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High school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classes

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High School Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Inclusion of ELL Students
in Mainstream Classes

by

Jason L. O'Brien

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Secondary Education
College of Education
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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my soul mate Lorie O'Brien. Without her support and encouragement, it would not have been possible. It is also dedicated to Connor, Pierce, Moo, Dookie, and Finn. They were forced to spend many weekends and evenings without their dad around while he was finishing his dissertation. Lastly, it is dedicated to Marínés Rivas, for opening my eyes to the population of ELL students in our classrooms.

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Finally, I would like to thank Beth Putnam for teaching me that writing is not something you simply do, rather it is a difficult and time-consuming practice that requires much revision (even when you're writing one paragraph).

Last, to all my students at TC during the 2006-2007 school year, I thank you for your patience and understanding as the stress and pressure grew.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of high school social studies teachers who had English Language Learners (ELL) mainstreamed in their social studies classes. In the school district in which the study took place, approximately 70% (n=240) of the high school social studies teachers had ELL students in their classrooms. For the quantitative portion of the survey, 344 surveys were given to each social studies department chairperson in the county to be completed by all the teachers who currently had ELL students in their social studies classroom. For the qualitative portion of the study, eight high school social studies teachers were interviewed as to their attitudes towards mainstreaming ELL students. Both the survey and interview instruments were developed by Reeves (2002) when she measured teacher attitudes towards mainstreaming ELL students.

While a majority of teachers appreciated the cultural diversity which ELL students brought to the classroom, more than three-fourths of the teachers reported that they would prefer ELL students not being in their social studies classrooms until they have reached a minimum level of English proficiency. While a broad spectrum of attitudes were reported towards support teachers received, many survey and interview

participants did not feel that the training offered in university coursework or from the school district was particularly beneficial in preparing them to teach ELL students. A clear majority of teachers reported time for both planning and instructional delivery as major obstacles when ELL students are mainstreamed in content area classes. Finally, a majority of teachers (66%) supported making English the official language in the United States.

Recommendations for future research and for future policy makers were reported in the final section of the study.

Chapter One

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

On a bright November morning, my principal called me out of my classroom to inform me that I would be receiving a new female student in my fifth grade class. I asked my principal what her name was, and he replied, “I don’t know, she doesn’t speak any English.” This student had arrived in the United States from Bolivia three days earlier and was expected to successfully assimilate into an American classroom. As intimidated as she must have felt, Juanita eventually became well-liked and the students took great pride in helping her learn English and about American culture. In retrospect, teaching her was one of the most challenging tasks I’ve had as a teacher. However, it also turned out to be one of the most rewarding. It occurred to me as I was struggling to effectively teach her in my social studies classroom that my attitude towards her being in my class was very important. How I valued her native language use and her differences from my American students, it seemed, could directly lead to her success or failure. According to Peregoy & Boyle (2005), when students sense that teachers truly recognize and value their home language and culture, they are more likely to feel positive about school and learning.

After talking to other teachers, it seemed that other teachers were also faced with the challenge of teaching students who don’t speak English. Through my conversations with fellow educators, however, there seems to exist a broad spectrum of attitudes towards having English Language Learners (ELLs) in mainstreamed classrooms. For the purposes of this study, “attitudes” will be defined as feelings or reactions toward a

phenomenon (Sapsford, 1999). While I was extremely concerned with how I could effectively teach a student who couldn't understand me, I wondered how other teachers dealt with these students. One colleague commented, "I mean, c'mon, I was clueless...so I smiled at him (the ELL student) a lot and put him in the corner and let him draw."

While most teachers who teach in Florida (the state of the proposed study) will at one time most likely have an ELL student who speaks Spanish in their classroom, the phenomenon is by no means unique to Florida or to Spanish speakers. Across the United States there are currently more than 400 languages spoken by ELL students in grades K-12 (Kindler, 2002). According to U.S. Census data gathered in the year 2000, 18.4% of the population of the United States between the ages of 5-17 (i.e., school-aged children) reported that they spoke a language other than English at home (U.S. Census, 2000). This number is significantly larger than the number reported in 1990 (13.8%) and represents more than 9.7 million students nationwide.

In the year 2000, 11% of the K-12 population in public schools in Florida was classified as ELL (OMSLE—Office of Multicultural Student Language Education Report, 2000/2001). Due to many factors, including economic reasons and people seeking refuge from political instability, Florida has experienced an influx of immigrants from Mexico, Cuba, Haiti, and other Latin American countries in the Caribbean. Many of these citizens don't speak English and their children are classified as ELL students in the public school system. In the past, several terms have been used when referring to this population, among these are Limited English Proficient (LEP), English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Non-Native English Speakers (NNES). Because it is the current accepted term in the profession, I will refer to students who do not speak English as their

native language as ELL students.

Based on census and enrollment data provided by school districts across the U.S., the trend is that the number of ELL students will continue to increase in the coming years. Therefore, an important question is, “What is the nature of ELL students’ educational experience?” While ELL students are typically enrolled in some type of language service program in their schools, cost restraints and general policy dictate that the majority of these students’ time at school is spent in mainstream classes with native English-speaking teachers and peers, a practice commonly referred to as “mainstreaming” (Berube, 2000). While all courses have subject-specific language, the social studies may require students to have a higher level of English-speaking proficiency to succeed.

Social studies, with its complex vocabulary and abstract concepts can be especially problematic. In a study conducted specifically on this topic, Short (1998) found that ELL students do not receive the language and academic support they need to master the problematic vocabulary and difficult reading and writing that are endemic to the social studies classroom. Conversely, because of the language difficulties experienced by many ELL students, it is likely that their presence in mainstream classes brings unique challenges to teachers. These challenges, in turn, may negatively or positively affect teachers' attitudes toward teaching in general and toward ELL students in particular. Several studies indicate that teachers in higher grade levels (i.e., middle school and high school) have a less positive attitude towards mainstreaming in general (Bender, Vail, & Scott, 1995; Houck & Rogers, 1994; Rogers, 1987). Two major themes identified in these studies were extra time required to teach mainstreamed students and the difficulties faced

when modifying coursework.

In many mainstream classrooms, content area teachers are not aware of ELL students' linguistic levels, cultural diversity, and learning styles, which all play an important part in their learning process (Carrasquillo & Rodríguez, 2002). It is possible that these common misunderstandings can be exhibited in attitudes towards this growing population. Yet, as noted by Reeves (2002), "little information is available on teachers who have experienced the inclusion of ELL students in their mainstream, subject area classroom" (p. 3). This research study will attempt to explore some of the attitudes of teachers which are associated with mainstreaming ELL students in high school social studies classrooms.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theoretical framework known as "social constructivism," which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two. Social constructivists focus on the social nature of the learning process, as well as the "reality" that is constructed as a result of social interactions. Several research studies have concluded that the teacher's attitude plays an important part in the overall learning process (Bloom, 1976; Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002; Garcia, 1999; and Krashen, 1981). An assumption I will make for the purpose of this study is that teacher attitudes are directly related to the "reality" of having ELLs in the mainstream social studies classroom. Each day teachers and ELLs are engaged in social interactions inherent in instruction, and these interactions will affect the attitudes of teachers. Measuring these attitudes as they are created is a major goal of this proposed study.

Adherents of social constructivism feel most meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities with other human beings (McMahon, 1997). Social constructivism is based on the premise that the social world of the learner includes the learner, the teacher, friends, other students, and other people (Cobb, 1994). Another assumption of mine is that teachers who have mainstreamed ELL students will construct some “reality” based on their attitudes towards having ELL students in their classrooms. The ELL students’ ability to speak English and the extent to which they are able to participate in classroom discussions and activities will have an important impact on the reality that is created by the social studies teacher.

Because the teacher plays such an important role in the education process, both in terms of what content is taught and what methods are used to teach it, it seems that studying the underlying attitudes of teachers with ELL students in their mainstream classrooms would help educators better understand the types of experiences that both ELL students and social studies teachers have as well as the social interactions in the classroom. Undoubtedly, other factors influence the experiences of ELL students in secondary social studies classrooms, but the scope of this study will only be concerned with the teachers’ attitudes and perceptions towards the ELL students.

While several studies (Cummins, 2000; Harklau, 1994 & 2000; Walqui, 2000) have explored the perspectives of the ELL on mainstream inclusion, few have explored the issue from the teacher’s point of view, further, a review of the literature reveals no study that has been conducted solely on high school social studies teachers. Kim (2004) conducted a study of how ELL students create identities in high school social studies classrooms, and while her study acknowledged the important role of the teachers, her

focus was on the experience of the students themselves. However, three studies which will be discussed more thoroughly in the literature review (Verplaetse, 1998; Youngs & Youngs, 1999; and Youngs & Youngs, 2001) have set forth a thematic framework for the study undertaken by Reeves (2002) by identifying major themes in attitudes of teachers with ELL students mainstreamed in their content area classrooms. Although generic instruments that measure teacher attitudes towards mainstreaming exist, currently Reeves's framework is the only one available specifically for measuring the relevant phenomena in this study. The themes that Reeves used to measure these attitudes were:

1. Language—specifically, how long do teachers feel ELLs need to successfully acquire English, how useful is the ELL's native language in the mainstream classroom, and what are the teachers' attitudes towards making English the official language of the U.S.?
2. Modification of coursework—what modification strategies do teachers use in the mainstream classroom for ELL students, if any, and can this modification be justified to English-speaking students in the mainstream classroom?
3. Time—do teachers have enough time to adequately address the needs of ELL students in the mainstream classroom and how does having ELL students mainstreamed affect the rest of the class?
4. Training and support—is the training that teachers have received adequate to teach ELL students? Is adequate training available to teachers of ELL students that desire it? Do administrators and ESOL personnel support the mainstream teacher adequately? And do ESOL personnel conduct a sufficient amount of meetings with the mainstream teachers?
5. Educational environment—do all students benefit from the inclusion of ELL students

in mainstream content area classes?

6. General mainstreaming attitudes—how do content area teachers feel about the process of mainstreaming, in general?

These themes represent some of the most salient issues that arise when ELL students are mainstreamed in content area classrooms. These themes take into consideration the teacher, the ELL, and the native-speaking students in the classroom. My study used the instruments created by Reeves, but were administered only to high school social studies teachers who had ELL students mainstreamed in their classrooms when the study was conducted.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of social studies teachers who have ELL students mainstreamed in their classrooms. Of the more than 3.6 million ELL students in the K-12 setting for the 2001-2002 school year, 59.6% were taught solely in English in mainstream settings (Zehler et al., 2003). However, researchers know very little about the ramifications of mainstreaming ELL students in this setting.

I am choosing to study high school social studies teachers (as opposed to middle school or elementary school teachers) with mainstreamed ELL students for two reasons. First, social studies does not exist as a separate course at the elementary level. Therefore, to measure the effect of having an ELL mainstreamed in a social studies class, it must be measured at the secondary level. More importantly, the ultimate goal of social studies in this country is to produce participating and critically-thinking members of a democracy (called “good citizens”). It is my assumption that high school social studies classes create

the milieu in which important and difficult concepts and skills (e.g. citizenship, critical thinking, capitalism) are taught. When teaching abstract and difficult concepts such as these, students who are not proficient at speaking English will present unique challenges to their content area teachers. My assumption is that these challenges will affect teacher attitudes towards these students and the learning environment. If these challenges are not overcome, some students may not learn these essential ideas and skills that are an integral component of the social studies curriculum. Since high school is the last level of formal schooling for many of these students, the effects of these challenges may be far-reaching.

In her unpublished doctoral dissertation Jenelle Reeves (2002) conducted a study to uncover the attitudes and perceptions of middle school and high school teachers (from a variety of disciplines) who had ELL students mainstreamed into their classrooms. Reeves surveyed 281 of these teachers, 32 of which reported their subject area as social studies. The school district in which Reeves conducted her study (Knox County, Tennessee) had only 12 high schools and no single high school had more than 33 ELL students at the time of the study. Of the four teachers whom Reeves interviewed and observed for her study, only one was a social studies teacher and this teacher only had one ELL student mainstreamed in her classroom. Also, only 18.7% of the teachers in Reeves' study indicated that they had any training in regards to working with ELL students. The enrollment statistics and training criteria for the district in which I conducted my study differ significantly from Reeves's and will be discussed in further detail later.

To measure the teachers' attitudes towards ELL students in mainstream social studies classrooms, Reeves used themes developed by Verplaetse (1998) and Youngs and

Youngs (2001), in their research. Reeves's (2002) general findings in regards to each theme are listed below.

Language

Many of the participating teachers in Reeves's study displayed an attitude that underestimated the time necessary for ELL students to successfully acquire English. Generally, teachers thought that ELL students should be able to learn English within two years of entering school. There is a large body of research that indicates that while BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) are ordinarily learned by students within the first two years of speaking a language, CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) may take as long as seven to ten years (Cummins, 1979). BICS is generally interpreted as social competency in a language (i.e., students are able to use the second language to communicate with others) while CALP is specialized language that is used for academic purposes (Cummins, 1984).

In Reeves's study, teachers generally believed that immersion in an English-rich environment was the best way for students to learn English. This mirrors the belief by many people that placing an English learner in an "English only" environment will aid in the rapid acquisition of English. Programs such as these, commonly called "submersion" (or "sink-or-swim"), fail to take into consideration the student's level of competency with their native language which significantly affects English acquisition (Cohen, 1976). The effectiveness of "submersion" programs has been challenged most notably by Krashen (1985) and by several other researchers, as well. A majority of participants in Reeve's study also felt negatively towards the utility of using a student's native language in the

classroom even though several researchers have shown that bilingual programs of this type can result in ELL students out-performing their English-only counterparts (Ramirez & Yuen, 1991; Oller & Eilers, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 2001; Kenner, 2007). Finally, a majority of Reeves's respondents did not provide instructional materials in the ELL student's native language.

Modification of coursework

Reeves found that a slight majority (59%) of teachers displayed a willingness to modify coursework for ELL students. Also 60.6% of the teachers believed it would not be difficult to justify modifying coursework for ELL students (based on their limited English proficiency) if asked by an English-speaking classmate.

Time

A majority (70%) of teachers in Reeves's study felt that they did not have adequate time to deal with the needs of ELL students in their mainstream classrooms. Teachers also felt that the inclusion of ELL students in their classes increased their workloads, and that this prevented them from making more coursework modifications for ELL students.

Training and Support

Less than 18% of the teachers in Reeves's indicated that they had been trained to teach ELL students. However, only slightly more than half (52%) were in favor of more training, which could mean that either they did not think that training was effective or that the primary obligation for educating ELL students was not theirs. In general, teachers

also felt that they were receiving inadequate support from their school's administration when ELL students were mainstreamed in their classrooms. While teachers perceived slightly more support from ESOL personnel than administrators in their schools, few teachers reported scheduling regular conferences with ESOL personnel.

Educational Environment

Teachers perceived the educational environment resulting from the inclusion of ELL students to be positive. English proficient students' exposure to cultural diversity was perceived to be the greatest benefit of ELL inclusion in content area classrooms.

General Attitudes

While 72.4% of the teachers surveyed would welcome the inclusion of ELL students in their content area classrooms, 74.9% felt that ELL students should not be included in their mainstream classrooms until they had reached a minimum level of English proficiency. Overall, many of the teachers perceived the ELL students to be "good kids" in their classrooms.

