanish, they expressed surprise, which likely stemmed from their personal trials in needing to learn English in the United States. I explained to them that Spanish was not my second language, but a foreign language acquired out of personal interest and backed by a tremendous amount of hard work and dedication.

During interviews, when reading personal journals (participants' and mine), and during classroom observations, I incorporated anthropological inquiry into my research. I included all aspects of the educational community which affected the participants. This type of inquiry delineated my boundaries as cultural researcher/ethnographer. Participants shared information about their activities at school, their classes, their teachers, their families—here in the United States and those residing in their native country—their lives at home and in the community. In her personal journal, Hai writes: “Living in America you have to get out of your shell. Go out to the world, learn, experience and get serious with your life. You’ll be wasting your life in America when you’re sitting around and do nothing.”

Conclusion

This dissertation explored three major issues involving the assimilation of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students at a large high school in the southeastern part of the United States. First, I interviewed seven LEP adolescents enrolled in the ESOL

program at the school where I teach Spanish as a foreign language. I examined their immersion into a multicultural environment, namely the culture of a high school with a majority African American population, the culture of a southern urban city, and the home culture of the respective participants. I also interviewed the ESOL teacher and her paraprofessional aide to gain insight into this unique program and its impact on the second-language experience of the LEP students, especially as related to the impact of the state-standard test, the GHSGT, on LEP students' graduating with a diploma. The research question I framed for the first issue centers on whether LEP students receive equal and equitable delivery of the curriculum mandated by the State of Georgia. The adult interviewees expressed an overwhelming need for more staff development opportunities (perhaps mandatory) for them to meet more effectively the needs of LEP students. They agreed that modifying the classroom curriculum and working closer with the LEP professionals in the school are vital to the success of these students.

LEP student participants' responses indicated a general feeling of "getting by" in most classes. Beyond the educational struggles, they also faced obvious differences from the other 90% of the school's students. Many noted that they either learned to cope with or ignore any negative feedback whether as a result of classroom performance or another student's intolerant remarks.

The ESOL professionals especially criticized the chasm which existed between LEP students and mainstream students. The ESOL professionals offered several observations and comments which they believe would improve the success of LEP students. Based on their comments, my research and findings, I conclude that implementation of the following would improve how and what LEP students learn:

more teacher training, teachers making a concerted effort to meet the needs of the LEP students by modifying the pace and amount of assignments in regular classes, training to understand the full range of diversity in hopes of creating a more sensitive attitude of educators toward LEP students as they work to cross the language barrier, and curriculum modifications to improve the chances for LEP students to pass the GHSGT and receive a diploma.

The second major issue I addressed in this dissertation was the meaning of multiculturalism in the school environment. I examined the participants' concept of multiple cultural similarities and differences being experienced simultaneously within the school. The second research question I framed relates to the assimilation process taking place in the school. The participants in this study fully realized that they were in the midst of cultural change and acceptance coupled with the process of "fitting in." The LEP student participants expressed that they did not find difficult the transition from school culture to home culture. These students admitted that they could not rely on someone at home to help them with their homework or converse with them in English about the day's activities. Yet, their answers reflected a strong sense of parental support of the school and the program. As typical teenagers, a few respondents felt that their parents were too strict; "American" kids seemed to have more freedom.

Their responses also indicated that LEP students do not have definitions for terms like assimilation and multiculturalism. Their responses reflected their age as teenagers being teenagers irrespective of cultural background. On the other hand, the two adult interviewees could call upon many more years experiencing the "American way of life,"

and therefore, they expressed quickly and offered stronger opinions about the subject of multiculturalism and the process of assimilation.

The ESOL paraprofessional aide defined multiculturalism as "...the unique general knowledge and insightful experiences that a person possesses. This possession is built up by interacting with difference ethnic people and living in other countries. Generally, most Americans think they know the meanings of diversity and multiculturalism, but they don't unless they have lived or migrated from one country to another." From these comments, I conclude that the two ESOL educators do not consider assimilation to be happening at the school. Rather, accommodations for the LEP students are in place as the students adapt to American culture, especially since the home culture differs from the school culture.

As voiced in their replies to interview and casual questions, the LEP students are dealing not only with a language barrier but are also dealing with the task of creating a seamless intercultural transience. The process of "fitting in" reflects their need to learn the second language and the cultural ramifications associated with life in the United States. However, the participants realize that they are expected to adhere to their native culture when at home.

The third issue raised in this study relates to a possible bias in my research because of my Euro-centric upbringing. Even though I speak a foreign language and can empathize through travel and experience with the LEP students, I was concerned that I would not be able to make them understand why I was so interested in them personally and academically. I was awed by their unpretentious agreement to be the subjects of my study. I assured them that when I spoke to native speakers of Spanish, I often felt self

conscious because Spanish is a foreign language to me, and I have so much more to learn. When the students asked me why I learned Spanish, I replied that it “came natural” to me. I have not learned a foreign language out of necessity but rather out of interest and intrigue. I have traveled several times outside of the United States, but my daily survival never depended upon my knowledge of a second language.

I also chose the topic of my dissertation because of a genuine interest in how adults and students feel about leaving their native country and adjusting to a new way of life to a country in which a second language becomes essential for daily survival. Also, I had questions about why I chose to teach a foreign language to children. As stated in the introduction to this paper, my interest in learning a foreign language was sparked at an early age. I was, and still am, an astute student who enjoys learning and accepting educational challenges. Therefore, my third research question reflects a personal approach in that I expected that the participants would find the assimilation process more difficult. To the contrary, I heard and witnessed the determination of the LEP student participants to accept the challenge of assimilating into American society by learning the language and adjusting to a different culture. A few of my participants responded to the difficulty of learning English and becoming more “Americanized.” In their own words, they write of this struggle on many fronts.

Hector writes of his adjustment from the basis on not knowing any English:

Yes, [it was difficult] because I spoke no English and I did have a hard time learning because nobody spoke Spanish. Well, there was a few people that spoke English, but they just told me what to do and they didn't translate everything. So I had to do it mostly on my own.

Celine studied English in France. Despite some reservations about cultural adaptation from her European upbringing, she especially appreciates the opportunities available to her in America:

Not really since I have learning English [in France] for many years, so I already have the base. I'm happy [in the U.S.] because I have more opportunity for my future – to do what I want even though I don't have my parents. When I left France to stay here was because I wanted to be more independent, more autonomous.

Seynabou viewed her American self with a mixed view, too. She especially viewed freedom here not available in her homeland.

Not very. Here I can do for myself. Like if I was going to the Mall, I buy things for myself. Like my furniture. If I was in Africa, my parents would have to do that for me.

Hai, the participant with the most optimistic outlook, also spoke openly about fitting in and appreciating her Americanized self:

I'm comfortable with it. I spend more money on my clothing because living over here you have to dress up to fit in and you have to do something that you don't want to do. You have to work and you have to save your money. You don't spend it right now. The kind of food you eat. And you waste more. In Vietnam, you eat it until another day and you buy another one. I fit in just fine. When I came here, I was ten years old, so now I just fit in fine.

Hiral also noted more freedom in America and differences in the structure of education from his homeland:

Yeah, sometimes. It's different with different teachers – how a teacher teaches. Americans have more freedom. In India if you don't do homework, they hit you. And if you get absent, they hit you too. And they call your parents and tell them not to let you come to school.

Juliana summarized differences between her native land in American in view of an urban versus a suburban feeling, especially as related to mass transit.

It is very hard, but I try to memorize the words and catch on. The first thing when I came here that I saw different was that there are no people in the street. They don't walk. They always are driving. In Colombia, you see a lot of people in the street, walking in the street. And a lot of buses and a lot of people because it is difficult to get a car. But here it is like everybody has a car.

Overall, the student interviewees accepted the challenge of learning a second language and adjusting to a new culture. I believe that their youth and desire to “fit in” prompted many of their positive responses. Also, the teenagers noted a strong contrast between experiences and opportunities in the United States and their native country. Because I began learning Spanish at a relatively early age, I can relate to the resiliency of these students. I learned the language first and then traveled to learn more about the culture. Yet, as previously stated, I never depended upon my use of a foreign language to survive.

The ESOL teacher's and her paraprofessional aide's responses to my inquiry caused in-depth reflection on my part about the academic achievement of the LEP students and any possible bias by me in the selection of student participants. The ESOL teacher and I chose the students based on their ability to converse in English and the

number of years they had resided in the United States. As well, the student participants represented as broad a spectrum of ethnic groups as possible.

Reflecting on the replies of the adult participants, I conclude that different perceptions exist, perhaps due to the age barrier, between themselves and the students. I detected in the adults a note of weariness and pessimism about how LEP students learn and their comfort level within the school environment. In contrast, the students' responses reflected youthful optimism and eagerness to succeed in the United States. I believe that the students who were chosen to participate in this research project are a valid and reliable cross section of young immigrants determined to pursue their education in the United States and overcome the frequent negative factors which have brought them to this country.

Major Contributions of this Study

In the field of teaching, educators face a number of variables every day. In this study, I have examined the variables of language and culture through the ESOL students at a large public high school in the South. First, this study has provided an opportunity for these LEP adolescents to voice concerns about "fitting in" in American society. Also, they have allowed me to enter their lives by giving straightforward and intimate answers to my inquiry into their lives and experiences in a new country. The ESOL teacher and her aide provided a mature perspective on the ESOL program and added valuable insight into the experience of teaching LEP adolescents for many years.

Second, I have explored the implications of assimilation of the LEP students into American society. After 24 years of teaching at the high school level, I know the difficulty for teenagers to cope with approaching adulthood. Compound this with the

struggle of learning a second language as the basis for educational success and dealing with cultural differences, the LEP students face struggles beyond their years. Despite this backdrop of challenge, the LEP students appreciate the opportunities available in this country.

Third, this research project has provided a vehicle for the ESOL teacher and her aide to verbalize the state of the ESOL program and its inclusion in the host high school. My friendship with these two adults has allowed me to feel comfortable in my inquiry into their area of expertise. Their responses reflect an unquestionable dedication to LEP students and an immeasurable concern about the students' education and well-being.

Fourth, this study has allowed me to share my personal experience in foreign language and culture acquisition. This intrigue fuels my daily teaching experience as I expose the foreign language learners in my classroom to a different way of thinking about the world. As stated in the introduction, my entire teaching experience has been a quixotic quest to make myself and my students empathetic to the lives of those who come to the United States.

Finally, the participants of this study have helped open up the lines of communication among the stakeholders in the educational setting by talking about their families, their experiences, and the educators who have made their lives in the United States a bit easier.

A Final Word

I have followed the lives of the participants by keeping in contact with my friend, Magda. The ESOL program left RHS two years ago. The reasons are many and varied and not germane to this study. We talk on a regular basis, and she has provided an

update as of this writing. Three of the student participants passed the state-mandated exam and graduated. Hai and Celine are enrolled at a local four-year university. Hector, who graduated among the top 10 of this class, was enrolled at the same university but left (as in “**you cannot refuse**”) to take his father to Mexico for his grandfather’s funeral. He lost his scholarship because he missed a term. He is working at a ship yard building interiors of yachts and hopes to return to school. Emiliano and Juliana are working in the area and must pass sections of the GHSGT to receive a diploma. Hiral moved to another city in Georgia, and Magda did not know of Hiral’s status in high school. Seynabou is working for her sister at a local beauty shop braiding hair. I am not sure if she has received her high school diploma. Lan, the paraprofessional aid, has since graduated from a local university and became employed in the corporate world. Magda settled in at her “new” school and currently works in a program with exchange teachers from countries throughout the world. These teachers also instruct in ESOL programs. As you can ascertain from her answers to the interview questions, Magda will be just as honest and candid with these “foreign” teachers as she was for this study. She’s the Real McCoy! Try to teach that concept to most Americans!☺

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL

TO UTILIZE HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

Instructions: Complete all sections of these forms (indicate any sections that do not apply with "N/A") and submit completed materials, including all data collection instruments, informed consent forms, and other relevant materials, to the address below. Please type or print.