The school district in which this study was undertaken is within the ten largest school districts in the United States and is one of the largest in the state of Florida. It has 23 high schools that served more than 46,000 students in the 2005-2006 academic school year (School District Website, 2005). At the time of the study, the school district had 344 high school social studies teachers, a slight majority of which were male, and the ages of the social studies teachers within the district ranged from 22 years to 66 years. While exact numbers were not available, the secondary social studies supervisor for this school

district stated that in his estimation, 70-80% (n=240-275) of all high school social studies teachers had at least one ELL mainstreamed in their classrooms and many had several (S. Jones, personal communication, 2005). Because so many high school social studies teachers within this school district have ELL students mainstreamed in their classrooms, it is expected that information gleaned from this proposed study will have important implications for the school district as well as other districts in the state which have similar policies for educating ELL students.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this inquiry are as follows:

- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards ELL students using their native language to learn in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards modifying coursework for ELLs in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the amount of time required to teach ELLs in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards training and support they receive to teach ELLs in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the effect on the education environment when ELLs are mainstreamed in their social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes in general, towards mainstreaming ELLs in their social studies classrooms?

It is my belief that having ELL students mainstreamed into content area classrooms will have an effect on teacher attitudes. While I believe that most teachers will indicate a general lack of preparedness in teaching ELL students, I want to investigate to what degree this lack of preparedness affects their attitudes towards teaching these ELL students. By distributing a survey instrument to teachers and reporting on the perceived effects that mainstreaming has on their attitudes, I hope to add to the body of knowledge in regards to mainstreamed social studies classrooms.

Assumptions

I had two underlying assumptions before the study was conducted. These assumptions were based on my experience having ELL students mainstreamed in my classroom and conversations I have had in the past with other educators. The first is that teachers would experience at least some frustration when teaching ELL students academic content. The second is that teachers perceived themselves as largely under-prepared to teach mainstreamed ELL students with the same proficiency as they do their native English-speaking counterparts.

I deliberately limited the scope of the study to include only high school social studies teachers who currently had one or more English language learners mainstreamed in their classrooms in one particular school district in Florida. After I collected survey data, I chose eight teachers who had English language learners in their classrooms and conducted interviews. It must be noted, that by only interviewing people who agreed to the interview, I may not have had an entirely representative sample of the school district.

Threats to Internal/External Validity

The researcher assumed that the respondents to the survey answered honestly. The major threat to internal validity was the respondents feeling that an answer that conveyed negative feelings toward mainstreamed students may have resulted in negative actions taken by a supervisor. Since the department chairpersons collected the surveys in some instances (although the envelopes were sealed), it is hoped that the respondents did not feel pressured to answer in a manner that would please these people. To guarantee the greatest chances of anonymity, I provided envelopes to the participants in which they could seal their completed surveys before turning them in to their department chairs. It was also made clear in the survey itself that the surveys were uncoded and completely anonymous and that I was the only person who read the responses. The department chairpersons addressed this concern by explaining to the teachers that they did not read the responses and I asked the department chairs to leave the room while surveys were completed. After collecting the data, a majority of the surveys were returned to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelopes which I provided, so the risk of department chairpersons reading the survey data was minimized.

To avoid "instrumentation bias," which can occur when participants are required to choose from a set of statements, participants were allowed to choose "no opinion" for all of the questions in the first section of the survey. Selection bias may have occurred while analyzing the surveys. Selection bias is defined as an error or bias that causes a sample to not be representative of the population from which it came. This may have been caused by some of the teachers not completing and returning the survey instrument, thus denying me access to important data on their attitudes towards having

English language learners mainstreamed in their social studies classrooms. Also, since I did not personally distribute the surveys to the teachers, it is possible that some systematic bias occurred (e.g., some chairpersons did not distribute the surveys) at their respective schools. In an attempt to control for this, I sent a reminder email to the department chairpersons asking them to ensure that all teachers were given the survey instrument.

External validity is defined as “the approximate validity with which we can infer that the presumed causal relationship can be generalized...across different types of persons, settings, and times” (Cook & Campbell, 1979, p. 37). Because I did not use a truly random sample, I am making no claims that the findings will generalize to the larger population of all high school social studies teachers in the United States. However, by using multiple methods of surveys and interviews, I hoped to develop at least a minor degree of “population transferability” to other social studies teachers who have English language learners mainstreamed in their classrooms elsewhere. The results of the study cannot be generalized to time periods other than the one in which the study took place or to settings beside the high school social studies classes in which the study took place.

Last, as in all qualitative inquiry, this study contains threats to interpretive validity. “Interpretive validity” is present to the degree that the researcher accurately portrays the meaning given by the participants to what is being studied (Johnson, 1997). In an effort to control for this, I recorded participants’ responses and used “low-inference” descriptors (i.e. reporting responses which are phrased identically to the participants’ responses) when writing results. The only exception to this was one of the interview participants at whose interview my tape recorder malfunctioned. During that

interview, I took field notes and typed the transcript immediately afterwards. I then sent the transcript (that day) to the teacher for verification. My field notes contained one error regarding the number of years the participant had taught overseas and this erroneous information was corrected before the data were used for analysis. Within two weeks of conducting the interviews, a transcript was sent via email to all the participants for them to verify. In all cases, with the exception noted above, all interview participants were in agreement that the data accurately described their attitudes towards having English language learners in their social studies classrooms. After the data were gathered, I shared the responses with two committee members to ensure that they were in agreement in regards to the emerging themes within the data set.

Finally, my personal appearance may, to some degree, affect the interactions during the interview process. The fact that I am a Caucasian male, with blonde hair and blue eyes may have caused the survey participants to answer in ways that are different from ways in which they might respond to a person of another ethnic background. In two cases, I feel that my appearance helped make the participants feel comfortable making critical remarks about the mainstreaming process.

Definition of Terms

Attitudes were defined as feelings about or reactions toward a phenomenon (Sapsford, 1999).

Comprehensible input refers to the belief that humans acquire language only when they understand the messages with which they are presented (Krashen, 1985).

English Language Learners (ELLs) are non-native speakers who are learning English.

English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a popular acronym used in K-12 schools.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) is a federal term for a student who is not a native speaker of English, has not developed full proficiency in the language and requires support services (i.e., ESOL classes or modified instruction in content classes) and monitoring.

Mainstreaming is placing ELLs in classrooms in which the school curriculum is delivered through the medium of English and it has not been modified for non-native English speakers (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002).

Submersion is placing ELL students with native-English-speaking students in content-area classes with no form of special support (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003).

Chapter Two

Review of the literature

Introduction

Social studies is one of the core academic disciplines common to the elementary and secondary school curriculum in the United States. The National Council for the Social Studies defines social studies as "a school program...whose primary purpose is to help young people to develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (NCSS, 2004, p. 1). Creating a generation of well-informed, critically thinking students is a difficult job, especially as the needs of students grow. As classrooms become more and more diverse, teachers are encountering students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. How does the inability of his or her students to speak English affect the teacher's ability to teach social studies? Unfortunately, very little is known about the effects of ELL students on teacher attitudes in the social studies classroom.

Even though more and more studies are being conducted that explore students' and teachers' attitudes towards diverse learning environments, no research study has ever been undertaken that focuses solely on high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of English Language Learners in their classroom. Because of this paucity in research, not enough is known about the ramifications of mainstreaming students in these settings. However, there is literature available that has focused on the experiences of mainstream teachers of ELL students in a variety of settings and in a

variety of content area classes. Beginning with the increase in ELL populations across the United States, and the subsequent increase in the amount of students who are mainstreamed, this review will then outline the history of legislative decisions that pertain to ELL students in American schools. Next, this review will describe various teacher preparation programs across the United States for social studies teachers in an effort to understand the nature of their training for ELL students. Then, a proposed theoretical framework will be discussed for understanding teachers' attitudes towards ELLs who are mainstreamed into their social studies classrooms. Finally, teacher attitudes and expectations towards ELL students, as well as the effects of these attitudes and expectations will be discussed.

As stated earlier, this study used instrumentation and procedures developed by Reeves (2002) to measure teacher attitudes, but focuses solely on high school social studies teachers with ELL students mainstreamed in their classrooms. The term "attitude" as a construct, much like "constructivism," has many definitions. A review showed more than 30 reported definitions in social science literature (Rao, 2004). According to Cook (1992), attitudes are comprised of three elements:

- cognition—the individual's perception of the attitude object
- affect—the emotional underpinnings of these beliefs and the amount of positive or negative feeling that an individual has toward the attitude object
- behavior-responses—observable behavior or the individual's intention to behave in a particular manner towards the attitude object.

For the purposes of simplicity and clarity, I will use the definition of the term "attitudes" as "feelings about or reactions toward" a phenomenon (Sapsford, 1999, p. 140).

Specifically, attitudes will be defined as how teachers feel about ELL inclusion in regards to the specific themes listed earlier. Furthermore, while this study does not measure teacher behavior, an assumption of mine is that attitudes towards the inclusion of ELL students in the mainstream classroom will have some effect on teacher behavior.

ELL Populations Across the United States

According to data collected in the 2000 U.S. census, the foreign-born population in the United States was 31.1 million, up from the 19.8 million reported in 1990. This represents a 57.7% increase in only 10 years (U.S. Census, 2000). Many of these people who have immigrated to the U.S. bring with them children who are not proficient in English. Since the majority of immigrants to the U.S., in fact, speak languages other than English, more than 90% of immigrant school children come from non-English speaking countries (Short, 2002). U.S. residents over the age of five, excluding visiting students, who reported speaking English “less than very well” on the 2000 U.S. Census numbered nearly 20,000,000 (U.S. Census, 2000). Furthermore, between the 1990-1991 school year and the 2000-2001 school year, the ELL population has grown approximately 105% nationally, while the general school population has grown only 12% (Kindler, 2002). In the last ten years, North Carolina has the distinction of possessing the highest growth rate of ELL students in the nation. Due primarily to its farm and factory jobs, which have lured many Latino immigrants to both rural and urban neighborhoods, North Carolina has experienced greater than a 400% increase in the number of ELL students in its classrooms (Zhao, 2002).

While individual states have experienced varying degrees of increases in the number of ELL students, approximately 60% of the 5.6 million foreign-born population who moved to the United States between 1995 and 2000 entered the country through the six "gateway" states of California, Florida, Illinois, New York, New Jersey, and Texas (U.S. Department of Commerce Press Release, 2003). What has been particularly difficult for many school districts is the fact that within these states, many immigrants are settling far from traditional immigration "hubs" (Zhao, 2002). The effect is that school districts within these states are now having to train teachers to teach ELL populations in areas that in the past have had very homogenous, English-speaking populations.

Based on these data, a compelling case can be made that a significant number of ELLs are currently enrolled in the nation's schools, especially in Florida, the state of the proposed study. In fact, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, in the 2002-2003 school year Florida had 203,712 ELL students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004). This number represents 14.7% of the total population of students aged 5-17. For this school year, only California and Texas had more ELLs grades K-12.

Programs Available for ELL students

The proposed study focused on students who were mainstreamed in classrooms in which instruction is solely in English. However, a variety of bilingual education programs have been implemented across the United States in the past decades. Bilingual education programs are defined as "educational programs that use two languages, one of which must be English, for teaching purposes" (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Bilingual

education programs take many forms, but two goals are common to all: (1) to teach students the English language and (2) to provide instruction of the core curriculum in the home language while students are learning English proficiency (Lessow-Hurley, 2000). The following are brief descriptions of several of the most popular types of bilingual education programs.

Transitional Bilingual Education

These programs offer instruction in the primary language (non-English) for one to three years. The purpose is to build a foundation in literacy and academic content that will facilitate English language and academic development as students acquire English. The goal of this program is to develop English language proficiency as quickly as possible (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005, p. 25).

Maintenance Bilingual Education

In this model, instruction is given in both English and the minority language beginning in elementary school and oftentimes lasting into middle and high school. As the name implies, the goal of this type of program is to help language minority students develop and maintain their primary language, as well as become fully proficient in both oral and written English.

Immersion Education

Unlike the American “immersion” model, in which students are “immersed” in English medium classes, the first bilingual immersion programs were developed in Canada for

different purposes. The goal of these programs is to teach a minority language to language majority students. Students in these programs receive instruction in their second language (e.g., Spanish) to develop second language proficiency while learning academic content. The goal of these programs is proficiency in both the native and second language. Special pedagogic techniques are used in these classrooms to help students understand, learn, and participate in the new language (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). The success of these programs has been extensively studied and evaluated by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (Genesee, 1984; Swain & Lapkin, 1989).

Two-Way Immersion Programs

These programs, also called “developmental bilingual education,” are created to serve both language majority and language minority students. Equal numbers of native speakers of English and language minority speakers are grouped together in the same classrooms. In the early grades, instruction is delivered in the non-English language. This procedure provides second language development for English speakers as well as intensive primary language development for native speakers of the minority language (Christian, 1994). Instruction in English begins with about 20 minutes a day in kindergarten and is gradually increased as students move up in grades until approximately equal time is given for both languages (Reynolds, Dale, & Moore, 1989). As a result of this type of program, both groups develop and maintain their home languages. The effects of the two-way program has been developed, researched, and evaluated throughout the United States with positive results (Lindholm, 1990; Lindholm & Gavlek, 1994; Peregoy, 1991; Peregoy & Boyle, 1990). It must be noted, however, that

bilingual education programs serve only a small percentage of eligible students across the United States (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Much more commonly, students who arrive in this country are placed in educational settings in which the ultimate goal is for students to quickly learn English and little attention is paid to the student's home language. The following section will explore legislation that pertains to ELL students in K-12 classrooms.

History of Legislation in Regards to ELL instruction

Since the latter part of the nineteenth century, the United States has opened its borders to millions of immigrants from nations all across the globe. One direct effect of this human migration is that many students who do not speak English attend American elementary, middle, and high schools. An important facet of this investigation, then, is to identify the historic legislation that has mandated how ELL students are to be educated in the nation's classrooms. An important question that needs to be answered is, "How do these policies affect the experience of both teachers and ELL students in the classroom?"

The educational policies of today's schools in regards to ELL students trace their origins to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI of the act states:

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program of activity receiving federal financial assistance (Berube, 2000, p. 16).

English Language Learners are protected under this act because their limited English proficiency is viewed as an extension of their national origin. As a result of this

legislation, in theory, all ELL students must be given equal educational access and opportunities as their English-speaking counterparts.

In response to challenges in federal court that the Civil Rights Act was not adequately addressing the needs of ELL students, the federal government passed the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 under the Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This Act federally funded programs that were truly bilingual in nature and whose goals were that students become biliterate (Crawford, 1999). However, across different school districts in the United States, many court cases were initiated by groups who felt that ELL students in their respective school districts were not receiving adequate instruction to meet their needs as both English learners and K-12 students.

On May 25, 1970, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued an official memorandum to clarify the school districts' responsibility to provide equal educational opportunities to ELL students (English Language Learner KnowledgeBase, 2004). The memorandum states:

Where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes (ELL) children from effective participation in the educational program offered by the school...the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional programs (Pottinger, 1970, p. 1).

Despite this mandate by the federal government, nationwide many ELL students had still not been given equal access to learn in U.S. schools. In 1974, in the case *Lau v. Nichols*, a group of Chinese immigrants challenged the San Francisco school district and maintained that their language minority children were not receiving equal educational treatment under the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. At this time, the school

district of San Francisco imposed a requirement that before students could participate in the educational programs of the schools, they must have already had basic proficiencies in English. The subsequent ruling by the Supreme Court is considered a landmark on the scale of *Brown v. Board of Education* in regards to its effect on educational policy. The Supreme Court stated that “by [solely] providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum[...]students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education” (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974). The *Lau* decision gave the OCR authority to regulate how schools must design meaningful instruction that was responsive to the needs of ELL students (Berube, 2000, p. 20).

However, the OCR (the primary enforcing agent of *Lau v. Nichols*) has taken a reactive, rather than proactive stance in dealing with violations of this decision (Berube, 2000). Specifically, instead of approving language programs before they are implemented, the OCR investigates complaints to see if a school district is taking “appropriate action” with regards to educating ELL students. This wording has proven especially problematic for the OCR because school districts are able to use the ambiguity of the term “appropriate” to their advantage. As a result, school districts are given much latitude to develop their own programs for ELL students. As Walqui states, “While school districts may have a general policy for the education of students learning English...this policy is usually cast in vague and imprecise terms” (Walqui, 2000, p. 17). The result of this is a great many inconsistencies among school districts in the United States.

In 1981, the U.S. Court of Appeals in *Casteñada v. Pickard* (1981), created guidelines to measure whether or not schools were in compliance with the requirement of

“appropriate action.” These guidelines stated that “if a school’s program, although based on a legitimate educational theory and implemented through the use of adequate techniques, failed to produce results indicating success in overcoming the language barriers confronting ELL students, then the program may, at that point, no longer constitute ‘appropriate action’ as far as that school was concerned” (Berube, 2000, p. 22). By basing the “appropriateness” of the program on the success or failures of the students in which it served, *Casteñada v Pickard* attempted to disallow districts from being in compliance with legislation just by creating a program and not monitoring its success.

However, not all legislation in the past several years has considered student success when determining the types of programs for ELL students. In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 227 by a margin of 61% to 39%. This piece of legislation stated

Whereas, the English language is the national public language of the United States; and Young immigrant children can easily acquire full fluency in a new language if they are heavily exposed to that language...It is resolved that: all children in California public schools shall be taught English as rapidly and effectively as possible (Proposition 227, Article I, 1998).

This legislation effectively banned bilingual education programs except under certain circumstances and established a “sheltered immersion” program which could last no more than one school year (Mora, 2005). “Sheltered immersion” was defined as an “English language acquisition process for young children in which nearly all classroom instruction is in English but with the curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the language” (Proposition 227, Article II, 1998). Considering the research by Cummins regarding the length of time needed to acquire Cognitive Academic

Language Proficiency (CALP), this program seems to place unrealistic expectations on the time required for ELL students to acquire English.

Likewise, Proposition 203, “English for the Children” was passed by voters in 2001 in Arizona and took effect at the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year. This legislation requires that ELL students “be taught English, by being taught in English” and that they be placed in “English language classrooms” (Arizona Revised Statutes §15-752 English Language Education, 2001). This program virtually ended all bilingual instruction in Arizona schools and requires that all ELL students in grades two through eleven be assessed annually in English on a norm-referenced test (Wright, 2005). The results of these standardized tests revealed serious achievement gaps between ELL students and their native-speaking counterparts and that most gains in test scores were the result of excluding test scores of ELL students who had been in public school less than four years (Wright & Pu, 2005).

With President Bush’s passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, federal funding (mandated under the ESEA Act) for bilingual education has been effectively eliminated. (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Furthermore, the NCLB requires an accelerated learning pace for English language learners in order to “close the gap” between them and the general student population. The NCLB represents the culmination of several decades of heated debate, not just among lawmakers and educators, but among the general population as well (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Across the United States, groups such as “English First” and “U.S. English” have lobbied to have English designated as the official language of the U.S. These groups feel the use of languages other than English in hospitals, social service agencies, schools, voting booths, and other public

venues is considered anathema to our collective unity and that for full integration into society, non-native speakers need to be taught English (Boulet, 2001). According to Jim Boulet, Executive Director of English First, “Bilingual-education programs say to Hispanic parents: ‘Your children aren't real Americans and never will be.’ Bilingual education ensures Hispanic children will grow up to be second-class citizens because such programs keep Hispanic children from learning English when they are young and can do so most easily” (Boulet, 2001). The above examples show that there exists a broad spectrum of attitudes towards language usage and language instruction in the nation’s classrooms. Within the context of this proposed study, I hope to identify some of the attitudes that teachers have in regards to these notions.

Policy Implementation in U.S. Schools

The significance of the cases brought before federal judges should be keenly understood. If it were not for the individual efforts of private citizens challenging the existing hegemonic social structures within school districts, there would be no codified bilingual education policies and practices and probably only miniscule amounts of funding and application of these programs across the U.S. (Minaya-Rowe, 1988). Although much of the legislation mentioned has attempted to create a more equitable experience for ELL students, the primary determining factor of how these programs are implemented is their feasibility to the respective school district. When developing the policies for ELL students at the school district level, the most implemented, yet least effective method is enrolling ELL students in language service classes (often called “ESOL” for “English Speakers of Other Languages”) with mainstream subject area

classes (Thomas & Collier, 1997). This method is commonly called “mainstreaming” or “pull-out ESL” and it is the most frequently used form of language service in American schools (Moran, 2000). The term “pull-out” refers to the students spending a portion of their day in ESOL classes, but they are “pulled out” at specific times so as to increase the amount of time spent in contact with English-speaking classmates and teachers.

For the proposed study, “mainstreaming” will be defined as placing ELLs in classrooms in which the school curriculum is delivered through the medium of English and it has not been modified for non-native English speakers (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002) While the term *mainstreaming* is most commonly used in the field of special education, it is commonly used to describe the types of environments in which ELLs are placed with their native-speaking counterparts in content area classrooms (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003). Reeves (2002) states that “Pull-out ESL classes may be popular due to their emphasis on the rapid acquisition of English” (p. 17). This rapid acquisition model is based on the belief that immersion in the target language is the best way to learn it.

Many researchers however, conducted research to disprove these claims and in his seminal work, Krashen (1985) points out that without “comprehensible input,” this method can hamper students’ ability to acquire English. In a classroom, the concept of comprehensible input refers to the teacher creating an environment in which material presented is supported by contextual clues and is presented in ways to maximize the ELL students’ ability to “make sense” of what is being said. When these context clues are included in pedagogic practice, the student is better-able to comprehend the meaning of specific words and phrases and thus acquire English (Krashen, 1985). Misconceptions

such as the rapid acquisition model may play an important part in the attitudes of teachers towards their ELL students in the mainstream classroom. If a teacher does not have the training necessary to understand the language acquisition process, he or she may be largely ineffective at teaching these students.

Teacher Training Programs in the United States

While this study took place in Florida, as a way to contextualize this study within the United States, this section of the literature review will report on the types of training required in other states for high school social studies teachers as it pertains to ELL students. An exhaustive search has shown no storehouse of information that relates directly to the requirements of preservice social studies teachers in regards to teaching ELL students in the mainstream classroom. An assumption of mine is that the preparation of social studies teachers to teach ELL students, as well as inservice training offered by school districts has a direct impact on teacher attitudes when teaching ELL students in the mainstream classroom.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) reported that from 1992 to 2002, the percentage of ELL students who received mainstream instruction only, without *any* native language services increased from 3.5 percent to 11.7 percent of the total ELL student population in grades K-12 (Office of English Language Education, 2003, p. v). The most relevant question pertaining to this proposed study then is, what is the nature of training for social studies teachers with ELL students mainstreamed in their content area classrooms and how does it affect the teachers' attitudes towards ELL students? Linguistic diversity in classrooms presents

additional challenges for mainstream teachers, with the implication being that these teachers will increasingly require the training and expertise required to work effectively with the ELL students (Office of English Acquisition, 2003, p. 96).

According to a 1996 U.S. Department of Education news release, the percentage of trained teachers and the types of training varied greatly across the U.S. for those teachers who had ELL students mainstreamed in their classrooms. In their 2003 report, the OELA found that many teachers and instructional aides who work with ELL students have not received training related specifically to instruction of ELL students (Office of English Language Acquisition). In response to the growing number of ELL students that are attending the nation's schools, some states have begun offering English as a Second Language (ESL) "endorsements" for their content-area teachers who have ELL students mainstreamed in their content area classrooms. These endorsements are earned by taking a prescribed sequence of courses from an accredited college or university. According to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs, 42 states and the District of Columbia currently offer ESL certification or endorsements (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2005). In addition, 22 states have legislative requirements or state board requirements that teachers placed in bilingual/dual language classrooms must have bilingual/dual language certification. However, these legislative requirements do not extend to content area teachers who have ELL students mainstreamed in their classrooms.

The five states with the highest numbers of ELLs as of the 2002-2003 school year were (in the following order): California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Illinois. In an attempt to describe the similarities or differences in training for high school social studies

teachers who may have ELL students mainstreamed in their classrooms, I will briefly describe the nature of training required in these states.

California

In the 2002-2003 school year, California had the most ELL students (1,599,542) in the K-12 setting in the United States. According to the California Commission on Teaching Credentials webpage,

Teachers of English Learners (EL) must hold an appropriate credential document authorization for English language development, specially designed academic instruction delivered in English, or content instruction delivered in the primary language.. Crosscultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD), and Bilingual Crosscultural Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) Certificates authorize instruction to English learners (California Commission on Teaching Credentials, 2007a).

Teachers who have at least one English Language Learner in their classroom have two options to meet state standards. They must either take 18 college quarters of coursework which include the courses “Language Development and Usage,” and “Applied Methods in Teaching Bilingual & English Language Development” or they must complete a 45 hour Commission-approved staff development program provided by their respective school district (California Commission on Teaching Credentials, 2007b).

Texas

In the 2002-2003 school year, Texas ranked second in the nation in regards to the total number (630,686) of ELL students in the K-12 setting. The State Board for Educator Certification will certify a social science teacher grades 8-12, if he or she completes an accredited teacher preparation program in the state (State Board for Educator Certification, 2005). The universities in Texas currently require no ESL (English as a Second Language) coursework or training to complete their academic program (Moore, 2005).

Florida

In the 2002-2003 school year, Florida ranked third in the nation in the number of ELL students (203,712) enrolled in the K-12 setting. In response to a lawsuit brought against the state by the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and to ensure that its teachers were trained to teach ELLs, and thus be in compliance with *Lau v. Nichols* decision and the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the state of Florida enacted the Florida Consent Decree on August 14, 1990. This decree guarantees that “[each student has] equal access to appropriate programming that shall include both access to intensive English language instruction and instruction in basic subject matter areas of math, science, social studies, computer literacy which is (a) understandable to the LEP student given his or her level of English language proficiency, and (b) equal and comparable in amount, scope, sequence and quality to that provided to English proficient students” (Florida Consent Decree, 1990, p. 6). However, the fact that the curricular changes under the consent decree came about as a result of a lawsuit may indicate that the respective

districts do not place as high a priority on the educational experience of its ELL students as it does on other populations.

Under the auspices of the Florida Consent Decree, the state of Florida has mandated that all of its high school social studies teachers are required to take 60 in-service hours of ESOL training, or three college credits of an ESOL education course. According to the social studies supervisor for the county in which the study will take place, all social studies teachers in the district are required participate in the ESOL in-service training within two years of being hired as a condition of their employment, regardless of their transferring into the district from another state or being employed prior to the Consent Decree (S. Jones, Personal Communication, 2005). The required college course at the University of South Florida is commonly called “ESOL Competencies and Strategies.” The University of South Florida’s College of Education website states that the course is “Designed to enable participants to meet the special limitations and cultural educational needs of ELL students in content area classes. This course is also designed to provide a theoretical and practical foundation for ESOL competencies and strategies” (USF College of Education website, 2005). Since many of University of South Florida’s graduates teach in the school district of the study, I am again making the assumption that the effectiveness of preparation will significantly impact teacher attitudes toward ELL students in the mainstream classroom.

New York

In the 2002-2003 school year, New York ranked fourth in the nation with 178,909 ELL students in the K-12 setting. Approved teacher education programs for grades 7-12

social studies currently contain no separate coursework to train teachers to work effectively with ELLs. When queried, the state licensure office replied, “Although the [preservice] coursework does not specifically say so, it is intended to help prepare the student of the program to address concerns that can arise when teaching special and diverse limited populations [such as ELL students]” (Zeidre, 2005).

Illinois

In the 2002-2003 school year, Illinois ranked fifth in the nation with 168,727 ELL students in the K-12 setting. Standard number 3B of the “Illinois Professional Teaching Standards” states “The competent social studies teacher understands the process of second language acquisition and strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English.” (Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, 2002, p. 4). However, when asked in which college course these skills were taught, a representative of one of the five largest teachers’ colleges in the state replied to me, “When it’s time for accreditation, there’ll be a ‘mad dash’ to find a syllabus that has the requirement listed on it. Trust me, they’ll all be covered somewhere” (Anonymous, 2005). It should be noted that this same representative also stated that, “Our advisors for the program do encourage our candidates to take elective coursework in ESL or bilingual education, to build on the cultural knowledge that they are exposed to in the diversity elements of our program.”

North Carolina

Although North Carolina did not rank in the top five states in total number of ELL students for the 2002-2003 school year, it does have the distinction of having the highest

growth rate in the U.S. of ELL students in the K-12 setting. Despite the growing number of ELL students, the state of North Carolina currently does not require individuals who teach high school social studies to have any training to teach ELL students as a condition for getting a certificate (Jakeman, 2005). Just as in Florida's classrooms, if high school social studies teachers in North Carolina have ELL students mainstreamed in their classrooms, then will there be an effect on teacher attitudes if teachers are have no training to teach these students effectively?

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Within the realm of the social sciences, the term *constructivism* refers to the philosophical belief that people construct their own understanding of reality. Some theorists go so far as to argue that there is no objective reality outside people's constructs or perceptions (Oxford, 1997). One of many paradigms that is closely linked with this view is called "social constructivism" and it will be used as the theoretical framework of this study (Cobb, 1994; Cobb & Yaker, 1995; Phillips, 1995). I have chosen this framework because it focuses on the social nature of the learning process and can be applied to the "construction" of reality by the mainstream teacher of ELL students.

There are several assumptions shared by adherents of social constructivist theory. First, that reality is constructed through human activity and that members of a society [or classroom] invent the properties of their "world" (Kukla, 2000). Attitudes that teachers possess in regards to time necessary to teach ELL students, how coursework should be modified to meet ELL students' needs, and the support that mainstream teachers receive are all important components of the reality-construction within the mainstream high

school classroom. This reality-construction, I believe, is constantly changing based on the interactions between teachers and ELL students, and also by the interactions the teacher may or may not have with ESOL support personnel.

Another belief of social constructivists is that knowledge is a human product that is socially constructed (Ernest, 1999; Gredler, 1997; Prawat & Floden, 1994). For most social constructivists, the emphasis of learning (whether it be language or content) is on the process (rather than just finished products) in activity-based learning situations with meaningful purposes (Rogoff, 1994). From this perspective, teacher attitudes about their ability to effectively teach ELL students (one of the themes in this study) should have some effect on the learning situations which the teacher creates in this environment. If social interactions between teachers and ELL students are guided by positive or negative attitudes, I am making the assumption that there will be an effect on how the teacher interacts with the ELL student. For example, if a teacher perceives the ELL student as incapable of communicating or even understanding the academic content with which he or she is presented, the teacher may lower expectations for the ELL student. The effects of lowered expectations will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Another assumption I will make is that the teacher controls many of the social interactions in social studies classrooms. While conversation is defined as “talk between equals in which no participant has special rights allocated in advance,” teacher talk is a language of control (Edwards & Westgate, 1987, p. 25). Several researchers (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Mehan, 1982; & Poole, 1988) have examined the discourse patterns in social studies classrooms and discovered that it typically exists as teacher initiation—pupil response—teacher feedback. According to Farrar (1994) there are several reasons

why recitation patterns such as these are so common. First, teachers can diagnose students' comprehension of the content. Teachers can also control the topic being discussed, and the teacher can control student behavior more easily through question-answer format. Teacher attitudes towards the ability levels of the mainstreamed ELL students to answer questions will have important ramifications as to the types of interactions that ELL students have in the mainstream classroom. The social constructivist framework will help to understand and interpret the attitudes of the teachers who have created a "reality" based on the experience of having these students in their classrooms.