Application Review: All applications are reviewed on a first come - first served basis, and as quickly as possible. Depending upon the type of review necessary, turn-around time can range from less than a week (for certain types of exempt research protocols) to 6-8 weeks for a full Committee review. Failure to follow instructions will delay the review process.

Research Oversight Coordinator Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office of Research Services P.O. Box 8005 Savannah, GA 30460-8005	Submit Completed Application to:	Phone: 912-681-5465 Fax: 912-681-0719 E-Mail: ovr@lib@GaSoU.edu http://www2.gsu.edu/research/Resources/
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Research Title: Understanding the Multicultural Experience of LEP Adolescents

Principal Investigator: Sharlene S. Monahan **Title:** Doctoral candidate

Department: Curriculum Studies

Mailing Address: 14 Brannen Drive **Phone:** (912) 897-6865
Savannah, GA 31410 **E-Mail:** monhans1@aol.com

Approval Signatures:

Sharlene Monahan 1/6/03 **Date:** _____
 Principal Investigator

William M. Reynolds
 Faculty Advisor (if student researcher)

Cordele Douglas
 Department Chair

William M. Reynolds
 Print Name of Faculty Advisor

Do Not Write Below This Line - For Internal IRB Use Only

DETERMINATION OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

Human Subjects:	<input type="checkbox"/> At Risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Not At Risk
Action:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Conditional †
	<input type="checkbox"/> Returned for Revisions/Not Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Extension of Approval Period

† Attach Conditions of Approval

Indicate Section of Federal Code that Applies _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
 Chair, Institutional Review Board

1. Statement of the problem to be studied.

The implications of multiculturalism are fast becoming a major educational imperative for the new millennium. Acts of terrorism within the borders of the United States in 2001 have re-emphasized positively and negatively the nation's diversity. Many "camps of (mis)understanding" divide a nation that boasts dozens of different languages and dialects and cultural practices. Therefore, the educational imperative assumes even more importance to help educators, students, and all individuals and groups involved in the educational process to become more aware of linguistic and cultural differences in the United States.

Crucial to this awareness is the realization that sameness cannot be a possible alternative nor a desirable one. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the percentage of students of African American, Latino, Native American and Asian backgrounds represents more than one-third of the nation's schools in their entirety, and the percentages are expected to increase steadily (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1999). More than three million, or 7.4% of students in all public and private schools in the United States are limited in their English proficiency (Macias, 1998). By the year 2010, the largest minority group in the United States will be those under the label Hispanic (Carger 1996).

As a non-native Spanish teacher (I was born in the U.S. and learned my second language in public schools, and private and public universities in Florida and Georgia) in the only public high school in the district that houses an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program, I have a personal interest in second language acquisition and intra-cultural understanding and experience. I empathize with students who are immersed in an almost-exclusively English-only educational program. I know their struggle; it was and is mine because I am not bi-lingual. I know how it feels to be "lost" and disoriented in the lingual and cultural milieu. As a foreign exchange student in college and graduate school and during personal travel in Mexico and Spain (1976, 1984, 1992, 2002), I made mistakes in communicating. I experienced periods of silence. I stumbled and fumbled words. Yet, I eventually connected through my adapted use of a learned foreign language.

The LEP students at Savannah High School are trying not only to learn a second language but also to acquire an American identity. Yet what is an American identity? Linda Watkins-Goffman poses that "there are multiple identities, not just one stereotype... Now, in the new millennium, we are still a people in search of a national self" (2001). The study and use of another language encourage LEP students to communicate, and the label "foreigner" slowly dissolves as the new world of America opens up to them; however, sometimes, this dissolution never occurs, especially if a student's family is itinerant or if the student is "sent back home" to his or her native country. My quest is to examine the lives of several LEP students as they seek an "American identity" within the context of their circumstances at home, in the community or at school—their "home away from home."

- 2. Describe your research design. [As appropriate, you should include (1) your procedures for selecting, recruiting, or identifying the research participants (as well as individuals in any "control" and "comparison" group); (2) any plans to do follow-up studies of the original participants; (3) issues, questions, etc. to be studied; (4) data analysis plans with respect to the ability to identify individual study participants' responses, and (5) any other information relevant for assessing possible risks to the study participants.]**

the curriculum, and the socio-psychological well-being of the LEP student and his/her interrelationship with all members of the educational setting.

The questions posed to the LEP participants [see attached sheet in their entirety] seek clarification as to their knowledge of English and the ESOL program, their overall educational experience in their country, the "mainstream" classes they are taking, their experience with English speakers during and after school, information about their family and reasons for coming to the United States, high school requirements for graduation, and their feelings about learning English and living in the United States.

6) A data analysis plan will be designed by the researcher. A coded system will maintain the anonymity of the interviewees. Each person's or group's responses will be absolutely confidential. The results of the study will reveal individual and group reactions to the multicultural environment in which they study, learn and mature. Another result will be a "living, breathing" interpretation of the term multicultural. Data collected will be secured in a locked cabinet. The only persons with access to the data at any time will be my dissertation supervisor, Dr. William Reynolds, and myself. Further, when the study is completed and the dissertation written, all data collected from individuals and groups will be shredded and destroyed.

7) I see no risk to the participants of this study. Their names will not be revealed, which hopefully will allow them to speak openly.

3. **Description of possible risks to human subjects.** *(If there is a possibility of subjects or researchers being exposed to bodily fluids (drawing blood, etc...), please explain how the Centers for Disease Control "Universal Precautions" will be followed. Also be aware that it will be necessary for you to receive Institutional Biohazard's Committee (IBC) approval in order to be in compliance. See the Research Oversight Coordinator for further information.)*

There is no possible risk to participants in this research study.

4. **Description of possible benefits to human subjects and society in general.**

1) This study provides the opportunity for LEP students to express themselves about their multicultural experience at the high school level in their second language. These opinions may be used to develop improvements in the ESOL program.

2) This study offers the ESOL teacher and her professional aide the opportunity to inform the school community about the ESOL program and its participants.

3) This study defines multicultural and multiculturalism as they are interwoven into the daily experiences of the educators and staff in the school.

4) This study involves the families of the ESOL students, through the students' eyes, and valorizes the "home away from home" bond that is formed in the school.

5) This study could improve the school climate, especially because the LEP students are able to discuss their experiences.

6) This study would re-invigorate the document, "The Effective Schools Staff Development Program, Phase IV: Multicultural Education" (Banks and Banks, 1992) which is housed in the Media Center and which needs to be utilized more effectively.

7) This study will allow for more parental involvement by the LEP students. The parents will have additional voice in the education of their children.

8) This study spurs the use of an interdisciplinary approach to overall education of the students in the building. During my 16 years in the building, not once have I been involved in a cross-curriculum endeavor. Perhaps this study will provide the impetus for such action.

5. Identifying information on study participants (e.g., social security number, name, position, title, or relatively unique demographic characteristics).

- 1) Name
- 2) Role within the school community - student, teacher, aide
- 3) Description of each role, if permission by participant is granted
- 4) Age or grade level - student participants
- 5) Years of experience - teacher, aide

6. List and attach a copy of all questionnaire instruments, informed consent documents, interview protocols, or any other materials to be used during the research project (i.e. Newspaper advertisements, flyers, etc.).

Interviews will be conducted orally and videotaped if consent is given. Notes and/or videotapes will later be transcribed and submitted to appropriate participants for their review.

See the following attachments:

- 1) A cover letter will be given to all participants in the study.
- 2) Consent letters for students and teachers.
- 3) Student Assent letter
- 3) Interview protocol for students and teachers.
- 4) Student interview questions.
- 5) Teacher interview questions.
- 6) Student journal themes

7. Describe the procedure(s) that will be used to secure informed consent. If description is necessary, attach a copy of the debriefing plan.

A cover letter will be given to participants with the consent document chosen for the study as described in the answer to question 6, above. (See attachments)

8. Will minors be included as part of the data set? (Indicate the appropriate response)

Yes No

If you indicated YES above, describe the procedure(s) to gain consent to utilize minors in the research.

A cover letter, a parental consent letter, a minor consent letter, and a student assent letter will be given to students or mailed to their home. I will encourage parents to meet with

me or to call me at school or at home if they have concerns about the study. I will also inform them that they may communicate with me through the ESOL teacher or her aide should a translation become necessary. The minors and their parents will need to sign the consent and assent forms. Interviews will commence when forms are returned.

APPENDIX B

LETTER FROM SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Sharlene S. Monahan
14 Brannen Drive
Savannah, Georgia 31410

January 21, 2003

Mr. James Green, Principal
Savannah High School
Savannah/Chatham Public Schools
400 Pennsylvania Avenue
Savannah, GA 31404

Dear Mr. Green,

As you know, I am working on my doctoral dissertation. For my dissertation, I am proposing to conduct a critical ethnography qualitative study into the multicultural experience of the students enrolled in the ESOL Program at Savannah High School. As a second language teacher, I am interested in the personal stories of these ESOL students—how they integrate their native language and culture into a new culture. My study is titled *Understanding the Multicultural Experience of LEP Adolescents*. I will conduct interviews with selected ESOL students and the ESOL teacher and her paraprofessional aide.

This letter is to request your assistance in gathering the data necessary to complete my research. All of the proposed cover and consent documents are attached as well as the interview protocol questions which will be used. Upon completion of my research, a copy of the report will be sent to you at your request.

If this is agreeable to you, please sign and return this letter to me to present to the Institutional Review Board at Georgia Southern University. If you have any questions about this research project, please call me at (912) 897-6865 or my supervising professor, Dr. William Reynolds, at Georgia Southern University at (912) 681-0291.

James Green, Principal

Date _____

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely yours,

Sharlene Monahan

APPENDIX C

LETTER FROM SCHOOL SYSTEM SUPERINTENDENT

Sharlene S. Monahan
14 Brannen Drive
Savannah, Georgia 31410

January 21, 2003

Colonel John O'Sullivan, Superintendent
Savannah-Chatham Public Schools
208 Bull Street
Savannah, GA 31401

Dear Colonel O'Sullivan,

My name is Sharlene Monahan, a teacher at Savannah High School, and I am writing my doctoral dissertation. As part of my dissertation in multicultural education/curriculum studies, I am proposing to conduct a critical ethnography qualitative study on the multicultural experience of the students enrolled in the ESOL Program at Savannah High School. As a second language teacher, I am interested in the personal stories of these ESOL students--how they integrate their native language and culture into a new culture. My study is titled *Understanding the Multicultural Experience of LEP Adolescents*. I will conduct interviews with selected ESOL students and the ESOL teacher and her paraprofessional aide.

This letter is to request your concurrence in gathering the data necessary to complete my research. All of the proposed cover and consent documents are attached as well as the interview protocol questions which will be used. Upon completion of my research, a copy of the report will be sent to you at your request.

If this is agreeable to you, please sign and return this letter to me to present to the Institutional Review Board at Georgia Southern University. If you have any questions about this research project, please call me at (912) 897-6865 or my supervising professor, Dr. William Reynolds, at Georgia Southern University at (912) 681-0291.