Constructivist theories are not without their critics, however. Bredo (2000) faults the ambiguous nature of constructivism, and argues that by its very nature, it is impossible to define constructivism. This is because any attempt to define constructivism "that does not take into account the variety in definitions [of constructivism] will itself be a created construct" (p. 128). Airasian and Walsh (1997) comment that "constructivism should not be used as an instructional approach; it is a theory about how learners come to know" (p. 444). Other critics argue that constructivism has become simply a catchword and that many people use the term without understanding its meaning (O'Neill, 1992). Despite these criticisms, however, constructivist ideas have spawned hundreds of books and articles and currently influence classroom teaching practices and teacher education techniques both in the United States and around the globe (Oxford, 1997). It remains a useful theoretical framework to use in understanding and explaining classroom phenomena.

Attitudes and Expectations for ELLs

Few areas have generated as much literature in the past 40 years as teacher expectations. Beginning with Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1968) landmark (and controversial) Pygmalion Study, the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy has been a major area of inquiry in the social sciences. In this study, teachers erroneously were led to believe that students would experience dramatic increases in IQ by the end of the school year. By the end of the school year, the teachers' expectations led to the students making significant gains in IQ. While reactions to the research conducted on teacher expectations have been varied, hundreds of studies have been conducted in a variety of settings that have confirmed the notion that the self-fulfilling prophecy is a real phenomenon (Brophy, 1983).

Rosenthal (1974) identified four broad ways specifically related to the social constructivist paradigm, in which teachers treat students differently based on their expectations of those students. First, teachers provide a more supportive emotional climate for "high expectancy students" (students for whom the teacher has high expectations). Teachers smile more, they are more receptive to them, and they offer more encouragement. Second, high expectancy students receive more favorable feedback from the teachers and this feedback is focused on the student's performance. Low expectation students consistently receive feedback that is related to behavior or cooperation while completing an academic task. Third, teachers often spend more time with and provide more attention to high expectation students. Fourth, teachers provide high expectation students with opportunities for output. High expectation students are called on more often, are given more hints and prompts when they seem unsure of answers, and are

given more-challenging class work and homework assignments. By researching teacher attitudes, and specifically, teacher attitudes towards mainstreaming ELL students in the content area classroom, I hope to gain a better understanding of some expectations teachers have in these settings.

Teachers' attitudes of ELL inclusion can have a significant impact on the educational experiences and opportunities of ELLs (Reeves, 2002). Harklau (2000) made the observation that "educators are more able than their students to impose their perspectives and viewpoints as commonsense" in the classroom (p. 40). If teachers with mainstreamed ELLs overtly or covertly believe that these students are unwilling or unable to accomplish academic tasks as well as their English-speaking counterparts, this can have a significant impact on the academic achievement of these students.

As stated earlier, much of the existing research focuses on teacher attitudes toward those students in ELL programs. However, several studies have been conducted that elucidate the types of attitudes and perceptions that mainstream content area teachers possess. In one such study conducted by Verplaetse (1998), the researcher found that English learners are often marginalized in these classrooms and their opportunities to interact minimized, even when the classroom teachers had the best of intentions for their ELL students. In a social studies classroom, this marginalization is the polar opposite of the goals of the instruction. According to the National Council for the Social Studies, the primary goal of social studies instruction is to "teach students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy"(National Council for the Social Studies, 2005, p. 1). If students are not allowed to exercise their "voice" in the classroom, and are precluded from

learning the content knowledge that allows them to fully understand and participate in a democratic society, then their social studies instruction has not met their needs.

Furthermore, Verplaetse found that the teachers in her study wanted to protect their ELL students from embarrassment, so they refrained from asking difficult questions and oftentimes completed the students' answers for them (Verplaetse, 1998).

Opportunities to interact with others are critical for ELL students because language interaction plays an important part in language development. Specifically, interaction gives ELL students an opportunity to create unique language output, and forces them to manipulate components of the new language (Swain, 1985). Teachers who do not allow ELL students the opportunity to produce language, in an effort to protect them from embarrassment, are engaged in what Hatch (1992) calls a "benevolent conspiracy" (p. 67). By attempting to create a comfortable environment without checking or facilitating development of academic content knowledge, teachers effectively block access to content knowledge acquisition.

This strengthens the case that the attitudes that teachers had about the abilities of their mainstreamed ELL students had a significant impact on teacher behavior. It should also be noted that all three teachers in Verplaetse's study believed they were acting in their mainstreamed students' best interests when they behaved this way. Well-intended but detrimental beliefs such as these (if they exist) are one of the primary justifications for this current study. Recalling my interactions with ELL students in my classroom, I was lucky enough to speak conversational Spanish, and would often repeat questions in Spanish that I had asked in English. That I was not helping my students learn English never occurred to me, until a colleague pointed out, "By not requiring her to answer in

English, you're not helping her. Why would she learn the term in English if she knows you'll repeat it in Spanish?" It seems I was a part of the "benevolent conspiracy."

In another study of teacher perceptions, Clair (1995) conducted interviews of three teachers with mainstreamed ELL students in their content area classrooms. She found that all three teachers felt unprepared to teach their ELL students and furthermore that they believed that the professional development made available to them by their school districts was largely inappropriate. They were, as Clair puts it, "learning to educate these students on the job" (Clair, p. 194). Another problematic aspect of Clair's findings were the beliefs by her participants that the simple solution for educating ELL students could be found in "goody bags" and bilingual textbooks for vocabulary words (p. 191). These data point to a common fallacious notion that fails to recognize the complexities of the social and academic integration of ELL students in mainstream classroom settings. These data mirror the findings of other studies (Harklau, 1994; Verplaetse, 1998) that teachers feel varying degrees of unpreparedness when teaching ELL students in subject area classrooms. If teachers who have these ELL students in their classrooms feel under-prepared to teach them effectively, this could have a significant effect on their attitudes and behavior towards these students.

Youngs (1999) distributed a 13-item survey to middle school teachers that had mainstream ELL students in their subject area classrooms. This instrument was created to measure teachers' attitudes towards mainstreaming as either positive or negative. The results of her study were that overall, teachers' attitudes were found to be neutral to slightly positive towards mainstreaming practices. However, one teacher in the study remarked "He [the ELL student] shouldn't even be in my class at this point" (Youngs,

1999, p. 84). This teacher believed that placing this ELL in his mainstream class created too much of a demand on his time, when there were dozens of other students in his classroom who spoke English. In later research, Youngs and Youngs (2001) linked teachers' attitudes towards ELL inclusion with various predictor variables. This study found that the variables of ELL training, personal experience with other cultures, contact with ELL students, and gender were significantly correlated to positive attitudes towards ELL inclusion in classrooms.

In a paper presented to the National Council of Teachers of English, Layzer (2000) reported the findings of a qualitative study she conducted by interviewing several content area teachers with ELL students mainstreamed in their classrooms. She consistently found that teachers perceived that ELL students were incapable of doing the same quality work as their native-speaking classmates. This belief led the teachers to lower their expectations for the students while completing academic tasks. Anyon (1980) and Oakes (1985) have made it clear that this type of "low expectation" environment is one of the ways schools reproduce social inequalities. Collier and Thomas (1999) argue that instead of adjusting expectations downward for ELL students, teachers need to demand more of these students who have to learn roughly 50% more than their English-speaking classmates just to be at grade level.

Schmidt (2000) conducted a study on middle school teachers with ELL students mainstreamed in their content area classrooms and he discovered an erroneous belief by one teacher that the ELL students in his classroom were only pretending that they didn't understand English. This belief was a byproduct of the assumption that ELL students' native language is a crutch that they use to receive "special breaks" that aren't available

to their English-speaking counterparts (Schmidt, 2000, p. 125). Other teachers in this study felt that ELL students should be taught in a self-contained classroom with other non-English speaking students until their English improved and allowed them to be transferred into regular classes. Attitudes such as these, if they exist, can have negative impacts on the social environment that the teacher constructs with the student.

Teacher Expectations and Significance of Teachers' Attitudes

This review of literature has discussed a broad spectrum of teacher attitudes towards ELL students, to this point. What are the manifestations of these teacher attitudes in high school settings? According to Adelman (1999), the single biggest predictor of college success is the quality and intensity of students' high school curriculum and instruction. Attitudes towards the perceived ability levels of ELL students should have a direct effect on the quality of instruction in the mainstreamed classroom. Furthermore, High school teachers often have the power to determine in which academic classes students are placed (Reeves, 2002). One such way this occurs is by tracking. Tracking is placing students in groups based on academic ability within the whole school or for part of the school day (Cazden & Beck, 2001). Ordinarily there are two tracks: high achievement, or academic tracks, and low achievement, or vocational tracts. According to Harklau (1999) "Teachers who perceive the cognitive ability of their ELL students to be low based on analyses that are English-language dependent oftentimes recommend lower-track placement and ELL students have been found to be over-represented in the vocational tract" (p. 45). Harklau (1994) also noted that students who are placed in vocational tracts are oftentimes unable to move to academic tracts because of the rigidity

of these systems.

Traditionally, schools have used the vocational track to prepare non-college bound students for the job market, while the academic track prepared other students for post-secondary studies (Donaldson, 2003). Low track courses often are taught by less experienced teachers, and may contain poor quality instruction (Slavin, 1993). If the teachers in these low tracks think that the students cannot learn, or do not want to learn, they may reduce their teaching efforts (Evertson, 1982)—which is one of the behaviors that leads to self-fulfilling prophecies regarding low achievement. The result of this placement is that ELL students lack both the required courses and the required educational components to effectively enter college and to succeed in college classes. If ELL students are denied access to advanced placement academic core classes, the results could be that many of them will be only prepared to occupy positions in lower -paying service industry jobs.

It should be noted that ELL students do not exist as a homogenous group. Dropout rates and achievement rates vary by ethnic group. In the county in which the study took place for the 2000-2001 school year, 86% of Asian students graduated high school in four years while only 51% of Hispanic students graduated during the same time period (Swanson, 2004). While not all of the discrepancy can be traced to the inability to speak English, the differences between groups is significant and appears consistently across states (Swanson, 2004). One probable factor is the impact of socioeconomic status (SES) on educational attainment. Krashen and Brown (2005) found that high SES English language learners outperform low-SES fluent English speakers on academic tasks. The results indicate that SES can offset the effects of language proficiency on

standardized tests.

Another probably factor that influences student-achievement, and a major portion of the rationale for this study is the effect of teachers on the English learners' experience while at school. Teachers may not recognize the power they hold over students in classrooms, but their power may be keenly felt by their students (Delpit, 1995). It seems worth the effort to attempt to understand the attitudes that social studies teachers have towards mainstreamed ELL students in their content area classrooms in an attempt to see what role (if any) they play in these students' achievement.

Summary

Scant literature exists on the attitudes and perceptions of secondary school teachers who have ELL students mainstreamed into their content area classrooms. No study appears to exist that focuses solely on the attitudes of high school social studies teachers who have ELL students mainstreamed in their classrooms. Because so many ELL students find themselves in these situations, and because teachers can have such a significant impact on their learning experiences, it seems noteworthy to study these teachers' attitudes. This chapter presented a review of literature that focused on the increasing numbers of mainstreamed students, as well as the attitudes of teachers that have been reported in other studies. Finally, this review discussed the effects that teachers' attitudes and perceptions may have on the ELL students in their classrooms. The next chapter will outline the research methods that were utilized in this study.

Chapter Three

Methods and Procedures

Introduction

This chapter will describe the methods of data collection and procedures that I used in this study. Because this study uses the instruments implemented by Reeves (2002), it used similar methods where appropriate. The research questions that guided this inquiry were as follows:

- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards ELL students using their native language to learn in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards modifying coursework for ELLs in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the amount of time required to teach ELLs in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards training and support they receive to teach ELLs in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the effect on the education environment when ELLs are mainstreamed in their social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes in general, towards mainstreaming ELLs their social studies classrooms?

Participants of this study were all high school (Grades 9-12) social studies teachers in the district of study who at the time of the study had English language learning students

mainstreamed in their social studies classrooms. At the time of the study there were 344 social studies teachers working in the district, and approximately 70% (n =240) have been identified as having ELL students mainstreamed into their classrooms (S. Jones, Personal communication, December 3, 2005). Teachers were only asked to complete the survey if they currently had ELL students mainstreamed into their high school social studies classes. I chose to do this because it is possible that some teachers may have had ELL students mainstreamed in classrooms more than fifteen years ago, before the Florida Consent Decree was enacted and therefore the training required for content area teachers was much different. Prior to distributing surveys or contacting participants for survey purposes, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was gained as well as approval from the social studies supervisor and the director of research and measurement in the school district in which the study took place.

For the qualitative portion of this study, the researcher chose eight high school social studies teachers from the survey respondents and conducted interviews with these teachers. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, a mixed method model was used. The specific model used was a “sequential exploratory model,” in which quantitative survey data were analyzed first (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 28) and interview data were analyzed last. From the group of respondents to the survey (n = 123), eight teachers were chosen who were asked to allow the researcher to conduct interviews with them regarding their attitudes toward teaching ELLs in their social studies classrooms. The eight teachers were chosen based on their willingness to be interviewed and no two interview participants were chosen from the same school. Initially, I had planned to interview four social studies teachers with three or less ELL students and four who had

more than four ELL students in their classroom. However, since there was no way for me to know how many ELL students each respective teacher had in his/her classroom, I interviewed the first eight teachers who would agree to the interview. It should be noted that all eight interview participants were from different schools and represented a broad range of teaching experience (from one-half year to 30 plus years).

Qualitative Instrument

For the quantitative inquiry that took place during this study, the same interview guide (with the addition of three questions) was used that Reeves (2002) relied upon when conducting her interviews. This type of interview is considered "structured" because the researcher asked specific questions that were predetermined before the interview took place (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The first series of questions on the interview guide gathered demographic data from the participant. These questions asked for information such as years of experience, number of ELL students currently in the respective social studies classroom, and nature of training for working with ELL students. The second and third questions are similar to the Section C items on the survey instrument and were used to explore the attitudes of the social studies teachers towards ELL inclusion. The fourth question asked the participants what types of training he or she had to teach ELL students in the classroom. Finally, the last questions asked the participants to describe successful techniques and strategies used with ELL students in the mainstreamed classroom. The content-related validity of the instrument was assessed after the interviews were conducted by analyzing the types of data that were collected. Since Reeves (2002) successfully used the same interview schedule to receive relevant

data to answer her interview questions, I hoped that the same interview questions (related specifically to social studies classes) would suffice. The data gathered by the survey instrument were used to describe the attitudes of the high school social studies teachers with ELL students mainstreamed in their content-area classrooms.