John O'Sullivan, Superintendent

Date _____

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely yours,

Sharlene Monahan

APPENDIX D

COVER LETTER ADULT (PUBLIC SCHOOL)

Cover Letter Adult (Public School)

Dear _____,

My name is Sharlene Monahan. I am a Spanish teacher at Savannah High School. I am interested in learning more about your opinions and ideas concerning the multicultural experience of the students in the ESOL program. Since you are the sole ESOL teacher at the school, your voice will be central to my study.

I am conducting research on the multicultural experience of the students enrolled in the ESOL program. The focus of my study is to better understand the transitional experiences of LEP (limited-English-proficient) adolescents as they encounter a new language and culture. Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. If you agree to participate, please complete the attached consent form.

As a participant, you will be interviewed about the ESOL program and your personal experiences with the students you interact with on a daily basis. The session(s) will be taped (with your permission) for accuracy. A transcript of the tape will be made available to you for your review. Anything you wish to have changed or deleted will be done at a scheduled follow-up time. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential. Research materials will be catalogued and kept in a secure place.

If you would like more information on this research study in order to make your decision, or if you simply want to discuss any questions or concerns you might have, please contact me, Sharlene Monahan at 897-6865; James Green, Principal, at 201-5050 or the supervising professor, Dr. William Reynolds at 912-681-0291 (Georgia Southern University). If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant in this research study, they should be directed to the IRB (Institutional Review Board) Coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at Georgia Southern University at 912-681-5465.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sharlene Monahan
Doctoral Candidate, Curriculum Studies/Multicultural Education
Georgia Southern University

APPENDIX E

ADULT CONSENT FORM

Adult Consent Form

I, _____, (participant) agree to participate in the qualitative study conducted by Sharlene Monahan (researcher) of Georgia Southern University. I understand that this research is to be used in the researcher's doctoral dissertation, *Understanding the Multicultural Experience of LEP Adolescents*. In this study the researcher will explore the history of the ESOL Program at Savannah High School and will use life experience interviews to explore the impact of this multicultural program on the school community. I will be asked to share life experiences and personal views and values orally during audio and videotaped interviews. The researcher will take notes during the interview and transcribe the audiotape at a later time. The researcher estimates that the time required for my participation in this study is approximately 1 hour for taped interviews and 1 hour for reading the research analysis. I also understand that I may be asked to participate in a researcher/student interview if there is a need for translation for clarification of student interview questions. The researcher estimates that the time required for these sessions may vary.

I give my permission for my voice to be recorded. All materials will be held in strict confidence and will be kept in a secure location. I also understand that tapes and transcripts of interviews and notes are the property of the interviewer and will not be released to a third party without my written permission. Because this study involves my own interpretations of practices and events, I will have the opportunity to read and approve the analysis of the data before it is published and to request particular information not be used in the published report. I have the right to refuse to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time. Participation in this study is voluntary and consent for participation can be discontinued at any time. My name will not be used in the published report unless I give my written permission. Upon completion of the research, if I desire a copy of this report, I will receive one. There is no anticipated risk to me due to my participation in the study.

Completion of this consent form and its return will indicate permission to use the date obtained in the subsequent interview in the study.

Participant signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Use of Actual Name or Pseudonym:

- I give permission for my actual name to be used in the dissertation and publications related to it.
 I do not give permission for my actual name to be used in the dissertation and publication related to it.
 I wish to be called by the pseudonym, _____
 I choose to have the researcher select a pseudonym for me.

If you have any questions about this research, please call the researcher, Sharlene Monahan at (912) 897-6865, or the supervising professor, Dr. William Reynolds at Georgia Southern University, (912) 681-0291. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, please direct them to the IRB Coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681-5465.

APPENDIX F

COVER LETTER FOR MINOR (PUBLIC SCHOOL)

Cover Letter for Minor (Public School)

Dear _____, (Parent or Guardian)

My name is Sharlene Monahan. I am a Spanish teacher at Savannah High School, the school where you are enrolled in the ESOL Program. I am interested in how students learn a second language as they enter the United States. I am also interested in your viewpoint on the concept of living in a society in which language and culture are noticeably different from that in your native country.

I am conducting research involving your personal experiences in a multicultural environment, the one in which you participate every day as you spend time with students in your ESOL class and in the regular classes. As a student, you will be allowed to ask as well as answer questions. The sessions will be taped for accuracy, if you so agree. A transcript of the tape will be made available to you for your review. If you agree to participate, please complete the attached consent form.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you may discontinue at any time. If you would like more information about this study, please call me, Sharlene Monahan, at 897-6865; James Green, Principal, at 201-5050; or supervising professor, Dr. William Reynolds (Georgia Southern University) at 912-681-0291. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant in this study, please contact the IRB (Institutional Review Board) Coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at Georgia Southern University at 912-681-5465.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sharlene Monahan
Doctoral Candidate, Curriculum Studies/Multicultural Education
Georgia Southern University

APPENDIX G
MINOR CONSENT FORM

Minor Consent Form

I, _____, (parent or guardian) agree to let my minor child participate in the qualitative study conducted by Sharlene Monahan (researcher) of Georgia Southern University. I understand that this research is to be used in the researcher's doctoral dissertation, *Understanding the Multicultural Experience of LEP Adolescents*. In this study, the researcher will conduct research on the ESOL Program at Savannah High School and use life experience interviews to evaluate my child's experiences in a multicultural environment. My child will be asked to share life experiences and personal views and values orally during audio- and videotaped interviews. The researcher will take notes during the interviews and transcribe the material at a later time. The researcher estimates that the time required for my child's participation is 1 hour for the interview and 1 hour for reading the research analysis.

I give permission for my minor child's voice to be recorded. All materials will be held in strict confidence and will be kept in a secure location and disposed of when the study is completed. I also understand that tapes and transcripts of interviews and notes are the property of the interviewer and will not be released to a third party without my written permission. Because this study involves my child's own interpretation of the practices and events, my child and I will be given the opportunity to read and approve the analysis of the data before it is published and to request that particular information not be used in the published report. My child has the right to refuse to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time. Participation in this study is voluntary and consent for participation can be discontinued at any time. My child's name will not be used in the published report unless I give my written permission. Upon completion of the research, I will receive a copy of this report, if I desire one. There is no anticipated risk to me or to my minor child due to our participation in this study.

Completion of this consent form and its return will indicate permission to use the data obtained in the subsequent interview in the study.

Parental signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Use of Actual Name or Pseudonym:

- I give permission for my actual name to be used in the dissertation and publications related to it.
 I do not give permission for my actual name to be used in the dissertation and publications related to it.
 I wish to be called by the pseudonym, _____.
 I choose to have the researcher select a pseudonym for me.

If you have any questions about his research, please call the researcher, Sharlene Monahan at (912) 897-6865, or the supervising professor, Dr. William Reynolds at Georgia Southern University, (912) 681-0291. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, please direct them to the IRB Coordinator at the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681-5465.

APPENDIX H
STUDENT ASSENT FORM

Student Assent Form (High School)

I, _____, (participant) agree to participate in the qualitative study conducted by Sharlene Monahan (researcher) of Georgia Southern University. I understand that this research is to be used in the researcher's doctoral dissertation, *Understanding the Multicultural Experience of LEP Adolescents*. In this study the researcher will explore the history of the ESOL Program at Savannah High School and will use life experience interviews to explore the impact of this multicultural program on the school community. I will be asked to share life experiences and personal views and values orally during audio and videotaped interviews. The researcher will take notes during the interview and transcribe the audiotape at a later time. The researcher estimates that the time required for my participation in this study is approximately 1 hour for taped interviews and 1 hour for reading the research analysis. I also understand that I may be asked to participate in a researcher/student interview if there is a need for translation for clarification of student interview questions. The researcher estimates that the time required for these sessions may vary.

I give my permission for my voice to be recorded. All materials will be held in strict confidence and will be kept in a secure location. I also understand that tapes and transcripts of interviews and notes are the property of the interviewer and will not be released to a third party without my written permission. Because this study involves my own interpretations of practices and events, I will have the opportunity to read and approve the analysis of the data before it is published and to request particular information not be used in the published report. I have the right to refuse to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time. Participation in this study is voluntary and consent for participation can be discontinued at any time. My name will not be used in the published report unless I give my written permission. Upon completion of the research, if I desire a copy of this report, I will receive one. There is no anticipated risk to me due to my participation in the study.

Completion of this consent form and its return will indicate permission to use the data obtained in the subsequent interview in the study.

Participant signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Use of Actual Name or Pseudonym:

- I give permission for my actual name to be used in the dissertation and publications related to it.
 I do not give permission for my actual name to be used in the dissertation and publication related to it.
 I wish to be called by the pseudonym, _____.
 I choose to have the researcher select a pseudonym for me.

If you have any questions about this research, please call the researcher, Sharlene Monahan at (912) 897-6865, or the supervising professor, Dr. William Reynolds at Georgia Southern University, (912) 681-0291. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, please direct them to the IRB Coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681-5465.

APPENDIX I

ADULT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Transcript of Interview with Magda Kahn, ESOL teacher SHS

November 11, 2003 (modified July, 2006)

Note: Responses are presented as spoken or written without editing. I have noted points of clarification in brackets []. As a reminder, I am SSM.

SSM: Magda, when did you start teaching ESOL at RHS?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): 1985

SSM: Who was the teacher before you?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Mr. Hicks.

SSM: Are you ESOL endorsed, or was that your major interest [in college]?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): No, my major interest is all languages. My major was in modern foreign languages. There was no ESOL endorsement for a long time. When it came along, I got the ESOL endorsement.

SSM: Did Mr. Hicks just decide to retire from ESOL and go back to teaching French, or do you know?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): You know that he is teaching French.

SSM: Where are you from originally?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): From Cuba.

SSM: Where did you teach before in Savannah?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I taught in New York - one year in Rochester public schools.

SSM: And previous to SHS?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): St Andrews on the Marsh for 5 years and 2 years at St. Paul's Day School.

SSM: What did you teach?

M. St. Paul's 2nd grade and at St. Andrews, Spanish, but I also did a little bit of ESOL, but as a tutoring when we had foreign kids.

SSM: Over the years as you teach ESOL what has been your reaction to, lets say, the number of kids coming into the program, the make-up of students coming into the program - what have you seen as the trend over the years?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): In Chatham County, the original ESOL program was for Vietnamese and Lao children after the Vietnam War. And that made up the largest amount of ESOL kids. I've always had another array, just a few students from different countries. At one point we had an influx of Russians coming in. I didn't have many Hispanics. As you know lately, we now have 95% Hispanics.

SSM: What do you attribute that to?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): The borders are easy to cross.

SSM: In working with teachers, you have been the only high school ESOL teacher do teachers have to have special training to before accepting these ESOL students into their classrooms?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): No, I wish they had, but they don't.

SSM: Has it [accepting these children into the regular class] gotten a little more stringent in the past few years?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): No.

SSM: How do you match the students with the teachers?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I try to find a teacher who would like "to teach" my students rather than them being dumped into any classroom. As you know, our schedules

don't allow that to happen and usually the kids get dumped wherever there is an available class.

SSM: After I have interviewed the seven students for this research paper, I have noticed that the ESOL students say the teachers and students are actually very nice to them. Is that your opinion also? Do the teachers work with you?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): As far as being friendly, they are friendly. I think that at the beginning, the teachers are very reluctant to have the ESOL students in their class because they see it as extra work coming into them - more work that they have to do. But the reality is that, except for two teachers who I have actually seen them do extra work for my students, it's usually the opposite. The ESOL kid is the one who does everything that he is told to do, and he doesn't make any waves, so after awhile teachers get to know him because they know that he is not

SSM: Why aren't you teaching Spanish? What did you teach first?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Spanish. And I realize the kids did not appreciate it when I was teaching it. And I saw the need for ESOL, and I tried it and I liked it. Plus I had worked in New York as a bilingual teacher for one year.

SSM: You are not the first teacher that I have talked to that is a native speaker that gets a little bit upset when kids do not take their [teachers] first language, which is Spanish, seriously. Did that cause you to get disillusioned with the kids who didn't want to speak Spanish because it was your culture?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Well, I taught it [Spanish] at a private school and it wasn't bad. Not even 10% near of what it is at this school. But, they [students at private schools] didn't trash the language in any way like the American kids here at this school.

They were very respectful of me in every way. But they [American students who I have taught] didn't see the value of learning a foreign language. The ESOL kids see the value of learning English because they can actually use it. Most of the American kids, unless they travel someplace - when they get all excited, they don't ever see the value. It's kind of like teaching myself to the Board. I mean, they were nice. I loved teaching at private school much better than here. But they didn't see the value of it [learning a foreign language]. They would come to class , do this, do that.

SSM: Did you teach Spanish at SHS to begin with?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I did it one semester in addition to ESOL. There was a shortage [of Spanish teachers] before you came.

SSM: What year did you start at SHS?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): 1985.

SSM: You said that SHS was chosen as the ESOL location because of its central location and having to bus students from all over the city to this program.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Yes.

SSM: What does it mean to you as an experienced teacher to be a divergent, multicultural and interdisciplinary thinker?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I don't know what divergent means. Multicultural? More than one culture incorporated into your life. You live with both, well, no, that would be bicultural. Multicultural means more than 3 different cultures in my life.

SSM: Is your ESOL class a multicultural class?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): It had always been multicultural, but lately it is more bicultural - Spanish and Hispanic- American. Actually, no, I take that back. Even within

the languages, there are different cultures. So I would say that it is multicultural, differently, because even with my Hispanics, they are from different countries and that is a different culture. So I would say yes that it is multicultural, differently because is even with my Hispanics, they are from different countries and that is a cultural difference/. So, yes, I would say that that is a cultural difference..

SSM: To you is there a difference between culture with a capital “C”-- like the fine arts-- and culture with a lower case “c” which represents everyday culture?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Is there a difference in my classes?

SSM: Yes, and in your definition of culture.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Yes. To me there are two different meanings. Culture, the fine arts, somebody who is more sophisticated and knows the fine arts, the performing arts, classical music, goes to theater. And then there is the other culture - the rules we live by every day and what’s right and wrong in our families and in our lives.

SSM: Do you consider yourself and interdisciplinary thinker? When you teach do you think of math and social studies? Do think how this is cross-disciplinary in what you teach?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I’m going to answer that with a yes and a no. I don’t think that what I teach goes to other things [other disciplines], but I teach other things. For example, today I was teaching a little bit about Georgia, and I realized that they don’t even know what a continent is. And then I did the continents and realized that, well, they don’t know the oceans. So it expanded into a geography lesson. Once in awhile, my lessons have something to do with science, that or social studies-- usually not much math.

SSM: Most teachers are experienced enough that they think outside of their discipline.

So when you are teaching a lesson, you are able to go off into another area.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Yes, I do it all of the time, especially with health, nutrition, geography, history and science - absolutely. Health is a big one with me. I'm often upset with my kids because they don't know the difference between a cramp and a stomachache. That's burns me up. Or how to floss your teeth. You can't blame them because they have never done it. I have kids who have never really flossed their teeth.

SSM: Personal hygiene.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I never flossed my teeth until I came to the United States. We didn't floss our teeth in Cuba. We brushed our teeth. And there was no toothpaste, so we brushed our teeth with baking soda, or salt. My father brushed with baking soda. Baking soda used to make me gag, so I did it with soap because I liked the smell of soap.

SSM: Tell me about your contact with the parents of ESOL students.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Be more specific.

SSM: OK. Is it daily contact? Do you contact all parents? Do they contact you? Do they participate.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Not daily. I try to contact them the least amount. The least contact the better - the less problems. I have parents who call me. The Hispanic parents are more likely to call or come by. More than the Orientals or the other parents. They [Hispanic parents] make more contact with the teacher. They will call me and say that so and so is out sick today and will not come to school. A lot of times they will call me.

SSM: Do you think that is because you are Spanish-speaking or the other parents just don't have time to call...

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): No, because when I met them, I told them that I want to know where they are, and because they can communicate with me - both. They know that I am tough about them being absent. I made a big deal about that. When they came to me, I gave each parent a lesson about being after their kids, about finding out what they are doing, not just letting them go into the bedroom thinking that they are doing their work, to make sure that they are coming to school.

SSM: Do you think absenteeism is a problem in our school?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): In our school with my students?

SSM: In our school, with your students and with the general student population?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Well, with my students, the more Mexicans I have, the more absenteeism there is. Because culturally, the children stay home with the Mom if someone is sick. That is very cultural when someone in the family is sick. That's just a cultural thing. That happens a lot more now than before. The Orientals are not out of school that much. And among the American students, yes. I don't teach them, but I see the absentee list every day.

SSM: When ESOL students leave your class to take "regular" classes, what are some of the concerns that they bring back to you - their home base class?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): One of the concerns, of course, is that they don't understand what is going on in the "regular" class - that they don't know what to do. Very often I have to call the teacher to explain the project or whatever homework they have because they didn't understand it. Many, many times, they are very lost. They

don't really know what is going on in the class. They are going through the motions, but it [content] doesn't really sink in. Another big complaint that I get is that teachers don't teach. They just put the work on the board. They [ESOL students] can't follow directions. They can't read it. They [teachers] just don't teach. Another thing is discipline problems. The other [American] students are so undisciplined, they are so disruptive, that my students can't hear the teacher. We do have a good teacher, like Mrs. Wing. My students tell me that they feel horribly sorry for her because the students are so mean to her. She is such a nice person. And my kids are the only ones that actually listen to her. The other ones are like in La La Land or screaming or jumping. She is always having problems with discipline.

SSM: Many times as I have interviewed the students, they will say that they are asking the teacher questions. Are they telling you that they ask the teachers questions?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Well, I think they don't. Many of them kind of blend into the wall. Because they are quiet and teachers pass them because they don't make any waves, and they just pass them along. They rarely ask any questions because when they do the other kids just laugh. They do ask questions if they have enough English sometimes. And they are vocal and outgoing. But the shy ones, they don't ask questions.

SSM: They just sit and listen.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Like Hiral, you know the problem that she had. She gave her speech [in her Language Arts Class] and it was so great. And everyone else just laughed. It was horrible. She cried. The teacher told her that she did the best speech in front of the whole class. It was very sad. When Hiral had the bad accent, I suggested to her the LA teacher that maybe she find something in a different language and have the

American kids read it. She did, and the [American] kids had to stand in front of the class - two or three of them - and say something in another language. They had no idea what they were reading and everyone else laughed. They felt really bad.

SSM: Do you know what language it was?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I don't really , but she [the Language Arts teacher] said it was something that she had in the book. I told Hiral to bring in Indian words for them to read, but I don't know which one it was.

SSM: How interesting.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): They [American students] don't know what it feels like. The shoe is on the other foot.

SSM: Is there assimilation, acculturation or enculturation (or a combination thereof) going on at RHS?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): When I first came to the US, one of the things which was very amazing to me was just to see how many people from other parts of the world were here, especially in NY. We arrived at Kennedy airport and everyone was wearing something weird that didn't look to me Western. So there were people from all over the world. Throughout the years, I've met and known and have as friends people from different backgrounds, different cultures. It was especially shocking to me because I thought that all American were blond with blue eyes. Actually when I came here, I was pretty shocked. I was very amazed by the number of cultures and the number of religions. One culture that I experienced, especially living up North and then moving to the South. It's a totally different life. When I came to the South, everybody asked me what church did we belong to? No one had ever asked me that question before. What do you mean

what church to I belong to? What does that mean? No one in my country [Cuba] or in Spain or in the North had ever asked me that question. I didn't understand for awhile what they meant. I thought that when you are in the South, you have to belong to some kind of church. That was pretty culturally different to me. And then another thing being here at SHS, is that most of the kids here are Black - a different culture altogether. So between the ESOL students, my family, and my friends, I am constantly bombarded with multi- numbers of cultures.

SSM: Much of my research involves the ESOL kids and their separate cultures and how they have become "Americanized". How would you depict a Black culture that we have been immersed in the last 15 years? What is so different that the kids experience and what we see as "different"?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I don't think that it would be so fair to say the Black culture. The Black culture that we are exposed to every day is very disrespectful culture. I see a lot of people who don't appreciate what they have. They have a sense that things should be theirs even though it doesn't belong to them. A perfect example is that I come into school in the morning and students try to beat me to the door instead of holding the door for me like in other schools. Or they never say "Good morning." But if I am walking down the hall eating a cookie, they immediately say "Give me some." There is a sense that it belongs to them. There's no respect. A lot of disrespect. The way they come to me to ask me questions, they are very annoying. Something as simple as asking me the time. They would never say "Would you please tell me what time it is?" They say "What time it is?" It's like I'm here to do for them. It's not like "I appreciate what you are doing for me." I find that very annoying, and I find that it's very demeaning to

my students, especially when most of my students are fairly respectful. Once in a while you have a kid [ESOL student] who is not as respectful, but most of the time the parents of my students demand respect, especially the Orientals who are very respectful. To see kids talk to teachers the way they do, it really offends [ESOL students] very much. I had this many papers written today about Mrs. W's class and how the kids treat her. All of my students are offended that the students treat Mrs. W. that way.

SSM: Do you consider that most cultures of the world, in your experience, consider education to be a privilege?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Absolutely. In every country that I have been to, if you can make it to school, if you have the luxury of going to, sometimes just a high school, it's definitely beyond a privilege. For example in Mexico, most kids don't go to school after middle school. Most kids in Mexico end their education in middle school. They don't go to high school because they either have to go help the family, or that is the end of that. If you can make it to high school that is a privilege. If you can make it to college, you're somebody really big.

SSM: Name the countries that you have visited, especially talking about the school systems.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Japan, Russia, Argentina, Chile, Spain, Mexico, Cuba. Those are the main countries in which I have checked out the school systems.

SSM: In your opinion, how well do the ESOL students assimilate into the general school population?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): They don't, usually. They pretend. If they can make it to the senior year, and they have been here for 4 years, they pretend to assimilate towards

the end. Especially in the last semester to make it through the senior activities. In reality, none of my students visit American kids. None of them call each other on the phone. There is really no assimilation going on.

SSM: So instead of a pluralistic setting where cultures are blending together, you see a very particularistic setting. For example, when I interviewed students they tended to hang out with the other ESOL students, no matter the nationality, because they didn't feel that they were so different from one another.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Yes, that is right. I think it is because they all have something in common. In this class, even though we laugh a lot about differences and things that happen to each one of us, there are still respectful of themselves. I can make fun of any of my students. It's not the same as anyone else making fun of them.

SSM: It isn't offensive.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Right, exactly. We can just make fun of something funny that happened. Most of the time the other kids in the school are either offensive to my students or my students pretty much blend into the walls- like they are not there. Especially if they are good students, for some reason, the better students are least wanted. The better their grade, then nobody pays them much attention.