Qualitative Procedure

The qualitative procedures that were utilized for this study involved the researcher conducting interviews with eight teachers from eight different schools. The only criteria I considered was whether or not the teachers had ELL students at the time of the study and whether or not they would agree to be interviewed. Each of the eight teachers who were selected were interviewed once and then I emailed the transcribed responses to the teachers so they could add or delete any comments. The purpose of the email was to allow the respondents to clarify any of their responses or to add to the responses, if the participant felt it is was necessary. With the exception of one participant, all participants had no changes in the initial transcription of the interview. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Each interview was conducted by me and each interview was audio-taped to ensure accuracy of data collection. One interview was not audio-taped, as my recording device malfunctioned. For that particular interview, I took field notes and immediately transcribed the notes upon returning home. All participants felt comfortable allowing me to record the interviews. After the interviews were transcribed, I shared selected components of the data with certain committee members to get their thoughts on the emerging themes. There were no codes pre-assigned to the data before collection, rather they were created as the data were analyzed.

Qualitative Analysis

After I conducted interviews, the audio-taped transcripts were transcribed into a word processing document. The transcripts of the interviews were imported into the qualitative software program NUD*IST (Richards, 2002) to help the researcher create codes for the data. Changing qualitative data into numeric data is a term Tashakkori and Teddlie call *quantitizing* data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 9). The coding of data took place as the researcher entered the data into the qualitative software and I allowed for more codes to be created as the data required it. The codes corresponded with the themes that were identified by the research of Verplaetse (1998), Youngs (1999), and Youngs and Youngs (2001) and were subsequently used to create the survey and interview instruments.

I analyzed the interview data for patterns in attitudes, and then I compared this data to the information collected on the surveys. Also, I examined the interview responses to identify any emerging themes that resulted from the unique experience of teaching ELLs who are mainstreamed in social studies classrooms. Comparing survey data with interview data was a method of triangulating the data. Triangulation refers to “using multiple sources of evidence...to support a conclusion” (Eisner, 1991, p. 26). Both the quantitative and qualitative data were examined to answer the question, “What are high school social studies teachers’ attitudes of ELL inclusion in their classrooms?” Neither design (qualitative nor quantitative) was given preference, rather, the researcher used the qualitative data to help further explain the data gathered by the quantitative survey instrument. The researcher used a sequential mixed analysis to explore the data collected. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003, p. 10) use the term “qualitative follow-up

interaction analysis” to describe similar studies as this one. It was hoped that the survey and interview data could be used to elucidate the themes that the previous research has discovered as well as offering new insights into how social studies teachers feel about the inclusion of ELL students in their social studies classrooms.

Quantitative Instrument

Because one of the primary goals of replicating a study is to see how data are alike or different across settings, I used the survey instrument created by Reeves (2002), with only minor alterations. The instrument was designed by Reeves (2002) using the major qualitative themes mentioned in the few earlier studies (Verplaetse, 1998; Youngs, 1999; Youngs & Youngs, 2001) that measured teachers' attitudes and perceptions of mainstreamed ELL students. The first theme explored two categories of language attitudes and perceptions: attitudes towards second language acquisition processes and the role each language should play in the classroom. An important component of this theme is to explore how teachers feel about allowing ELLs to use their native language in the mainstreamed classroom. The second theme explored attitudes and perceptions regarding modification of coursework for ELLs in the content area classroom. The third theme represented attitudes and perceptions towards the time required of social studies teachers with ELLs mainstreamed in their classrooms. The fourth theme explored the different types of training teachers received that enabled them to work effectively with ELLs and the perceptions of the adequacy of support the teachers received from the school administration and the ELL program. The fifth theme explored the changes in the environment as a result of the inclusion of ELLs in the social studies classroom. The last

theme rated the general level of enthusiasm by teachers for the policy of mainstreaming ELLs into content area classrooms.

The survey consisted of 38 items: 16 items represent a 5-point Likert-format, 11 items represent a rating scale format using a frequency table (e.g., “How often or How much do you do something?”), 4 items were open-ended, and 8 items were included that elicited demographic data on the participants (e.g., gender, age, number of years teaching ELL in inclusion settings, etc.) (Appendix B). The researcher gave all the department chairs the exact instructions to read when administering the survey for all the participants in the study. In Section A of the survey, the 5-point Likert-format scale containing 16 questions was utilized (see Appendix B). The participants were asked to choose which statement most accurately describes their attitudes and perceptions: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree, and they were also allowed to choose “no opinion” as a response. These items were used to by Reeves (2002) to answer the research questions that pertained to the attitudes of these teachers as well as the effect of having an ELL student in their classroom. These same items and scale were used in the current study to address the quantitative research question. No formal reliability test was run using the survey data collected. Score reliability refers to the how consistently the instrument (in this case, the survey) will accurately measure the phenomenon that is attempting to measure. A simple way to ensure reliability is to ask more than one question regarding the same topic to see if there is consistency in the types of answers collected using the instrument.

In Section B, using an 11-point rating scale, participants were asked to read a statement and then check the box next to the most appropriate frequency with which it

occurs: most of the time, some of the time, seldom, or never. Section C consisted of two open-ended items: a) Please list what you consider to be the greatest benefit of including ELL students in your high school social studies classroom, and b) Please list what you consider to be the greatest challenges of including ELL students in social studies classes. Finally, the survey included eight items that allowed me to describe the sample. Although Reeves (2002) developed the survey questions and conducted a pilot study to test construct-related validity, no score reliability was contained in the description of her instrument. To avoid ambiguity upon its administration, the survey operationally defined the term *ELL student*. I also asked the department chairs to read the survey to make sure they had no questions or concerns about its administration and I offered clarification if necessary. Upon completion of the surveys, the participants were asked to place them in a sealed envelope or to return the surveys to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelopes that I provided for all the teachers. In this way, I tried to ensure that the department chairperson did not have access to the respondents' answers to the survey, if he or she chose to look at it.

Quantitative Procedure

The quantitative procedures in this study were used for descriptive purposes. Descriptive statistics, rather than examining causation, simply attempt to use numeric data to describe variables. In this study, the high school social studies teachers' attitudes were the variables described. After receiving IRB approval, as well as the approval of the school district in which the study was conducted, the researcher met with the high school social studies supervisor for the school district. The surveys were distributed to the

department chairs of every social studies department in the school district at their “end of year” meeting. The department chairs were asked to distribute the surveys and collect them at weekly department meetings at their respective schools. A blank envelope was provided for each of the surveys and the teachers were asked to seal their envelopes so that the department chairs could not read the survey results. To standardize the data collection, all surveys contained the exact same wording and the exact same operational definitions of the problematic term mentioned earlier (i.e., *ELL student*). The teachers were be asked to complete their surveys and return them to their department chairs in a sealed envelope or directly to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope which I provided. After the surveys were collected by the department chairs of each school, they mailed them to my campus address.

Quantitative Analysis

The survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Univariate analyses were employed to determine frequency distributions, percentages, and measures of central tendency. Each response to the survey data was coded using a numeric value. In the first section, the coding was as follows: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, no opinion = 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5. For the second section of the survey, the following coding scheme was used: seldom or none = 1, some of the time = 2, and most or all of the time = 3. Each participant’s set of responses for these two sections was entered into the statistical program Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 2003) using the values described above, in order to conduct all statistical analyses.

Yes/no responses to items on the survey were coded as yes = 1 and no = 2.

Responses for gender were coded as male = 1 and female = 2. For the question that asked

the participants to rate their second language abilities, responses were coded as beginner =1, intermediate = 2, and advanced = 3. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for these questions. The final category that required coding was the description of training methods used to prepare the teachers for instruction. For this section, the following coding scheme was utilized: university coursework = 1, in-service training = 2, both university coursework and in-service training = 3.

The last three items of the survey allowed participants to write extended answers to the questions. All responses to these questions were transcribed to a word processing document. The responses were read several times and patterns in the participants' responses were examined. Any response that consistently appeared in the responses by the teachers were given a code by the researcher. Codes are labels "assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56).

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

The research questions which guided this inquiry are as follows:

- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards ELL students using their native language to learn in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards modifying coursework for ELL students in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the amount of time required to teach ELL students in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards training and support they receive to teach ELL students in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the effect on the education environment when ELL students are mainstreamed in their social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes in general, towards mainstreaming ELL students in their social studies classrooms?

To answer these questions, 344 questionnaires (one for each high school social studies teacher in the district) were distributed to every department chairperson in the county in which the study took place. Since I had no way of knowing which teachers at which schools had ELL students mainstreamed in their classroom at the time of the study,

each teacher in the school district was supplied with a survey. Within one week, surveys began being returned to me at the university. One department chairperson placed the completed surveys in my university mailbox, but a majority of the participants mailed the completed surveys back to me at the university's address using the self-addressed stamped envelopes I provided.

To gather qualitative data, in the fall of the 2006-2007 school year eight teachers who all taught at different schools and who agreed to be interviewed were asked questions regarding their attitudes towards the inclusion of mainstreaming ELL students in the high school social studies classroom. The interviews were conducted either at my office at the university or at the participants' respective schools. Interviews took between 30 to 60 minutes to conduct and were completed by November, 2006.

Return Rates

Only teachers who had ELL students enrolled in their social studies classes at the time of the study were asked to complete the surveys. Of the 344 surveys which were distributed, 123 (35.7%) were returned. The county supervisor estimated that approximately 70% (n=240) of the social studies teachers in the county had at least one ELL student mainstreamed in their classroom. Using these figures, the 123 surveys indicated that slightly more than 50% of the teachers who had ELL students mainstreamed in their classroom at the time of the study responded to the survey. Since the surveys were collected anonymously, it is impossible to know if any systematic bias occurred in the distribution at the respective schools. For example, although all the department chairs took the surveys back to their schools, I do not know definitively

whether they did or did not distribute them to the teachers in their respective departments. Also, since demographic data was not available for me regarding all high school social studies teachers, it is not possible to know whether or not my sample of 123 participants differed significantly based on ethnicity, training, years of teaching experience, or second language proficiency.

Demographics of Survey Participants

Of the 123 respondents, 47.2% (n=58) reported their gender as male. Another 42.3% (n=52) reported their gender as female. Thirteen respondents did not indicate their gender on the questionnaire. Data reported by respondents in regards to their ethnicity are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Ethnicity of Survey Participants

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of total</u>
White	87	70.7%
Hispanic	6	4.9%
African-American	10	8.1%
Other	6	4.9%
Missing	14	11.4%

When queried about their native language, 88.6% (n=109) of the participants indicated that English was their native language and only 2.4% (n=3) reported that

English was not their native language. Sixty-one respondents (49.6%) indicated that they spoke a language other than English but only 21 of these respondents indicated that they spoke the second language at either the "intermediate" or "advanced" level. Due to the large number of Spanish-speaking students in the county in which the study took place, it may be that many people who indicated that they do speak another language probably speak conversational Spanish that they've learned through interactions with students or in their personal lives.

Years of experience by participants ranged from one year to forty-one years. The mode of the data was four years of teaching experience, as 11.4% (n=14) of the participants listed this as the number of years they had been teaching. This number was more than twice as high as any other number of years reported for experience. A vast majority of respondents (82.9%, n=102) indicated that they had received training in teaching ELL students, while only 6.5% (n=8) indicated that they had no training whatsoever in teaching ELL students. Of the survey participants, 59.3% (n=73) reported having received inservice training from the school district and another 20.3% (n=25) reported having received training to teach ELL students in college courses. Twenty-six participants (21.1%) did not indicate the type of training which they had received.

Demographics of Interview Participants

There were eight participants who agreed to be interviewed. The original study design called for me to identify four teachers whose classrooms contained one to three ELL students and four teachers whose classrooms contained four or more ELL students. However, because specific information as to the number of ELL students in each

classroom was unavailable to me, I instead interviewed the first eight teachers who agreed to participate in the study. It should be noted that all teachers were from different schools within the district.

Five of the interviewees were male, and their experience ranged from two and a half years of teaching to 37 years of teaching experience. The three female teachers' experience ranged from seventeen weeks to nineteen years. In order to conceal the identity of the eight interview participants, pseudonyms were created for identification. Below are demographic data for each of the participants:

Stacy is a department chair at her high school. She taught social studies (in English) for several years at a school in Europe. At the time of the study she had approximately fifteen ELL students mainstreamed in her social studies classroom. Overall, less than ten percent of the students at her school are classified as "Limited English Proficient." She teaches in a racially diverse school and her ELL students spoke three different languages at the time of the study. When asked what her goal was for her social studies students she said, "To equip them so they are prepared to actively participate in becoming a citizen."

Stephanie has been teaching at an inner-city magnet high school for five years. Her school is ethnically diverse and less than five percent of the school population is listed as "Limited English Proficient." At the time of the study, she had six ELL students in her social studies classroom. She indicated that she has "many friends from many different countries" and that she's experienced "many language learners from many cultures." Her goal is to "connect teaching to the real world and to experiences outside the classroom," because in her opinion, "students can't learn until you've done that."

Rachel is a first year teacher teaching at a school in an urban setting. She was born in the

Caribbean, but does not speak any other languages besides English. Less than five percent of her school is listed as "Limited English Proficient" and at the time of the interview she had six ELL students mainstreamed in her social studies classroom.

According to her, the major goal of her instruction is to "make students more responsible and better citizens."

Ralph is in his third year teaching at a school that would be characterized as being in a "rural" setting in which more than half of the students are classified as "white." At his school, "Limited English Proficient" students make up approximately five percent of the total population. At the time of the interview, he indicated that he had approximately 16 ELL students in his mainstream social studies classroom. He grew up in a very homogeneous town in the Midwest and had very little experience with English Language Learners until he moved to Florida. His main goal is "to get students to make good decisions (in regards to economics) so they can go out into the real world and be successful."

Peter was in his fifth year of teaching at the time of the interview at an urban magnet high school. He also grew up in a homogenous town in which there were virtually no English Language Learners. He has traveled extensively in Europe and to Africa as an adult. More than ten percent of the students at his high school are classified as "Limited English Proficient" and almost half of the students at his school are classified as "Hispanic." At the time of the study, he had approximately 40 ELL students enrolled in his social studies classes. When asked what his goal is for students when they leave his class, he responded, "I want students to be good, civically-minded students. I also want to stretch kids' minds, I want them to think outside the box."

Roger has been teaching social studies for more than 30 years. His school is one of the larger schools in the county in which the study took place. He has never traveled to a non-English speaking country. His school is in a "suburban" setting and less than five percent are classified as "Limited English Proficient" on the school's webpage. At the time of the interview, he responded that he had five ELL students in his social studies classes. When asked about his goals of instruction, he responded, "I want the students to go out in the world and understand their rights and protections."

Gary is a 30-year veteran of the U.S. military and has lived in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. He had eleven years of teaching experience and at the time of the study had thirteen ELL students mainstreamed in his classroom. Less than three percent of the students at his school are classified as "Limited English Proficient" and almost 70% of the students at his school are classified as "white." His goal is "to get students to connect yesterday to today." He believes that "if math and science are the building blocks of education, then social studies is the mortar that holds it all together."

Steve was in his fifth year at the time the interview data were collected. He spent almost a decade outside the United States teaching conversational English in Japan. His school is in an urban setting and almost one fourth of its students are classified as "Limited English Proficient." At the time of the study, he estimated that approximately one third of his students were English Language Learners. He stated that over the course of his teaching career, his goal moved from being content-centered to "I just want them to think."

Research Question One—Survey Data

The research questions will be addressed in the order in which they have been previously listed. Appendix F lists each research question with its corresponding survey questions. The first research question is "What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards ELL students using their native language to learn in their mainstream social studies classrooms?" Survey respondents were provided with a five-point Likert Scale and asked to respond to the prompt, "ELL students should avoid using their native language while in my classroom." Table 2 represents responses collected to this question.