SSM: Do your students say to you that they witness a lack of achievement in the school's general population? Do they find that they are not challenged or that they are not praised for achieving well?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): No. For my students, they don't see that that is such a big deal because learning English is so strong. They just concentrate most of the time on the subject [not on the praise]. If they go to a class and they are not being challenged, it's

not a big deal because they are still learning English. But what I hear are complaints when they get to college. They just aren't prepared.

SSM: What are the [ESOL] parents' attitudes toward public schooling in our district?

What feedback do you get back, if any, from the ESOL parents generally?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): The poor parent has no choice. So they don't even think about any other choice. But, as a matter of fact, I had two students pulled from my program to go to private school. If they can afford a little bit, especially the parents of girls who come here, they see that buses are a pain in the neck. Some of my students are on the bus for an hour and a half before they get here. That's a problem. But if a parent has no money, and all they know is public school.... What is interesting though is that in other countries, private schools are way superior to public schools. The kids who come to me from public schools, in small towns especially, they really have no education at all. The kid who comes to me with the best schooling has attended private school in their country. I think that what most of my parents don't understand is that we are all paying for school either way.

SSM: Through their tax dollars?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Yes, and if they send them to private school, they are paying tuition. In that case you pay double. That's what private school parents do, they pay double.

SSM: As I mentioned before, the laws of our country dictate that the students must be in school until a certain age. They have got to be in school until they are 16 no matter what their background is. Are the ESOL students placed in the middle or high school program according to their age and not their ability?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Our school system does [places them according to age and not ability]. The parents don't want that. They want to keep them in the level that they should be. Parents come to me all the time and say, 'I don't think my son knows that much. Can you put him down [into a lower grade]? They will come, let's say, with a 9th grade diploma to go into the 10th grade. They'll say "Put him in the 9th grade.' They [the children] don't know the language. Parents have a different conception or idea than the American parents. American parents want to push that kid to pass whether they know it [the material] or not. I think that a lot of my parents - not all- but a lot of my parents are more interested in "Teach the kid. Let the kid learn first. It doesn't matter what age he is. Americans are very concerned with age.

SSM: You mean age-specific grade. You are 15 so you should be in this grade.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Yes, whether the kid knows anything or not. Therefore we have a lot of 19 year olds that are out there and they are dummies. And they have diplomas. I don't know how they get them. I just had that conversation with Cynthia today. I was doing pre-registration and I said, "Cynthia, you are in the 11th grade. If I put you in 11th grade English, you are going to fail it. Are you sure you want me to put you there?" She replies, "No, don't put me there." I say, "You won't graduate on time." She says, "That's OK. I don't want to be pushed."

SSM: That is to say that the ESOL students have a personal conception of their own competence?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Yes. Sharlene, you know, with the level of education that you have right now, if I were to take you to Beijing, and I put you in a first grade class in Beijing, you would not feel very comfortable. Even though you have this high

education. A lot of times our school system does not realize, or doesn't give the idea, that you have to learn the language before you can pass the class. Because if you are passing the class [and don't know the language], it isn't authentic. You are not learning. You might memorize A, B, C, D, E, but you are not really learning it. When I got the memo from Mrs. J. [the current principal], it was really unrealistic about ESOL kids. How could LeWu pass biology? I can't get him to say "My name is...." or "I live on..."

SSM: Several of the students I interviewed are seniors. How did they get that far especially when they no longer have an ESOL class - they have been mainstreamed in to general population? How are you doing with your English? How are you doing in your English class?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): They do great.

SSM: How is that? Is it because they memorize things? Are they speaking the language?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Well, first of all, most of the kids that you interviewed are very good students to begin with. They are the doers. You've got Hector, Randy, and the kids who are really hard working. Those kids are going to survive. You know, the "swim or sink" philosophy. They will swim. You throw them in the water, and they will swim. But not everybody swims. If I take a child, and I throw them in a swimming pool and I give them a little bit of a life jacket to help them tread water, that's a lot easier than if I throw them in a swimming pool, and there's not even salt, and they sink down to the bottom. I think that is what we do with these kids. We'll immediately spring them out automatically. You know last semester I couldn't even put my students - if you ever look at any other ESOL programs in other cities, basically when you have systems that require you to mainstream the child immediately, you mainstream them to art, to music,

physical education. - easy things that they can't really fail, and they are learning singing, they do a lot of speech, drama. Here - biology, algebra - you dump them right into the hard classes the first day they come here. It's just impossible. I'm teaching them the English as fast as I can, even then, they can't take too much time to learn English because they have to study all of these things. Most of them are not really understanding it [the material in the academic classes]. They just memorize it. They look in the book and quickly try to find out the word that is in the questions which will help them get the answer. If you noticed, the questions that come with the book, it is very easy to find the answer. You don't really have to understand to find the answer. You can just find that key word. Believe it or not, there is a philosophy out there that that is how they are teaching kids to read today. They tell them to find the key word and find the answer based on that key word. That really doesn't teach them anything. I think that is a mistake, but that is what we are teaching kids.

SSM: We have talked before about the educational level of students who are coming to you now as compared to several years before. Are you finding that students who come to you now have an educational level that is comparably lower?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): As a matter of fact, Colonel W. who used to be here, was saying that in late 1970s, he saw a Vietnamese family who would go to the library - they didn't speak any English - but she expected her kids to learn because that is what they [the parents] wanted. They just wanted their children to get an education. Just like the first Cubans who came to the US. They were professionals, and they wanted their kids to be professionals like them. The kids who are now coming into the U.S. are from varied social and economical groups. Just by getting to the U.S., they have succeeded.

The parents have no education. They now can really understand and see that in the U.S. you don't have to be educated to have a good job. They just want their kids to get a good job and make money. Think about it. I have seen pictures of this. These are the people like Randy's and Israel's mom who have no shoes, barefooted on the dirt. One of my students was telling me that her job was to go and grind the corn for the tortillas. She had to walk over 2 kilometers each way. That was her job, and she was 7 years old. Her mom didn't even know where she went. She would just go for about 2 miles. Some people didn't even have homes. They had just maybe a hut, or they lived with somebody else. There was no running water, there was no electricity. They pretty much didn't have anything. Now they have a car. They have hot running water, electricity. They have a job. And their kids come to school. Another thing is that with Mexicans, it's very important for the older kids to help the parents and the younger kids. School is no longer where they are needed [in Mexico]. They are needed to help with the younger brothers and sisters if they are sick so the parents can go to work. If Mommy is sick, the older child needs to stay home with Mommy. It is a very, very different lifestyle.

SSM: Do you see your students becoming more and more American, every day, every year, every month.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Yes, immediately start sagging the pants, start wearing the jeans... but a part of them is still their culture. Like Soang [a former SHS ESOL student from Korea who now goes to private school?] says that he will never date a Korean girl, only an American girl. I said, "Why?" He said the "American girls give you more." It's true.

SSM: I found that in several of my interviews the parents of foreign students are stricter. The students are rebelling a little bit...like even Hai....

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I try to tell them, but you can't - you really can't. Deep down in the bottom of your heart, you know, you were taught for so many years - your siblings and your family members- that you would never would do that to your parents. It's just unheard of to hurt to your parents. American kids don't give a shit about their parents. Most ethnic kids do care about their family. I didn't do it, not because I didn't want to hurt my parents. I wanted to get the hell out of my house as soon as I could, but I knew that it would break my parents' heart. So I didn't do it. Then I got married, and I hurt myself.

SSM: We'll stop here for today. In our next session, I want to get your view of race and ethnicity. These two terms are often used synonymously and they are shouldn't be. In all of the research and reading that I do, people cannot pinpoint a definition of race and ethnicity.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Race has to do with the color of your skin as far as the four major races of the world which are Mongoloid, Negroid, Caucasian, and Indian (red). Now that has nothing to do with your ethnicity which is your cultural background. You can be a Mongoloid, for example, from South America, and you are of the Mongoloid race and your ethnic background is South American—whatever that country is—let's say Brazil. You are a Mongoloid Brazilian. Or you could be a Negroid Brazilian. Or you could be a Caucasian Brazilian. But I have problems with - in the US - especially in the South - I never experienced that in the North - because I come from Cuba, I must, therefore, not be White, or I must not be Mongoloid, or I must not be

Indian - I must be quote, unquote "Other" - people of color. And I resent that because I know a lot of Cubans who are White Caucasians, who are Black, people who are Chinese who come from Cuba. And one thing does not have anything to do with the other. So, ethnicity has to do with your cultural background. The other thing that is confusing is nationality. And that's a third thing. Just because you come from, let's say Puerto Rico, and you are Black, that's doesn't make you African at all. You are Puerto Rican. That is your nationality. Your ethnic background might be from Spain. It might be of Spanish descendent. It might be just Puerto Rican. And your race might be Black, or White, or Chinese, or "Other." You might be a mix. Those are the differences.

SSM: So going right into hyphenated races: African-American, Cuban-American...

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): That's a lot of bullshit. That is just a way to explain why someone is Black who is here. We know that. Anyone who reads history knows why Blacks are in the New World. You don't need to know that. So what do you do when you have a Black person who lives in Germany? Afro-Germanic? There are a lot of Blacks who live in Germany.

SSM: Do you feel like there are enough or any curricular modifications used for ESOL students?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): They are supposed to have. Each discipline is supposed to have modifications for ESOL students. But what I find is "No." Definitely not enough. Teachers have a difficult time with making rules with a group of students and then exempting or changing the rules for the ESOL students in their class. Because, just like you, they feel that making the rule for one is making the rule for everyone. The reality is, number one, the quantity of work and timing, is a big difference with the ESOL

student. The ESOL students are supposed to be allowed, by law, to have extra time to turn in work. And you [the teacher] are supposed to reduce the quantity of work by modifying the number of assignments to just the most important ones rather than all of them.

SSM: What have your students voiced as their fears and concerns about the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT)?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): One of their fears is that they can't pass it. The biggest problem about them not passing it is that they can't use dictionaries. I really believe that if they were allowed to use dictionaries, that many more of them would pass it because often it is a word in the question that they don't understand. When they don't understand a word in the questions, especially on the Writing test, they can't do it at all. So they can't even get partial credit because they do it all wrong. Vocabulary is one of those things that is very difficult to teach every word that there is. If the students were able to use dictionaries. Do you know why they are not able to use dictionaries?

Because there are no language dictionaries for every single language in the world. For example, there are no dictionaries for New Guinean languages. And because we have so many New Guineans languages in the state of Georgia, it would be unfair practices to let some of us use dictionaries. [said very sarcastically!]

SSM: What would you like to see implemented in the ESOL program in this county, if anything?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): In my program? Or for the students?

SSM: In the general ESOL program itself.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): What [changes] I would most like to see are not for me, but for the students. I would like to see sheltered classes in the different disciplines - like science, social studies, and math, especially science and social studies more than anything else. As you know, we tried doing that a few years ago in English and a very famous teacher here [at the time] said that it would be unfair to hand pick your students. The answer was “No.” In this county things get done the way that people [in power] want to get them done.

SSM: And sheltering would be that they are paired with

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): What you do is pair them with the best of the American students so that they can work in cooperation; it’s cooperative learning. They can help each other in the class. It usually works very well. We just [this year] tried doing that in a math class, Mrs. W’s class; we were going to do it with special education, ESOL, and regular kids. They [administration] said “No.” The reason? No reason. Not feasible....

SSM: Do you think that this [sheltering] is something that our superintendent might listen to if you made a plea to him?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): The problem is that we have such few ESOL students that when you start going “out of the box,” I feel that people think, “Oh, here come the ESOL students”, and they kind of black list us. It happens. And unless you have someone [in the superintendent’s office or in the site administration] who has worked with ESOL in other counties or in other states, this county is just not ready for any change. The country...