Table 2

*Students should **avoid** using their native language while in my classroom*

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=14	n=44	n=17	n=35	n=12
(11.4%)	(35.8%)	(13.8%)	(28.5%)	(9.8%)

According to these data, 47.2% of the teachers who responded strongly disagreed or disagreed that students should avoid using their native language while in the mainstream social studies classroom. Slightly less (38.3%) of social studies teachers either agree or strongly agree that the student's native language should be avoided in the mainstream classroom.

Two questions from Section B of the questionnaire focused on the same topic but were asked from a different perspective. Specifically, these questions asked teachers how often they allowed ELL students to use their native language in the mainstream

classroom and how often the teacher provided materials for ELL students in their native language. The results are indicated in Table 3 below.

Table 3—Results for native language use

I allow an ELL student to use his or her native language in my class.

<u>Seldom or never</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Most or all of the time</u>	<u>No response</u>
n=27	n=54	n=36	n=6
(22%)	(43.9%)	(29.3%)	(4.9%)

I provide materials for ELL students in their native language.

<u>Seldom or never</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Most or all of the time</u>	<u>No response</u>
n=67	n=43	n=6	n=7
(54.5%)	(35%)	(4.9%)	(5.7%)

These data indicate that approximately three out of four teachers allow students to use their native language at some point in their classrooms. The survey instrument included a section which asked the respondents to list the greatest challenges of including ELL students in their mainstream classroom. Below are several anonymous responses that are pertinent to the research question:

- "It's difficult when I take away their crutch (others interpreting for them)."
- "It's hard keeping them on task when they're fraternizing in their own language (with other students)."
- "I've suspected some students of cheating in their own language and I don't know

what they're saying."

- "I find them wanting to speak English less and less if they have friends in the classroom who speak their language."
- "My biggest problem is lack of materials for me in their native language; lack of quizzes and worksheets, for example."

One teacher was an obvious proponent of allowing students to use their native language, especially in a cooperative capacity. This teacher wrote:

- "When I have no other student who speaks the student's native language it's difficult, but I've had great success with students helping other students."

Research Question One—Interview Data

Of the eight interview participants, four mentioned having positive experiences "pairing" less-proficient ELL students with other students who were more proficient in English. Stephanie said, "I think one of the best things that work for kids that are learning English is to pair them with somebody else who is very proficient at English who can be their like study-buddy or can be their assistant to help them do the work." Rachel was opposed to students using their native language in her social studies classroom on a regular basis. She commented:

If they're speaking their native language then they're not getting practice speaking English and of course, we're in a class where we speak English. They're speaking their native language at home so the only practice they get speaking English is at school which is barely any because they don't talk a lot in class.

Steve had this to say about the use of language "pairs" in his social studies classroom:

Pairing them together did not work for me. Um, this is a classic...if you ask a teacher 'are you using ESOL strategies?' They respond, 'Well, I pair them up,' that's all they do. Pairing did not work for me because what I found out was the kid was copying off his friend for the entire semester. And when I finally figured it out and broke them apart his grade just went 'phhfft.' He spent the whole semester just copying off his friend.

Gary also had a negative experience using a cooperative learning group which consisted of only ELL students. He commented:

I've had some trouble with group work. One time I put five or six Spanish speakers in a group and they weren't getting anything done, it was just social hour. So it took me about ten minutes to break up that group.

Research Question Two—Survey Data

The second research question which guided this study was, "What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards modifying coursework for ELL students in their mainstream social studies classrooms?" The survey instrument contained ten items specifically linked to this research question. The first seven questions employed the five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The data for these questions are listed in Table 4.

Table 4—Results for coursework modification

It is a good idea to simplify coursework for ELL students

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=9	n=56	n=12	n=40	n=6
(7.3%)	(45.5%)	(9.8%)	(32.5%)	(4.9%)

It is a good idea to assign less coursework to ELL students

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=17	n=85	n=4	n=13	n=3
(13.8%)	(69.1%)	(3.3%)	(10.6%)	(2.4%)

It is a good idea to allow ELL students more time to complete coursework

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=3	n=8	n=7	n=86	n=18
(2.4%)	(6.5%)	(5.7%)	(69.9%)	(14.6%)

Teachers should not give ELL students a failing grade if the student displays effort.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=15	n=51	n=12	n=41	n=3
(12.2%)	(41.5%)	(9.8%)	(33.3%)	(2.4%)

Teachers should not modify assignments for ELL students enrolled in social studies classrooms.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=15	n=67	n=6	n=23	n=10
(12.2%)	(54.5%)	(4.9%)	(18.7%)	(8.1%)

The modification of coursework for ELL students would be difficult to justify to English-speaking students.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=17	n=51	n=10	n=36	n=6
(13.8%)	(41.5%)	(8.1%)	(29.3%)	(4.9%)

Until students have learned to speak English, I shouldn't expect too much from them in my class.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=24	n=71	n=8	n=12	n=5
(19.5%)	(57.7%)	(6.5%)	(9.8%)	(4.1%)

These data indicate that overall, a slight majority of teachers (52.8%) believe that it is a good idea to simplify coursework for ELL students. A significant amount (26.8%), however, indicated that teachers should not modify assignments for ELL students. A larger percentage (66.7%) either agreed or strongly agreed that coursework should simply be modified for the ELL student. However, a larger majority (72.9%) of teachers

surveyed did not believe in assigning the ELL student less coursework. A vast majority (84.5%) of the teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that ELL students should be given more time to complete coursework in the mainstream classroom. Also, slightly more than half of the teachers (55.3%) disagreed that it would be difficult to justify course modifications for ELL students to the English-speaking students in the same classroom. In Section B of the survey instrument, respondents were asked to describe the practices which occur in their social studies classrooms using "seldom or never," "some of the time," or "most or all of the time." These data are indicated in Table 5 below:

Table 5—Reported behaviors for coursework modification

I allow ELL students more time to complete their coursework

<u>Seldom or never</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Most or all of the time</u>	<u>No response</u>
n=9	n=42	n=67	n=5
(7.3%)	(34.1%)	(54.5%)	(4.1%)

I give ELL students less coursework than other students

<u>Seldom or never</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Most or all of the time</u>	<u>No response</u>
n=89	n=24	n=5	n=0
(72.4%)	(19.5%)	(4.1%)	(0%)

Effort is more important than achievement when I grade ELL students.

<u>Seldom or never</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Most or all of the time</u>	<u>No response</u>
n=28	n=63	n=26	6
(22.8%)	(51.2%)	(21.1%)	(4.9%)

These data indicate that almost three-fourths (72.4%) of teachers who responded do not feel like ELL students can do less work than their English-speaking counterparts. These data also indicates that a vast majority (84.6%) of the respondents allow ELL students more time to complete assigned coursework in their social studies classroom.

The survey instrument provided a space which stated, "Please write any additional comments you have regarding the inclusion of ELL students in your classroom." Several responses from this portion of the survey pertained to the second research question. Some comments are listed below:

- "It's difficult to cover the content with students who don't speak English the same way as those who do."
- "Modifying lessons is difficult, especially those related to the FCAT."
- "My inability to modify the lesson or to explain it, makes it difficult for me to teach."
- "Having to modify the information all the time is difficult." This was one of the most common comments in regards to the greatest challenge in regards to teaching ELL students in the mainstream social studies classroom.
- "By modifying the lesson for ELL kids, the standards expected of the class and grade level are impossible (underline his) to stick to."
- "Current ESOL practices dumb down the curriculum. ELLs are not dumb, they just don't speak English."
- "(ELL) students are put in the classroom too soon and far too little is expected of them. I have had various students that started learning the language less than two

years who have learned more than 90% of my (other students). Don't baby them, sink or swim, they will learn how to swim."

- "The ELL students are given way too much preferential treatment. If I was in another country, I would be required to take their classes in their language. If I failed to make a passing score, I would have to retake the class."
- "If ELL students want to receive the same high school diploma as others, then they should have to do the same work. If they get less work, then they should get a diploma of attendance."

Research Question Two—Interview Data

The eight interview participants were asked to describe specific modifications they incorporated into their instruction when teaching English Language Learners. Four of the interviewees mentioned that they incorporated more visuals when ELL students are mainstreamed in their classroom. Stephanie said, "I think that's helpful, you know visuals, I use a lot of graphic organizers to organize information." Peter teaches Law Studies and uses an extensive set of PowerPoint images to convey his content. He stated:

I have to find pictures of somebody who has rage in their face. So I find these pictures and I piece them together and I go 'these are the elements of first degree murder' and I show the different pictures, and I go 'these are the elements of second degree murder' and I show them the pictures. Um, for instance, maybe a more clear picture. There's a picture of a house on fire, arson. There's a picture of a man punching another man with his fist, that's simple battery. Someone hitting someone with a stick, it's aggravated battery, because they're using a weapon. So I

find these pictures on the Internet and then I put them in PowerPoint and then I kind of run them through a visual test first. So I do the test a couple of times and I do the slides right before the test and they all get a 100 on it.

Both Stacy and Ralph allow ELL students to take work home with them, especially translating vocabulary. Stacy said:

So I'll say ahead of time, 'now we're going to work on this set of vocabulary for fifteen minutes, you do that at home.' Okay, so that they're not spending the whole time looking up the words and missing the interaction in class. So now I know that there are certain things that they'll do at home or to the side or after so that they don't miss out on a learning activity.

Gary was the only interviewee who made reference to non-ELL students' reactions to modifying coursework. He stated:

I try to include more visual activities such as map activities and I constantly use overheads. But I have to make sure I maintain a level playing field for all students. If regular students perceive that I'm doing too much for the ELL students, then they feel like, 'Why not me?' or 'Why can't I have that special treatment?' Some vocalize these concerns, but it's rare. However, I know that it's one of the native-speakers' main concerns.

Research Question Three—Survey Data

The third research question which guided this inquiry was "What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the amount of time required to teach ELL students in their mainstream social studies classrooms?" Question number six asked the participants to respond to the prompt "Social studies teachers do not have enough time to deal with the needs of ELL students." Table 6 below shows the data collected regarding this question.

Table 6—Results regarding time requirements

Social studies teachers do not have enough time to deal with the needs of ELL students.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=6	n=40	n=18	n=44	n=15
(4.9%)	(32.5%)	(14.6%)	(35.8%)	(12.2%)

These data indicate that slightly less than half of the teachers (48%) feel like they do not have adequate time to deal with the extra responsibilities that accompany ELL students in the mainstream classroom. In Section B of the survey instrument, participants were asked to respond to two prompts regarding the "Impact of Inclusion" regarding ELL students in the mainstream classroom. Table 7 indicates the data gathered for these two prompts.

Table 7—Reported attitudes toward time

The inclusion of ELL students in my classes increases my workload

<u>Seldom or never</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Most or all of the time</u>	<u>No response</u>
n=18	n=49	n=50	n=6
(14.6%)	(39.8%)	(40.7%)	(4.9%)

ELL students require more of my time than other students

<u>Seldom or never</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Most or all of the time</u>	<u>No response</u>
n=14	n=57	n=46	n=6
(11.4%)	(46.3%)	(37.4%)	(4.9%)

Both questions indicate that more than 80% of teachers believe that having ELL students in their social studies classrooms either takes up more time or increases their workload. This number is significantly higher than the percentage of teachers who indicated they did not feel they had *enough* time to effectively teach these students. Chapter five will discuss the implications of the discrepancy between these two sets of numbers. However, these data seem to indicate that there is a perception that ELL students, like any other "exceptional" population (e.g., students with learning disabilities or students who are "gifted") require more time than do "ordinary" students.

In the section of the survey which asked teachers what their greatest challenges were in regards to teaching ELL student in the mainstream classroom, "time" was listed by several participants. Below are comments from the survey participants that pertain

directly to this theme.

- "(The inclusion) increases teacher workload often with no discernable results/benefits to students—it interferes with class momentum."
- "Increased paperwork and lack of time."
- "Finding the time to modify material and lessons, especially to learn abstract concepts."
- "Taking time away from the 'flow' of class to explain further (to ELL students)."
- "They (ELL students) often require a lot of time and special assistance."
- "Not enough time. Making accommodations in lesson plans typically means more time grading."
- "It requires more time and work."
- "Extra work and lesson plans that we just don't have time for."
- "Harder to prepare bilingual lessons, there's just not enough time."

Research Question Three—Interview Data

Six of the eight interviewees specifically mentioned time as a major obstacle faced by social studies teachers with mainstream ELL students. It should be noted that even teachers with positive attitudes towards mainstreaming ELL students mentioned time constraints when asked. Ralph (who had indicated a negative attitude towards mainstreaming) said:

I assign them something to read out of the textbook and they just don't get it. It's very frustrating. I want to teach a certain way and you just can't. It takes time to

try to think of a way to get a student to understand something and it gets frustrating.

When asked about the biggest obstacle in teaching ELL students, Roger said, "Time...Time with the curriculum. It's not the nature of the students. Typically, they're of at least average intelligence but it's simply a time consideration." Stacy mentioned that time constraints cause her to present a less-challenging curriculum to the ELL students. She said:

The biggest challenge is time. And to include them at the same level is the biggest thing. You can always have them do assignments that are less-challenging, intellectually, that are easier. In order to modify the curriculum so they at least get the same intellectual delivery of the lesson, that's more time-consuming and requires individual help. And many of the students just need a lot more time which means you need to be a lot more flexible to accept things turned in later.

Rachel mentioned the difficulties of having ELL students and ESE students in the same classroom and how that affects her instruction. She said:

Because some of my other kids are ESE (i.e., students who are considered "exceptional" and may have any of a variety of learning challenges) and they're demanding attention from me, I can't give them the kind of time and attention that they need if I'm in a class with 35 other students you know, three are ESE, four are ESOL, while the rest...It's hard, I can't give them the kind of attention that I know they need.

Stephanie made reference to how large class sizes affect her instruction when ELL

students are present. She said:

I'd say one of the biggest challenges right now is just the class sizes. They're so big anyway. And many of the classes range between 30 and 40 students and so if you have a large percentage of English Language Learners in the class, it's hard to just take the time to just give them the accommodations they need and to you know, give them the additional help. Especially if it's a class where behavior is an issue. If you even stop your momentum for a moment, things might get out of control on the other side of the room.

Peter explained how the county-mandated exam at the end of the semester can make it difficult when ELL students are mainstreamed in his classroom. He said:

The speed of getting the curriculum across to the students. The social studies curriculum is so broad and sometimes you have to go into incredible depth with each item, and you've got a short time span to get it across to these students. When you've got students who really aren't great with the language you have to take your time and go slow. And that can trip you up when there's a county exam at the end and the county exam written by the county you have to cover these things, that's on the county tests, so um, there's just certain things where you just have to race through things.

Research Question Four—Survey Data

The fourth research question that guided this study was "What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards training and support they receive to teach ELL students in their mainstream social studies classrooms?" The survey instrument contained

five items that were directly related to this research question. The data from the first two questions from Section A of the survey are listed in Table 8.

Table 8—Attitudes towards training

I had adequate training in college courses to teach ELL students effectively.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=23	n=40	n=16	n=36	n=6
(18.7%)	(32.5%)	(13%)	(29.3%)	(4.9%)

My district offers training that would help me teach ELL students more effectively

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=10	n=24	n=18	n=58	n=11
(8.1%)	(19.5%)	(14.6%)	(47.2%)	(8.9%)

Slightly more than half of the respondents (51.2%) felt that they did not have adequate training in their college coursework to effectively teach ELL students.