SSM: This country of Chatham?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Yes, this country.

SSM: Do you have a particular definition of “multicultural” that you use, that you talk to people about? What does that term mean to you?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Multicultural?

SSM: Yes, multicultural it has become one of the buzz words in education and in society in general.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Multicultural, to me, would be.... are you talking about a person?

SSM: The whole concept... when people say ‘I am a multicultural, diverse person.’

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): That means that you know of and you are in contact with and you understand real well different cultures of the world. Not just the one to which you belong, but many, more than three.

SSM: Are we bi-cultural or tri-cultural?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): In this school? More like mono-cultural. Well, we are pretty much Black and White.

SSM: That has been my contention all along. We recognize Black and White and no shades....

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): That’s not even a culture - that’s Black and White.

SSM: One step further.. It’s your opinion... Do American citizens really know what diversity and multiculturalism really are?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I think that in some places in this country, people actually do understand those terms. In Chatham County, no

SSM: Do you think that is part of the culture of Chatham County not to understand those terms?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I think that people in New York City are very aware of that, in Chicago and Los Angeles. People understand what diversity and multiculturalism mean. But not here.

SSM: Yet, we are such a small city in comparison the cities you have mentioned.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): We don't want to know. That's the worse part. It's not how small we are; it's that we don't want to learn.

SSM: If we had to make two implementations to our curriculum that would affect ESOL students, involving teacher training, etc., what would they be?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Making teachers more aware and more sensitive to what it entails to learn the regular academics in a totally different language. I really believe that if I put a bunch of teachers in a classroom and teach them the whole concept of something really easy in a discipline in a different language they would have a tough time. ... It's not just Black or White.. It's not something that you talk about. She came to me after class. She said to me, 'I can not believe you said that.' You are so right. I have the same problem. People think that just because I am not from here, that I am Black. I am not. She really wasn't. She was very light-skinned and had green eyes. It was very interesting.

SSM: In all of the years that I have sat with you in faculty meeting, knowing that we are the only high school ESOL program, have there been comments concerning modifications for the ESOL students.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): They don't care. And we even get extra money for having this program at our school.

SSM: That's another issue.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): It seems like they [administration] would want us here [for the money].

SSM: Have you ever raised the issue of the ESOL and program and the extra money, since money drives so much of what we do?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I mentioned it to Mr. Green [former, retired principal 2002-2003]. I reminded him that extra money comes to the school because of the ESOL program. He said, 'I know.' That's about it.

SSM: There's no deference to your students...

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): As long as you don't make waves, you go about your day, without raising any problems. The less you have to contact the principal, the less you have to cause a problem, the better off you are.

SSM: Have you attended meetings at other schools or in other counties where the principal is very supportive of the ESOL program?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Many times. When we go to ESOL meetings. Absolutely. And administrators go to these meetings. Our administrators don't go to TESOL. But other administrators in other schools do.

SSM: TESOL is....

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Teachers of English for Students of Other Languages.

SSM: At the state department, I understand that we have someone who is very pro-ESOL. Would you say that about M. Hyers?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): M. Hyers is the head of ESOL at the state level. She has to be very pro-ESOL.

SSM: Has she tried to work with people in Chatham County?

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): Yes, she has come here to SHS. She even taught our teachers [discussed modifications, etc] but none of our teachers were paying attention. People started walking out before she even got started. Mr. Green didn't make it a big deal.

SSM: And our current administration hasn't made it a big deal.

MAGDA (ESOL TEACHER): I don't even want to try. It's like I want to stay in my little "country" here. This is my little "ESOL country." Let me stay here. I will do what I can to help my students. It's the same thing with scholarships. They [guidance/administration] know nothing about scholarships for ESOL students. I have to do it myself. I have to call Armstrong State Atlantic University and work with the LASO organization.

SSM: Thank you for candid responses.

Transcript of written interview with Lan Pham, ESOL teacher's aide, SHS

November 12, 2003

Note: Responses are presented as spoken or written without editing. I have noted points of clarification in brackets []. As a reminder, I am SSM.

SSM: Tell me about your background as an educator/paraprofessional aide.

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): Originally, I am Vietnam. I was an ESOL student for four years at RHS, and this is where I got my high school diploma in 1997. A year later, I decided to go back to work in the ESOL program. And then I decided to attend college to further my education.

SSM: Why did you decide to become an ESOL teacher's aide?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): The reason why I decided to become an ESOL aide is because I have always enjoyed learning. Also, I know that by exposing to the school's environment [*sic*], I will gain more general knowledge by interacting with students from different countries.

SSM: What can you tell me about the history of the ESOL program at Savannah High School?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): When I first enrolled in the ESOL program, Ms. K. was my teacher. Mr. H was the prior instructor. And I think the program is established 15-17 years ago.

SSM: What was your experience as an ESOL student?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): As an ESOL student I had many experiences, good ones and bad ones. I remember my Math teacher who said something to me in English and I had no idea what was going on. She then spoke louder as if I was hearing

impaired. I thought that was funny because I did not understand what she was saying, not because I could not hear what she was saying. I also remember being laughed at by other American students when I gave my speech in Literature class. One of the most memorable moments of being an ESOL student for me is when my project was graded as the best in the Literature class. We had to make a scrapbook to celebrate Black History month. I worked days and nights for months to put together the scrapbook. And hard work was finally paid off. My scrapbook was the best compared to the whole class body. And my teacher showed mine to all the students in her classes. To me that was something that I am really proud of.

SSM: What does it mean to you to be a divergent, multicultural, and interdisciplinary thinker?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): No answer.

SSM: Tell me about your contact with the parents of ESOL students.

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): Parents of ESOL students are very concerned about their children. Most of them are very involved with their children's schooling. We have parents call in to just let us know the reason why their children were out of school. Sometimes they called in and checked if their children were in school. We have parents who do not have the language capability to communicate with the teachers yet showed up in every conference and even brought interpreters. Other times, we have the entire family show up for a meeting.

SSM: When ESOL students leave your class to take "regular" classes, what are some of the concerns that they bring back to you, their "home-base" class?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): After leaving the ESOL classes to attend regular classes, most students would come back to complain that the other [regular education]teachers speak too fast and they [ESOL students] don't understand what's going on. They also complain that the regular students tease them when they talk and interrupt the class while the ESOL students were paying attention. This occurrence interferes with student's learning process. Because of the uneasy feelings when attending regular classes, many of them ask the teachers for passes to come back to the ESOL class just to hang out and to do their work.

SSM: Tell me about your multicultural experience in the United States.

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): My first experience in the United States is that if two females hang out together and walk down the street hand in hand; this will be considered as lesbian. In Vietnam this is considered normal and friendly. So I learn what to do and what not when I hang out with my friends. At home, I speak and practice my own language and religion, respectively. I can take off my shoes when I am inside my house or when I come to my Vietnamese friend's house. This gesture is a form of respect and being comfortable. But I can not do the same thing when I come to my American friend's house because taking shoes off in their house will be considered rude and disrespectful. Again, I have to know my limitations, if any, when I come to people's houses.

SSM: In your opinion, how well do the ESOL students assimilate into the overall student population?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): Not very well. It doesn't matter how well the ESOL students assimilate into the other student population; there's always a gap and

tension that they perceive when hanging out with the other students unless they were born, raised, or tried to fit in the group. This includes dye the hair colors, talk, and dress in America's style.

SSM: Is there assimilation, acculturation, or enculturation (or a combination thereof) occurring at SHS?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): No answer.

SSM: What are the parents' attitudes toward public schooling in our district? What feedback do you get from them generally?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): Generally, parents think that public schools have a better environment for their children. I agree with them. At SHS, the ESOL students don't have a comfortable environment to learn. There's tension when they walk in the hallway. They are perceived as "Different" [interviewees' emphasis] because they look different and are able to speak another language. I have a personal experience with the regular students in this school. When I walk in the hallway and they happen to walk across me or behind me, they would assume that I speak Chinese and mimic Chinese by making funny or nonsense sound. I am calm and I see beyond this childish behavior. Therefore, I'd ignore it. Now, if it was for some other ESOL students, they [ESOL students] would immediately say something back, could be positive or negative. Still, if this is going on continuously, I don't think the students will be able to stay focused in school.

SSM: Describe the educational level of students who come to you. Has this changed over the years? Explain.

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): The education level of students has regressed dramatically. Years ago, when I was a student, although I did not speak or understand the language very well, I had the general knowledge and was able to catch on to what was going on in the class. Besides me, there were many other students who came from other countries and we were in the Science club and FLBA club and were scored in high percentile in tests. Now, as a teacher's aide, I don't see that many students who are involved in such activities. As far as in the [ESOL] classroom, we have students who don't even know the alphabet, who can not understand a simple concept of saying the numbers correctly [in their native language]; this is very sad. I don't think it is because they are stupid. I think it's because the parents may not have had time to sit down with their children in the early stages of learning. Or some other unknown reason; I don't know. Also, lack of practices, lack of motivation to learn may be the reasons for this regression.

SSM: Are non-ESOL teachers prepared to accept ESOL students into their classes? Explain.

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): Some are very much involved and cared. They called and very concerned about the ESOL students. Some even have target dictionary language to help ESOL students. Some even send ESOL students to come back to ESOL class to do their work. Other show intrigue in finding out more about the students' background and cultures.

SSM: Are curricular modification made for ESOL students?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): I think so; I think there modifications for ESOL students. Exactly hw, and what I am not sure.

SSM: What do your students tell you about the Georgia High School Graduation Test?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): Most of them said that they wish they could use the dictionary while taking the GHSGT. They said that they would be able to do better with the dictionary. Especially with Writing test because sometimes they don't have enough words to express what they really want to say.

SSM: What are some of your students' successes and fears?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): We have a lot of successive students. For instance, two years ago, the salutatorian was an ESOL student, third place was also another ESOL student. Many ESOL students were in the top ten and graduated with honors. This year, we have Hector [research participant] who is involved and actively a member of at least seven clubs, National Honor Society, ranked 7th place in the senior class. Karla ranked 3rd place. This is a true success. I don't think the ESOL students have any fears toward reaching their goal. I would say that they are afraid of being bothered or teased by the non-ESOL students.

SSM: What would you like to see implemented in the ESOL program, if anything, and why?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): No answer.

SSM: What is your definition of multicultural and multiculturalism?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): To me, multicultural and multiculturalism mean the unique general knowledge and insight experiences that a person possesses. This possession is built up by interacting with different ethnic people and living in other countries. I think people with multicultural [experiences] fit best in any environment since they have the experiences that a non-multicultural individual does not.

SSM: In your opinion, do American citizens really know what diversity and multicultural mean?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): Generally, most American think they know the meanings of diversity and multicultural, but they don't unless they have lived or migrated from one country to another. They got the definitions of diversity and multicultural by seeing people with different skin color, different looks, hearing different languages, tasting different kinds of ethnic foods, and trying on different outfits from other countries. That's not the real meaning of diversity and multicultural.

SSM: What implementation, if any, to the curriculum of the school would you like to see made, whether it affects your ESOL students?

LAN (PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE): No answer.

APPENDIX J

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND TWO SELECTED RESPONSES

Interview with Hai Mai

October 12, 2003 (modified July, 2006)

Note: Responses are presented as spoken or written without editing. I have noted points of clarification in brackets []. As a reminder, I am SSM.

SSM: Hi Mai. How many years have you lived in the United States?

HAI: I have lived here for 7 years.

SSM: What is the primary language spoken in your home?

HAI: Vietnamese and English.

SSM: How many years have you been studying English (including English classes that you have had in your country of birth as well as in the U.S.)?

HAI: Seven years.

SSM: That includes Vietnam?

HAI: I didn't study English in Vietnam.

SSM: So, you have lived here for 7 years.

HAI: Yes.

SSM: Where have you attended school in the United States.?

HAI: Eli Whitney [elementary school], Shuman [middle school] and Savannah High.

SSM: So you have been in the ESOL program since the elementary school.

HAI: Yes, m'am.

SSM: Hai, even though you were a student in the ESOL class, did you understand what that meant to be in the ESOL class?

HAI: Yes, m'am.

SSM: What did it mean to you?

HAI: Having to learn a second language.

SSM: OK. How many class periods do you have with Mrs. Kahn?

HAI: None.

SSM: Are you still having a hard time learning English or are you pretty comfortable with it?

HAI: I'm comfortable with it.

SSM: What other classes do you take at Savannah High?

HAI: I take Math, English, Spanish, and Health.

SSM: Do you have any advanced classes?

HAI: Yes, Math.

SSM: In which classes do you have the most difficulty when using English and why?

HAI: Mostly of them are pretty good and not that confusing.

SSM: So you aren't confused.

HAI: No.

SSM: When you were first learning English, what was the really tough class?

HAI: Math, because there were many words that I didn't know, and I just couldn't figure it out.

SSM: So, you didn't have trouble in your English class?

HAI: Not too much. I could look in the dictionary and figure it out.

SSM: Is there a class in which you can easily use your English?

HAI: I guess it is Science because I like it.

SSM: Do you get help from your ESOL teacher when you are having great difficulty in a class?

HAI: Yes m'am, I think in my sophomore year.. No, my junior year, I have to take the Georgia High School Graduation test, and Mrs. Kahn helped me study English - and the Writing test, she helped me.

SSM: Do you feel comfortable in the classes that you take that aren't with the ESOL teacher?

HAI: I feel comfortable in them.

SSM: Do other students accept and make you feel comfortable in the school?

HAI: Yes, but not all of the time, but then... I don't always feel comfortable, but it's just normal.

SSM: It's just normal. Do you just hang around with the ESOL kids, or do you have American friends too?

HAI: I have American friends too.

SSM: Are students friendly toward you?

HAI: Yes, m'am.

SSM: Do American students offer to help you if they see you are having difficulty with the material in classes which aren't with the ESOL teacher?

HAI: Yeah.

SSM: In classes in which you aren't in the ESOL class, does the teacher pair you with a student whose first language is English?

HAI: They give me extra help when I need it. They are extra nice and sweet.

SSM: So you feel that they are very helpful?

HAI: Yes.

SSM: Do you ever have to help them?

HAI: Yes.

SSM: When do you help the American students?

HAI: I help them when they sometimes talk and don't do their work - I have to tell them to do their work. I help them in math when they really need it.

SSM: So now you aren't having difficulty in Math?

HAI: No.

SSM: Does the English that you learned in the ESOL classroom sound like the English that you hear in the hallways of the school?

HAI: Not all of the time. No, because in the hallway, people talk in a different way. They talk like a friend. And in class, you talk more educated.

SSM: So, what kind of language do you hear in the English class when they [students] are answering the teacher, is their [students] language more educated sounding?

HAI: No.

SSM: It's like in the hallway?

HAI: Well, in the classroom, when you are talking with the teacher, the language in the classroom is more educated. When you are in the hallway, you talk more like you are in the street.

SSM: So when you are in your classes, and your American teachers are teaching you, are your American teachers using standard English?

HAI: Yes, m'am.

SSM: Who do you speak English with outside of the ESOL class?

HAI: Mostly with my American friends and with the English teacher... and everybody.

SSM: You know that you must pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test before you receive a high school diploma. How did you prepare for this test, and how do you feel about this test?

HAI: I studied extra, and feel, not unfair, but I feel that's it's not unfair or fair ... it's a requirement that you take it.

SSM: Did you pass it the first time that you took it?

HAI: I passed the English and the Math the first time. I'm still trying to pass my Science and Social Studies.

SSM: You passed the Writing?

HAI: The Writing? I still have to wait for the results.

SSM: You took the test in September?

HAI: Yes, m'am.

SSM: Because English is not your first language, do you feel that other students and teachers treat you differently?

HAI: No, I don't think that they have to treat me differently.

SSM: Do they?

HAI: No.

SSM: Even in your past experience, did teachers treat you differently because you didn't speak English?

HAI: They treat me more special. They treat me in a good way, special way.

SSM: Do your parents know that you were enrolled in the ESOL program?

HAI: Yes, m'am.

SSM: Do you talk about your school and your classes at home?

HAI: Yes, to my brother.

SSM: Not to your parents?

HAI: Yes, to my parents, but they always want me to be a good girl, but I want my little brother to know what I am doing in high school and to be better than me.

SSM: Where is he right now?

HAI: He's in middle school.

SSM: Which one?

HAI: Shuman Middle school.

SSM: Do you do your homework?

HAI: Yes, m'am, I have to.

SSM: Do your parents ask you about your school work and about your classes and about your daily experiences at school?

HAI: Yes, m'am. They ask me every day. They ask me if I have homework, do your classwork if you have time and everything. I have to read.

SSM: Are there any things that happen at school that you complain to your parents about?

HAI: Yes, m'am. Too much homework, and sometimes I just don't know what to do, and it's too hard. They just want me to do the best that I can. I tell them not to pressure me.

SSM: What about things like dress code and student I.D.?

HAI: I think that it is good.

SSM: Do your parents come to school for parent conferences or special programs like PTA?

HAI: What is PTA?

SSM: Parent/Teacher Association.

HAI: They don't come here because they don't have time. I always give them my report card and they trust me.

SSM: Can your parents read the notices that are sent home, or do you have to translate?

HAI: No, they can read the notices.

SSM: They can read the English?

HAI: Yes, m'am.

SSM: Who helps you with your homework?

HAI: Myself.

SSM: Who speaks English at home?

HAI: My Dad and my brothers.

SSM: How long has your Dad been in the United States?

HAI: He's been here for 13 years.

SSM: Your mom came over with you?

HAI: Yes, m'am.

SSM: So, 7 years.

HAI: Yes, m'am.

SSM: What do you think are the benefits of knowing English?

HAI: I think that it's good for you to learn more languages to communicate with people.

SSM: How about jobs?

HAI: Jobs are good because you need to learn more English. It depends on what kind of job you work in. And if you work at a better place you need a more educated language.

And you need a more educated language to talk, to communicate.

SSM: Do you plan to live in the United States.?

HAI: Yes, m'am.

SSM: What do you plan to do after high school?

HAI: I plan to go to college.

SSM: What have you learned, Hai, about the American way of life? Think about your life in Vietnam? How have you changed living in the United States?

HAI: I spend more money on my clothing because living over here you have to dress up to fit in and you have to do something that you don't want to do. You have to work and you have to save your money. You don't spend it right now. The kind of food that you eat. And you waste more. In Vietnam, you eat it until another day and you buy another one. That's about it.

SSM: How about the culture of the United States? The way that things are done, the music, going to the movies... just fitting in...

HAI: I fit in just fine. When I came here, I was just 10 years old, so now I just fit in fine.

SSM: Do you miss your country?

HAI: Yes, m'am. Because that is where I grew up, and I have a lot of memories and I have a lot of friends over there.

SSM: Do you have a lot of relatives that still live over there?

HAI: Yes

SSM: Have you visited?

HAI: No, but I plan to go there next summer.

SSM: Are you saving your money?

HAI: Yes, m'am. I'm also saving my money for college.

SSM: You work?

HAI: Yes, I work at the Sunrise restaurant.

SSM: Where's that?

HAI: They have one at Wilmington Island and one at Tybee.

SSM: How do you get to work?

HAI: By car.

SSM: Do you drive?

HAI: Yes, m'am.

SSM: Oh, when did you get your driver's license?

HAI: I just got it last week. I've worked there for two years now. My Dad drove me there.

SSM: So he is going to let you use the car?

HAI: Yes, m'am. He's going to buy me a new one after I graduate from high school.

SSM: Is that something that you see commonly? Do many of your friends get new cars?

HAI: Yes, m'am.

SSM: Would that happen in Vietnam?

HAI: No, you would not get a new car in Vietnam. You would just get new clothes. Vietnam is really a poor country, and you have to save a lot of money to go to college.

You just don't go to school for free. You don't go to high school for free. You have to pay. You have to pay for everything in Vietnam. Most people don't have that...

SSM: That luxury..

HAI: Yes, m'am

SSM: Are you happy here?

HAI: Yes, my life is in a better place, a better future..

SSM: You went to school in Vietnam... can you think of some big differences between going to school in Vietnam and going to school here?

HAI: In Vietnam, they are stricter. If you don't do your homework they will hit your hand. Then you have to keep everything clean; your notebook has to be kept clean. And you have to wear a uniform. Every day you have to get there early. If you have a bad grade they will report that to your Mom. They do a lot of things so that you can be educated.

SSM: So... your plans after graduating from high school ... where do you want to go to college?

HAI: AASU – Armstrong Atlantic State University.

SSM: To study what subject?

HAI: I want to study Psychology. My Dad wanted me to study nursing because you can find a lot of jobs more easily, and it's easy to make money.

SSM: How are you becoming more American each day?

HAI: I watch TV and I have American friends. And my little brother is just an American guy (laughs)!

SSM: This is probably one of the most important questions. What is your idea about being in a multicultural country? Do you practice your culture at home and something different at school? Or does it all blend together?

HAI: It all blends together. My parents still follow the Vietnamese culture pretty much. I live between Vietnam and being Americanized. When I speak to my parents, I speak just Vietnamese to them, because we are Vietnamese. And I speak English when I see American people. So I am living between two cultures.

SSM: Do you live in a community which is mostly Vietnamese families?

HAI: Not really, because where I live there are Americans all around us. I speak Vietnamese when I see Vietnamese people. The young people like me that are American, we speak American.

SSM: Do you have many Black friends?

HAI: Yes m'am.

SSM: Do they come to your house?

HAI: No, they don't come to my house because my parents don't like it. They don't like it; they just don't trust Black people.

SSM: When you go home, do you feel like you are leaving a different culture at school or when you go home do you experience the same culture as at school?

HAI: I live different when I get home. I'm free to talk to my Mom. At home, it's like Vietnam. When I go to school, it's another place.

SSM: Does your Mom understand things [going on] at school?

HAI: Yes m'am. She doesn't understand that much, but she always tries to be the best Mom. She helps me out, like when I have a lot of homework, she let's me do my homework. She cooks for me and everything.

SSM: Hai, I'll type this up and you can read it and make any corrections or additions.
Thank you very much.

Transcript of interview: Hector Garcia

September 2003 (modified July, 2006)

Note: Responses are presented as spoken or written without editing. I have noted points of clarification in brackets []. As a reminder, I am SSM.

My name is Hector Garcia. I am 17 years old.

SSM: How long have you lived in the United States, Hector?

HECTOR: For about four years now.

SSM: What is the primary language spoken at your house?

HECTOR: It's mostly Spanish.

SSM: How many years have you been studying English (including English classes you have had in your country of birth as well as in the United States)?

HECTOR: Well, before I came here I took an English class that would count as 5 years

SSM: Where have you attended school in the United States? Have you been to middle school in the United States or just Savannah High?

HECTOR: I started in 8th grade in middle school and now I am about to finish high school.