However, slightly more than half of the teachers (51.5%) have been teaching eight years or more and the current college requirements for coursework in training ELL students was not implemented before the Fall of 2000 (Smith, 2007). It is possible that most or all of these teachers never received any training in college to teach ELL students, as the number of ELL students they encountered were drastically lower than the numbers encountered currently. A slight majority of teachers (56.1%) either agreed or strongly agreed that their school district does offer training that would help them teach ELL

students more effectively.

Section B of the survey instrument contained a section titled "Teacher Support" and asked the participants to respond to three questions regarding this research question. The first three asked for frequencies ranging from "seldom or never" to "most or all of the time." The data for these three questions is indicated in Table 9.

Table 9—Attitudes toward support received by teachers

I receive adequate support from my administration when ELL students are in my class.

<u>Seldom or never</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Most or all of the time</u>	<u>No response</u>
n=52	n=42	n=22	n=7
(42.3%)	(34.1%)	(17.9%)	(5.7%)

I receive adequate support from ELL staff when ELL students are enrolled in my class.

<u>Seldom or never</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Most or all of the time</u>	<u>No response</u>
n=40	n=46	n=30	n=7
(32.5%)	(37.4%)	(24.4%)	(5.7%)

I conference with the ELL teacher.

<u>Seldom or never</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Most or all of the time</u>	<u>No response</u>
n=43	n=50	n=23	n=7
(35%)	(40.7%)	(18.7%)	(5.7%)

These data indicate that more than three fourths (76.4%) of respondents felt that

their administration was not providing adequate support most or all of the time. Roughly one-third of the respondents (32.5%) also replied that they seldom or never received adequate support from the ELL staff. In regards to conferencing with the ELL teacher, 35% of the participants stated that they "seldom or never" had conferences. It is possible that some of these teachers did not need to conference with the ELL teachers, but it is also possible that some would have liked conferences but were unable to do so. The survey also included a question which asked, "How often do you meet with the ELL teacher?" Participants offered a wide variety of responses for this question. The most common response was "when needed" or "when necessary" (n=14). Many respondents listed specific numbers such as "one time per month" or "two times per semester."

The last question of the survey asked the participants to add any additional comments they had in regards to mainstreaming English Language Learners in the social studies classroom. Several chose the quality of their training as topics upon which to write. It should be noted that while several participants chose to criticize the poor quality of their teacher training to work with ELL students (especially the training supplied by the school district), no participant mentioned that this training was particularly effective. This seems to contradict the findings that more than half the teachers who responded believed that their school district did offer effective training in regards to teaching ELL students. The following are comments listed by the survey participants in regards to their training.

- "Training programs for ELL students are poorly funded and notoriously ineffective, especially the training supplied by the District."
- "No training for me is going to help them (ELL students) understand better. Our

current system is broken and it's failing these kids."

- "I had 60 hours of inservice training provided by the District. It didn't help."
- "Submersion isn't working. Training teachers inadequately is not a substitute for supplying ELL students with a comprehensible education."
- "The ESOL training is a waste of time and a joke. The county could do much better at this."

Research Question Four—Interview Data

Administrative Support

The interview participants supplied a wealth of data regarding the issues of support and training they received for teaching English language learners in the social studies classroom. The interviewees were asked the question, "What can your administration do to better support you when you have an ELL student in your classroom? Three of the interview participants felt that adequate support (or lack thereof) was purely of a financial nature. Rachel said, "They could give us more aides to help us out." Peter said, "It's a money thing...So I don't know how much more they can do because they only have so much money but there's bilingual aides that schools are assigned and I don't know how many we have." Roger offered the longest response to this question when he said:

I'm not sure what more my administration could do because, basically, everything is funding, that's my assumption. So instead of five aides, again you can do anything you want to improve the system okay, bring in ten bilingual aides. Again, the budget being the factor. So more ESOL teachers I think, if there

would be more available then they would be used more because many times I may request a teacher and so would the teacher across the hall, pretty soon you have fifteen teachers requesting me, the ESOL teacher to be in four places at once, and I can't. So if the, then I'm going to start saying, 'Well they're not going to help me anyway,' I stop requesting. So if it was known that there's availability of ESOL teachers for teachers in general, and a location, either in your classroom at a location in their department, I think it's more realistic and the teachers would use it. I'm very fortunate here, I don't think there's ever been an occasion when I've asked for assistance and I was told, 'No, you can't, not today.' It's been a very good experience for me and I may be in the minority on that. But I've not had any problem.

Stephanie lamented her class size when she responded, "They could give me smaller classes. Have ESOL people who are organized and structured and who communicate with the teacher on a regular basis would be a big help." Stacy was the only person to mention scheduling as a way for her administration to better support her. She said:

Yes, they need to pay attention to scheduling students appropriately. And what I mean by that is that a lot of times, limited English students will get scheduled in regular classes and they're not stupid, they should be in an honors class, just to give you an example. So appropriately scheduling, the administration is in charge of scheduling students and the teacher doesn't have control over that but I think if as a teacher, you identify students you could properly schedule them, the other thing is scheduling too many in one particular class is another problem. When you have ten in a class of, you know, thirty, that's a third of your class, and if they

happen to all speak the same language, that's great, you have the ESOL aide who speaks Spanish but if you have three who speak Portuguese, whatever, it becomes horrible. So they really have to pay attention to appropriately scheduling students. Ralph responded that he did not know what his administration could do to help him and Gary was the only person who stated that his administration could do nothing more to help because he was getting "a lot of help from my administration and ESOL support personnel" at his school.

ELL support

The interview participants were asked to respond to the prompt, "Describe the support you receive from the ELL teacher at your school." For most of the teachers, support constitutes bilingual aides assisting with tests or specific tasks that can be translated into the student's native language. A broad range of support was reported from the participants. The following are comments given in response to the prompt above. Larry reported, "Almost every time I've requested help I've gotten it. I do remember an occasion or two when I've requested an ESOL teacher but the teacher was not present at school that day. The teacher was out. But I've not had any real problems." Rachel also had positive comments in regards to the support she received. She stated, "(The support) is good. Every time I have a test, all I need to do is tell the ESOL teacher that I have a test scheduled on this day and I need you to take this student out and do their test with them." Stacy mentioned the fact that due to funding, support varies from year to year. She said:

Right now we have three aides. Two all the time, that circulate to all the classrooms, and one who does an 'in classroom' kind of testing and assistance. But two travel around the school and they're given a caseload of students and they'll

actually come and sit ten minutes in the classroom and they'll sit to make sure and I really appreciate that, but some years you get none.

Based on their experiences, Ralph and Steve have considerably less positive attitudes towards the support they receive. Ralph said:

I've seen the aide once or twice this year. She'll come around a sit in class for about five minutes and then she's off to another teacher's class. I asked to have her help me with giving tests, you know, and once no one was available and another time no one was on campus. So I've stopped asking.

Steve's reply was the most negative of the eight interview participants. He said:

Do you really want me to say? (Laughs) There's a woman who has been assigned to our school who is in charge of ESOL issues. I frankly don't know what she does. Um, I've never had an aide in my class, even when I taught regular students and 1/3 of them were learning English. Most of my experience with them is that they're busy doing paperwork to make sure that students are exited at the right time, and you know. All they do is paperwork, there's no instructional help at all. When I have to make phone calls to parents of ELL students I don't get any help either. Not from an ESOL teacher. Not from an aide. I have to have one of my students actually talk to the parents.

Teacher Training

Six of the interview participants took part in the 60-hour inservice training mandated under the Florida Consent Decree. Three of these participants cited its ineffective nature when asked about their attitudes towards teacher training. In regards to improvements that could be made to district-mandated training, Ralph stated:

No district training is going to help me learn the English language better. The students need to be separated from the English speaking students and get intensive language instruction until they're ready to join their classmates.

Stacy said:

I had a mandated District training of 60 hours, of which we watched videotapes and answered some questions. On the job, would be bulk of my training. If they want to really train teachers effectively? How about, they (preservice teachers) do observation hours in preparation to be a teacher. And I know in social studies anyway, they do microteaching. Let's do a microteach to an ESOL class. Let's modify your instruction to people who don't understand English. How would you teach about whatever topic?

Steve did not feel adequately trained after the 60 hours of inservice training also. He commented:

I would focus less on the cross-cultural awareness issues that they're really big on. They're really big on 'Don't pat the head of a Mexican kid' and 'Don't stare at Asian kids because they're not used to being stared at.' And we need more of hard, strategic linguistic techniques that we can use in our classroom. And then the training, literature shows, studies I've read say that 'one shot' workshops don't work. They need to continue the training over periods of time and then they need to follow up on that and see if they're actually doing it.

Based on his experience overseas, Peter had very specific recommendations for the school district to better train teachers. He stated:

There are programs that when American teachers want to teach English, in Japan,

there are language institutes that specialize in training you so you can teach English in Japan. Those language institutes are proven, they're successful, I don't know what they do, but there's obviously some methodology there that they're using. We should probably, instead of reinventing the wheel, grab their curriculum, or hire some of their instructors to teach ESOL. Because obviously they know what they're doing, they do a good job it's successful, they pay them thousands of dollars to do it. The State Department uses them, the CIA uses them. I don't know why we can't hire one of those language institutes.

Although she had been teaching for five years in the school district, Stephanie had the distinction of being the only interviewee who did not have any training to teach ELL students. She explained that because she was working on a post-graduate degree in multicultural issues, her college transcripts allowed her to be exempt from the district-mandated training. Her attitude, however, towards teacher training was not positive. She commented:

I think teachers are way over-trained (laughs). I don't think we need more training in much of anything. I think that it's very top-down, teachers know what they need and working together with people who can really help them with a plan that's really going to work is the way to go. I think that the training model is a model that needs to fall by the wayside.

Gary became a teacher through an alternate-certification program and mentioned that he would have liked to receive training in college before he entered the classroom and participated in the District training. Rachel had the distinction of being the only interview participant who had forgotten that she received training to teach ELL students because it

was in her sophomore year of college.

Research Question Five—Survey Data

The fifth research question which guided this study was "What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the effect on the educational environment when ELL students are mainstreamed in their social studies classrooms?" Two questions from Section A and one question from Section B of the survey addressed this research. Data from Section A are listed in Table 10.

Table 10—Effects of ELL inclusion

The inclusion of ELL students in my class creates a positive educational atmosphere.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=9	n=34	n=24	n=47	n=9
(7.3%)	(27.6%)	(19.5%)	(38.2%)	(7.3%)

The inclusion of ELL students in a social studies classroom benefits all students.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=12	n=40	n=17	n=41	n=13
(9.8%)	(32.5%)	(13.8%)	(33.3%)	(10.6%)

Less than half of the respondents (45.5%) either agreed or strongly agreed that including ELL students in the mainstream social studies classroom creates a positive educational atmosphere in the class. An unusually high percentage of respondents

(19.5%) reported not having an opinion on this question. When asked if the inclusion of ELL students benefits all students, the responses were almost even. The difference between those who did believe it benefited all (43.9%) and those who believed it did not benefit all (42.3%) translates to only two total participants.

Section B of the survey instrument contained one prompt which read "The inclusion of ELL students in my class slows the progress of the entire class." I have chosen to report the data in this section, rather than in the section regarding teachers' attitudes towards time necessary to teach ELL students because it is my belief that this data has more to do with educational environment than teacher attitudes towards time necessary to teach social studies content. Table 11 contains the responses to this prompt.

Table 11—Effect of ELL students on class progress

The inclusion of ELL students in my class slows the progress of the entire class.

<u>Seldom or never</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Most or all of the time</u>	<u>No response</u>
n=52	n=39	n=26	n=6
(42.3%)	(31.7%)	(21.1%)	(4.9%)

These data indicate that slightly more than half of the participants (52.8%) perceived that the inclusion of ELL students slowed the progress of the entire class to some degree.

The survey instrument included a place for teachers to explain what they perceived to be the greatest benefits of including ELL students in the mainstream social studies classrooms. Sixty participants mentioned "diversity" or some aspect of "cross-cultural awareness" as a positive effect of including ELL students in the social studies

classrooms. The following quotes are comments taken from the survey instrument.

- "ELL students bring another perspective to the class that GREATLY benefits my English-speaking students"
- "ELL students can be an invaluable teaching tool. Some have experienced things like poor labor conditions and immigration. They are living history."
- "ALL students benefit from the inclusion of these (ELL) kids in my class."

However, not all teachers who responded were in agreement. The following quotes are comments taken directly from the survey instrument.

- "They (ELL students) are bored in my class b/c they don't understand what is being taught. Invariably they are a disruption because they don't know what's going on and they start talking to their friends."
- "Including ELL students slows the progress of the entire class and English speaking students don't like the special treatment of ELLs."
- "There are NO [original caps] benefits to including these students. Oftentimes they'll talk to other ELL students who are trying to help and disrupt the whole class."
- "Including ELL students lowers the level of the classroom (instruction) and creates a tremendous amount of unnecessary work for teachers."

Research Question Five—Interview Data

Interview participants were asked how having an ELL student in their classroom can benefit the educational atmosphere in the classroom. Rachel stated that she did not

see any benefits from including ELL students in classrooms with English-speaking counterparts. Seven of the eight interview participants echoed the statements of the sixty survey participants by mentioning the positive effects of the diverse perspectives that ELL students brought with them into the social studies classroom.

Stacy and Gary mentioned a new theme that was not present in the literature review and one that I had not considered until the interviews were conducted. Stacy stated, "ELL students have forced me to reflect upon what I'm doing as a teacher, constantly my practice, you know I have to rethink how I'm presenting the material when I have a lot of them...it's definitely, good for me." Gary echoed these sentiments when he said, "It's challenging for me as a teacher so it keeps me on my toes."

Research Question Six—Survey Data

The final research question which guided this study was "What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes, in general, towards mainstreaming ELL students in their social studies classrooms?" The survey instrument contained two questions which were directly related to this research question. The survey also contained two questions that were intended to yield data regarding teachers' attitudes towards making English the official language of the U.S. and about the perceived time necessary for students to learn English and thus successfully assimilate into the American classroom. Table 12 contains the data regarding these four questions.

Table 12—General attitudes toward ELL inclusion

ELL students should not be included in social studies classrooms until they have attained a minimum level of English proficiency.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=4	n=20	n=3	n=58	n=36
(3.3%)	(16.3%)	(2.4%)	(47.2%)	(29.3%)

I would welcome the inclusion of ELL students in my social studies classroom.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=3	n=26	n=21	n=57	n=14
(2.4%)	(21.1%)	(17.1%)	(46.3%)	(11.4%)

ELL students should be able to acquire English within two years of enrolling in school.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=1	n=15	n=32	n=51	n=23
(.8%)	(12.2%)	(26%)	(41.5%)	(18.7%)

I would support legislation making English the official language of the U.S.

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
n=9	n=16	n=14	n=43	n=39
(7.3%)	(13%)	(11.4%)	(35%)	(31.7%)

More than half (57.7%) of the respondents who indicated that they had an opinion

stated they would welcome the inclusion of ELL students in their mainstream social studies classroom. This number is lower than the percentage of teachers in Reeves' study (72.4%) who responded to the same question. A larger than normal percentage (17.1%; n=21) of teachers indicated that they did not have an opinion on this topic. Also, while a slight majority indicated that they would welcome the inclusion of ELL students, more than three fourths (76.5%) of teachers indicated that ELL students should have a minimum level of English proficiency before they are included in social studies classrooms. These data are very similar to Reeves' findings, in that 74.9% of the participants in her study felt the same way. These data seem to indicate that social studies teachers want the ELL students in their classroom, but only after they have learned enough English to function on par with their English-speaking peers.