SSM: Did you go to Shuman middle school?

HECTOR: Yes, and now I am at Savannah High School.

SSM: And when will you graduate?

HECTOR: 2004.

SSM: You are a student in an ESOL class. Do you understand what that means?

HECTOR: ESOL means. English as a Second Other Language.

SSM: OK. How many classes do you have with Mrs. Kahn?

HECTOR: Now I don't have any classes with Mrs. Kahn. I used to have two in my 9th grade and then I moved to the next level, which was only one class. Then I moved to advanced level which was one class also. Now I'm done with the ESOL class, so I don't take her class anymore.

SSM: Did you have a hard time learning English?

HECTOR: Yes, because when I came here everybody spoke English and I didn't understand anything, not a word so it was really hard for me to understand what people were saying to me

SSM: So when you came here you spoke no English..

HECTOR: yeah, I spoke no English and I did have a hard time learning because nobody spoke Spanish. Well there was a few people that spoke Spanish, but they just told me what to do and they didn't translate everything, so I had to do it mostly on my own.

SSM: So, right now, what classes do you take at Savannah High?

HECTOR: I have taken most of the classes to graduate, but right now I'm taking AP Lit/Comp. I'm taking French 2A. I'm taking Advanced Algebra and Trig. I'm taking Economics and Personal Fitness's and AP Biology.

SSM: OK, tell me, is there any one class over another that you have more difficulty using English?

HECTOR: Well, not anymore, but I used to have trouble in my English classes.

SSM: Is there a class in which you can easily use your English, and why is that?

HECTOR: I can use my English in most of my classes because everything is in English and I get to practice and now express myself.

SSM: Alright, do you get extra help from you ESOL teacher when you are having difficulty in a regular class?

HECTOR: Well, if I am having difficulties in one my classes, first I would talk to my regular teacher, and then if she cannot help me, or he cannot help me, I'll go to my ESOL teacher.

SSM: Do you feel comfortable in the classes that you take that aren't with the ESOL teacher?

HECTOR: Yes, because I get to speak English, not only speak it, but learn also the language and how to use it interacting with others.

SSM: Do other students accept you and make you feel welcome at the school?

HECTOR: Well, that's a big concept because everybody is different. Some people, for example, are prejudice and have different thoughts about Hispanics but after all I do feel that I am welcome at this school. It's been good.

SSM: Have you had to prove yourself to students, or are they naturally friendly?

HECTOR: Well, I am a person that has different opinions about people and I can be very choosy about who do I want to be my friend and I feel that I don't have to prove myself to anyone if they want me as a friend they will have to accept me like I am.

SSM: Do American students offer to help you if they see that you are having difficulty with the material in the class which isn't with the ESOL teacher?

HECTOR: Well students always tend to do their own work and if you ask them to help you they would help you but then they'll expect you to do something for them.

SSM: Are any of the students taking Spanish that are in your other classes that want help with their Spanish?

HECTOR: Yes, yes, because I speak Spanish so they ask me to help them, and, of course, I help them. Of course I won't do their work, just help them understand.

SSM: OK, what about your written Spanish?

HECTOR: My written Spanish...

SSM: Very good?

HECTOR: Yeah, it is very good.

SSM: Alright, in classes that aren't with the ESOL teacher, now that you don't have classes with her, does the teacher have to pair you with a student whose first language is English? Answer that first.

HECTOR: Yes the teacher would mostly pair me up with someone that speaks English.

SSM: In the past, before you didn't have an ESOL class anymore, were you ever put together with another student for help?

HECTOR: Not that I remember.

SSM: Does the English that you learned in the ESOL classroom sound like the English that you hear in the hallways of the school?

HECTOR: No, it does not sound alike. I think the teacher is always trying to teach us the right way to speak English. And in the hallways, you hear all kinds of things. You hear the English that is commonly spoken. It's alike, but it's not the same; it's not the correct way of speaking it.

SSM: So which way do you find yourself speaking it [English]? It depends?

HECTOR: Yeah, it depends where I am. If I'm speaking with my friends or if I am speaking with a teacher or an adult.

SSM: Who do you speak English with outside of the ESOL class?

HECTOR: I have friends who are Americans, and I speak with them on an everyday basis.

SSM: You know that you must pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test before you receive your high school diploma. How are you preparing for this test? How do you feel about it? Or have you already prepared and have you already taken it?

HECTOR: Well, I have already taken the test. I passed all of the sections of the graduation testing the very first time I took them. And I did prepare. I came to all of the tutorials every day when they were offered so that helped me a lot to pass that test.

SSM: Were many other students, American students, attending the tutorials?

HECTOR: Not many.

SSM: Because English is not your first language, do you feel that other students and teachers treat you differently? How?

HECTOR: They do not have to treat me differently. Most of the times they treat me the same just like any other student. But when it comes to something about my country they would ask me questions and sometimes they expect me to know everything about my country.

SSM: So your parents know that you are enrolled in the ESOL program?

HECTOR: Yes they do.

SSM: Do you talk about your school and your classes at home?

HECTOR: Yes, I talk about my school and my classes at home.

SSM: Do your parents understand you when you talk to them? Do they speak enough English to understand you?

HECTOR: I talk to my parents in Spanish and when there is a note or a letter I have to translate most of the stuff because they do not speak a lot of English.

SSM: Do you do your homework?

HECTOR: Yes, I do.

SSM: Do your parents ask you about your schoolwork and about your classes and your daily experiences at school?

HECTOR: Yes, every day they ask me about what happened at school? Are you doing good? Or stuff like that.

SSM: So your parents have a real interest in your education.

HECTOR: Yeah, generally because they didn't have the opportunity to be here and to study. And so they encourage me to study.

SSM: Do your parents come to the school for parent/teacher conferences or special programs like PTA?

HECTOR: Well, they come for conferences. They don't come for PTA because they don't have enough time. But when there is a conference, they come.

SSM: Can your parents read the notices that are sent home, or do you have to translate?

HECTOR: I have to translate them because they don't read English.

SSM: Who helps you with your homework?

HECTOR: Well, I have to help myself, since my parents did not have a high education, they are not able to help me.

SSM: Who speaks English at home right now?

HECTOR: My siblings and I speak English because we know the language, and so that we can practice the language. But with our parents, we speak Spanish.

SSM: So, you and your sister speak English?

HECTOR: Yes, me, my sister and my siblings.

SSM: What do you think are the benefits of knowing English?

HECTOR: A lot of doors can open, mostly in businesses, and if you speak any language other than English, you can make good money in the career that you want to take.

SSM: What have you learned about the American way of life?

HECTOR: The American way of life is very calm I should say because everything could be provided for you or you can get it. You can get help anywhere you go you can ask. It is very different from my country.

SSM: Give me some examples, some comparisons.

HECTOR: For example people from my country don't really care if you have a problem everyone is just trying to have the best or be the best by overrunning others and not caring.

SSM: Is everyone able to get a job? Are jobs plentiful? Is it easier to get a job in the United States by what you have observed with other people?

HECTOR: Well, if you speak two languages, it is easier to get a job. But in Mexico is not so easy to get a job if you don't have a career or any experience. And sometimes if you have a career you end up working in factories for a cheap payroll, that is why people come here, they cannot get a job there. They don't have opportunities like they do here.

SSM: Do you miss your country? Do you miss Mexico?

HECTOR: Of course I do, but I would only like to come back there for a visit, not to stay there because the way of life is really hard.

SSM: Who do you talk to about your daily experiences in school - as far as your friends?

HECTOR: Well, sometimes I talk to my parents. I also talk to my teachers. That's about it.

SSM: Do you have a job?

HECTOR: No.

SSM: Are you happy here?

HECTOR: I'm happy because I have more opportunities here. I would also be happy if I was in Mexico because I would be with my family, and right here I don't have any family but my Mom and my father.

SSM: You have kind of answered this, but are there any other big differences living here than in your country? I know that we have talked about it, but what about school? What about driving? I know you have a car. What are some big differences?

HECTOR: There are many differences. I could not tell all of the differences because the two countries are very different. For example, right here, the government is very organized, and in Mexico, the government is very corrupted. So the police will stop you, and they will just ask you for money and then will let you go. And here you have to follow the laws.

SSM: What about things that teenagers do, like driving?

HECTOR: Well, they don't necessarily have to have a license to drive in Mexico because, as I said, the government is corrupt and so teen driving is not a big deal in Mexico.

SSM: What are your plans after graduating from high school?

HECTOR: My plans are to go to college and get a degree in architecture and work as an architect.

SSM: Great. How are you becoming more American each day? What do you miss about your native country?

E: I become more American each day because of the holidays and the customs that people have here. I do miss my country because I don't get to celebrate the holidays of my country B how they celebrate everything - how they look at everything so differently than here.

SSM: Think about this next question. You might want to think about it and come back to me later. When people talk about multicultural and diversity, what do you define it as? What do you see as being the definition of something that you call diversity all the time, or a multicultural school, or community, or country?

HECTOR: Multicultural is, for example, people from different places all gathered in one place. For example, in this school, we have people from many different countries in the ESOL classes. So I would define that as multicultural and diverse because people that come from different countries have different customs and speak different languages and when we are together we have the same ideas as to the differences of the places we come from.

SSM: Would you call your school and community, in general, multicultural?

HECTOR: Yes, I would call the whole country as multicultural. Because right now the Hispanics are the biggest minority in the United States and every day we are growing more and more so, yes, I would define this country and community as multicultural.

SSM: Do you feel that Mexicans are comfortable and that they are accepted in our country? (Only from the point of view of Mexicans because you are Mexican).

HECTOR: No, they don't feel that they are welcome here or anything.

SSM: Why is that, do you think?

HECTOR: Well, because, as I said, there is racism here and prejudice. Not everybody has to be prejudiced or is prejudiced, but there are some people here that are. We as Mexicans do not feel welcome in the United States unless someone does something nice for us or helps us.

SSM: I know this last question is almost a repeat of what we have been talking about before concerning the similarities and cultural differences between the U.S. and your native country, Mexico, but would you please elaborate a little more.

HECTOR: Describing the differences and cultural similarities here - I think that Americans define multicultural as a lot of people being here from different countries, for example, Mexico. Mexicans here in the United States, as I said, do not really feel welcome, but they come here because they really need the support from Americans and Americans need of Mexicans. So they have to work for Americans, even if they work for less money, they will do it, and they will do it right. And that's what I mean by they don't feel welcome in the United States because they are gathering in groups, like where I live is mostly Mexicans. We try to keep our traditions too. I go to church every Sunday. I am Catholic. And we try to keep our customs too. And even though people look at us different, we try to stay together. As I said, where I live, there are mostly Mexicans, people from Central America, and more Hispanics from other countries. Everybody tries to stay together and help one another when we cannot find any help with Americans. So we try to keep our traditions. I know that everybody is not the same, but multiculturalism is becoming more and more in the United States and more people from different countries are coming to the United States. Americans have a different point of

view. If I would ask an American. If I would ask him/her what does he/she think or what is his point of view, it would not be the same as mine because I have been through a lot. I know how hard life can be here and also in my country. And I know that they have not experienced the same things that I have they were born here and they have been here all of their lives. They haven't got the need to move or to go to another country in search of successfulness. Most people in here are capable of doing everything they want to in terms of succeeding and having a true American dream. We instead have to come from our country in the search of that dream because we cannot find it in there so we are here. Right now there are protests to the Congress and to the President to give us Mexicans the amnesty or the residency, I think that we should get it because as much as we need from this great country this country also needs from all of us.

SSM: Thank you, Hector.