In an effort to determine how well teachers in the study understand the time necessary for an ELL student to learn English, survey respondents were asked whether or not they believed that ELL students should be able to acquire English within two years of entering U.S. schools. More than half of the respondents (60.2%) responded that they did think ELL students should be able to acquire English within two years. The significance of this number will be discussed in chapter five. In regards to supporting legislation making English the official language of the U.S., 66.7% of the participants stated that they would support such legislation.

After reviewing teacher comments from the survey instrument, it became apparent that many felt very strongly for or against the mainstreaming practices as they are implemented currently. Below are comments taken directly from the survey instrument.

Negative comments:

- "Instead of being thrown to the wolves, ELL students should be placed in a 15-1 ratio class where they can learn English."
- "Separating kids into separate class may hurt their feelings, but it hurts their academic progress more when they can't understand the teacher."
- "It is a disservice to all students to group students in classes with widely divergent language abilities—and the amount of groupthink within education academia (which thinks otherwise) remains troubling to me."
- "It is my belief that students who speak little or no English do not benefit from sitting in a classroom and not comprehending anything the teacher says."
- "I do not want it (mainstreaming). Their(sic) should be a separate social studies class for these students."
- "Current ELL practices prolong the difficulties and create resentments, frustrations, and added workloads that result in more teachers leaving."

Positive comments:

- "It's challenging, but it feels good when ELL students are able to learn new things and express understanding of lessons."
- "It broadens my horizon! I love to see the smiles on their faces when they realize they can do it."
- "Some of my most pleasant teaching experiences have occurred with ELL students. Many of my ELL students are my best students."
- "I thoroughly enjoy their positive attitude towards work, the dedication and

interest, and their appreciation of the help I give."

Research Question Six—Interview Data

The eight interview participants were asked to characterize their attitudes towards current mainstreaming practices using the terms "Positive," or "Neutral," or "Negative." Rachel indicated that her attitude was "neutral, neither positive nor negative." Stephanie stated, "I have no negative feelings towards mainstreaming these (ELL) students. It's just a part of life. It's the changing demographics of the area, it's a reality. It's what's happening."

Four of the participants indicated that their attitude towards current mainstreaming practices was positive. Peter stated:

Absolutely it's positive, I think tracking hurts kids. And if you put all these ELL kids in the same basket, they're going to struggle together. I think the help they get from a heterogeneous setting is invaluable.

Two of the participants stated emphatically that their attitude towards including ELL students in the mainstream classroom was negative. Steve said, "Very negative because of the things I've told you already. It's unfair to them and it's unfair to me." Ralph echoed these sentiments when he stated, "Definitely, the way it is now, negative. It's really not fair to the ELL kids and it's definitely not fair to teachers."

In summary, the majority of teachers' responses—both on the written survey instrument and via the interviews—indicate that social studies teachers face a myriad of issues when including ELL students in the mainstream classroom. Obviously, the inability to speak English was the main concern of teachers in regards to these students.

However, time, training, and support were also important considerations. While a significant amount of teachers seem to appreciate the cultural diversity these ELL students bring with them, many of the teachers would like to see current mainstreaming practices changed. Chapter five will contain my analysis, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter summarizes the purpose of the study, as well as the methods and procedures used. Conclusions and interpretations based on the data will be discussed. Finally, my recommendations for future research and future policy will be addressed.

Purpose of the Study

This research study investigated the attitudes of high school social studies teachers who have English language learners mainstreamed in their classrooms. Social Constructivism was employed as the theoretical framework to interpret teacher attitudes with the assumption that a majority of teacher attitudes were formed by interaction with English language learners in the mainstream social studies classroom. While other researchers (Fu, 1995; Harklau, 1994; Olsen, 1996; Schmidt, 2000; Reeves, 2002) have examined teacher attitudes towards including ELL students in the mainstream classroom, no other study to date has focused solely on high school social studies teachers' attitudes. Since social studies teachers share the important goal of training students to be effective citizens, this study has attempted to address the dearth of knowledge regarding the ramifications of mainstreaming ELL students in this setting.

Research Questions

The research questions which guided this inquiry were as follows:

- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards ELL students using their native language to learn in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards modifying coursework for ELL students in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the amount of time required to teach ELL students in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards training and support they receive to teach ELL students in their mainstream social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the effect on the education environment when ELL students are mainstreamed in their social studies classrooms?
- What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes in general, towards mainstreaming ELL students in their social studies classrooms?

Methods and Procedures

A mixed methods procedure was employed to answer the six research questions.

All high school social studies supervisors in the county were given questionnaires to distribute to all social studies teachers in the district and only those who had ELL students mainstreamed in their classrooms at the time of the study were asked to respond. I received 123 surveys which contained demographic data, answers to specific questions

using a five-point Likert scale format, and a three-point Likert scale as well as open-ended questions which allowed teachers to write comments pertaining to their attitudes towards the inclusion of ELL students in the mainstream classrooms. Also, eight teachers were interviewed to further uncover attitudes towards including ELL students in their social studies classrooms. My discussion of the findings will be listed below in the same order in which the research questions have been presented.

Discussion of Findings: Research Question One

Attitudes Towards Use of Students' Native Language

Almost three-fourths of the teachers who responded to the survey reported allowing students to use their native language at some point in the mainstream classroom. According to Lessow-Hurley (2003), allowing students to use their native language provides benefits to ELL students. Among these benefits are that concepts learned in the native language transfer to English, also that native language development can help students develop their overall language and literacy skills, and finally, supporting native language bolsters students' self-esteem. Kenner (2007) also conducted research in this area and found that allowing elementary-aged students to complete schoolwork in both their native language and English deepened their understanding of the concepts and also raised scores on national curriculum tests.

However, it seems that in this study, a majority of the "sanctioned" native language use is done by pairing students who are not proficient in English with other students who are more fluent (which have yielded varying degrees of success based on the data collected from respondents). While a majority of teachers reported allowing ELL

students to use their native language in the mainstream classroom, this was not a universally accepted practice. One interview participant (Rachel) did not allow native language use in her classroom and remarked that if students were allowed to use their native language in the classroom, they were losing one of the few opportunities to speak English over the course of the day.

It seems that many of the survey and interview participants have tried pairing students who are not proficient in English with other students who are more fluent (which have yielded varying degrees of success based on the data collected from respondents). An important question remains, however. If teachers spend 60 hours attending District-mandated training, or complete college coursework learning specifically how to teach ELL students, why do so many of them feel the need to allow other students to help them teach the content? Are there important ramifications for allowing other students to become *de facto* teacher aides? Another important factor is that only 2.4% of teachers who responded to the survey reported that English was not their native language and only 17.1% reported speaking another language at more than a "beginner's level." The data indicate that a majority of the participants are most likely unfamiliar with the language learning process which their ELL students were undergoing in their content-area classrooms. It is unrealistic to expect social studies teachers to be bilingual as a condition of employment, but how does the school district foster an understanding of the language acquisition process? One possible way is to focus components of the teacher-training process on this area. Steve commented that the portion of his training which included cultural and language acquisition awareness was largely unhelpful and he would have liked to see more specific pedagogic strategies that helped him teach content to ELL

students.

Lastly, teacher attitudes that English proficiency was the most important determining factor for student success were evident among many of the participants. Many teachers cited the "lack of understanding" or the "language barrier" as the single greatest challenge that faced them when teaching ELL students. However, there was no clear consensus based on the data as to how teachers thought this language barrier could be resolved. Some advocated placing the ELL students in ESOL classes until they reach a certain level of language proficiency and others believe that the "full immersion" program is the most effective. This is clearly indicated by the survey participant who stated, "(ELL) students are put in the classroom too soon and far too little is expected of them. Don't baby them, sink or swim, they will learn how to swim." However, the research of Krashen (1985) and others have challenged this notion and maintain that not only do students need to be in a language-rich environment, but that teachers need to ensure that the input is comprehensible to the ELL student.

Discussion of Findings: Research Question Two

Attitudes Toward Modifying Coursework for ELL students

As stated in chapter four, more than 70% of teachers who responded believed that ELL students should not receive less coursework than their English-speaking classmates. This seems to indicate a belief by social studies teachers that ELL students are capable of doing the same amount of work as their English-speaking classmates. Conversely, 84.5% of teachers also believed that ELL students should be given more time to complete coursework. This indicates that a majority of teachers may realize that extra effort was

necessary for ELL students to complete the same coursework and therefore could justify allowing more time to complete the assignments. It could be reasonably concluded that teachers, through their observations of ELL students, noticed the increase in effort (e.g., using translation dictionaries) it requires to do tasks that English-speaking students can complete almost without effort.

Along this same line of inquiry, 55.3% of respondents stated that it would not be difficult to justify course modifications to English-speaking members of their social studies classrooms. Reeves (2002) found that 60% of the teachers in her study felt the same way. However, Gary stated that "maintaining a level playing field" was important in his mainstream classroom. He stated:

If regular students perceive that I'm doing too much for the ELL students, then they feel like, 'Why not me?' or 'Why can't I have that special treatment?' Some vocalize these concerns, but it's rare. However, I know that it's one of the native-speakers' main concerns.

This is a possible limitation of utilizing the social constructivist paradigm in that, if the students, in a majority of cases, do not voice their concerns about equity in the classroom, the teacher may be unaware of this undercurrent in the classroom. Furthermore, if this negative undercurrent by English-speaking students exists, it may have an impact on overall attitudes (both by teachers and students) towards mainstream inclusion. However, without direct observation of the mainstream social studies classroom, it may be impossible for a researcher to accurately gather or assess this data.

In regards to assigning failing grades to ELL students, the data collected in my study closely replicated the data collected by Reeves (2002). Her study found that 60% of

teachers surveyed would assign a failing grade to an ELL student even if he/she was displaying effort to master content. The data collected in this study indicates that 53.7% feel the same way. An important discovery was that 26.8% of teachers who responded stated that social studies teachers should not modify coursework in any way for ELL students. It is significant that one in four teachers do not think that ELL students should receive curricular modifications, since the express purpose of the Florida Consent Decree is to ensure that students who do not speak English are able to receive meaningful, comprehensible instruction. What is not clear is whether teachers feel this way because they are unwilling to modify coursework or if their training has made them unable to do so.

These findings could be interpreted as a contradiction to earlier research findings by Hatch (1992) who coined the phrase "benevolent conspiracy" to explain the phenomenon of teachers reducing expectations for ELL students. In an effort to see what percentage of the social studies teachers had lowered expectations for ELL students, I added the survey question which stated "Until they have acquired English, I should not expect too much from ELL students." More than three-fourths (77.2%) of the teachers who responded disagreed with this statement. This seems to indicate a general belief that expectations should not be lowered significantly for ELL students. In my interviews with participants who had positive attitudes towards mainstream inclusion, several specific strategies were mentioned that the teachers used (including using visuals and creating more context for the information being learned) which leads me to believe that the amount of curricular modification varies greatly among teachers and is based on their ability to "connect" the material to the students' frame of reference and whether or not

they have had perceived success at doing so.

However, a comment made by one of the interview participants struck me as poignant and relevant to this research question. When queried about specific modifications to curriculum, Roger stated:

In the past I've allowed a Chinese student to take a test home. Take it home it's a homework assignment. And at home you know, you can use your parents, you can use any dictionaries. Then I would not weight it on an equal value, I'd simply equate it as a homework assignment. And at the same time, I'm not going to hold that Chinese speaking student to the same standards as I'm going to hold an English-speaking student. So I'll modify the grading in my class.

Based on that data, I asked Roger specifically, then, how he administered tests to ELL students. He responded that he had a positive experience with using bilingual aides to administer tests to students who speak Spanish, but with the variety of languages spoken in American classrooms, it would be virtually impossible to guarantee help in all languages which are present. An important question to be addressed by future research could be how the grading and assessment is different for students who do not speak a language in which a bilingual classroom aide is fluent and the effects of these practices. Short (1998) concluded that the use of hands-on and performance-based activities which are less language-dependent allow ELL students to demonstrate and apply their knowledge without the constraints of language difficulties, however, none of the survey or interview participants mentioned such assessment modifications.

Discussion of Findings: Research Question Three

Attitudes Towards Amount of Time Required to Teach ELLs

Less than half of the teachers who responded (48%) stated that they did not have enough time to deal with the needs of ELL students. These results were significantly lower than the results reported in Reeves's study (70%) and may be partially explained by training methods required by the teachers in my study. In Reeves's study, only 18.7% of the participants had training to teach ELL students, whereas all teachers currently in my study are required to have college coursework or district-mandated training to work with ELL students. However, 14.6% of the participants in my study chose "no opinion" as an answer to this question. This number represented the second-highest percentage reported for any one question on the survey. This is also contrary to many of the comments listed by teachers under the category, "Greatest Challenges of Including ELL students in the Mainstream Classroom." Time constraints, whether for grading or modifying lessons or spending time one-on-one with students was a major theme in the data. Furthermore, six of the eight interview participants mentioned some aspect of time as a major obstacle they faced. Peter faced the additional obstacle of a county-mandated exam at the end of the semester and commented on the frustration of having the delivery of the curriculum slowed by virtue of having ELL students in his classroom. It should be noted that he did not feel it was the ELL students' fault, rather it was an inevitable consequence of mainstream inclusion.

While less than half of the participants felt they didn't have enough time, more than 80% of teachers responded that having ELL students in the mainstream social studies classroom increases the teacher's workload and 80.5% responded that ELL

students required more time than their English-speaking classmates. The distinction between *enough* time and *more* time is important. It is possible that teachers see lack of time as an unavoidable component of the profession and simply spend more of their personal time planning and grading assignments when ELL students are mainstreamed in their classrooms. Beginning in the fall of 2007, the school board and superintendent of the county in which this study took place has voted to increase the instructional time teachers are required to spend with students (Stein, 2007). This increase (from 250 minutes per day previously to 300 minutes per day in the fall) represents an extra class taught each day with no extra pay or planning period. This increase can only serve to exacerbate the feelings by teachers that they do not have enough time to work with both ELL students and their English-speaking classmates.

Discussion of Findings: Research Question Four

Attitudes Towards Training and Support

Fifty-six percent of the teachers in the study either agreed or strongly agreed that their school district offers training that would help them teach ELL students more effectively. However, this contradicts comments written by many of the survey participants. As reported in chapter four, several teachers cited the "waste of time" or the "ineffective nature" of the training offered by the school district. As stated earlier, a common strategy used by teachers was the pairing of non-native speakers with other students who are bilingual. This seems to represent an attempt to modify coursework in a way that requires the least amount of training or effort by the teachers. If a teacher feels that he or she is inadequately trained to effectively deliver content to the ELL student,

other students can be used as *de facto* teacher aides. In retrospect, it would have strengthened the survey instrument had I included a question asking teachers to rate their attitudes towards the district training which they were provided. This may have offered a clearer picture as to the teachers' attitudes towards this training.

However, the responses of the interview participants painted a clearer picture of teacher attitudes towards this training. Responses such as "We watched videos and answered questions" or "Don't pat the head of the Mexican kid," or "That training model needs to fall by the wayside," indicated that interview participants did not seem to find the training to be particularly effective. Rachel, who had only been on the job for four months, was an example of how training was failing both the teachers and the ELL students. When queried as to the nature of her training, she responded, "I haven't been formally trained yet (to teach ELL students)." When I asked from which college or university she had graduated, she mentioned that she had graduated the previous May from the University of South Florida. Knowing that the program now requires students to take the course "ESOL Competencies and Strategies," I asked if she had taken the course. She responded, "Yeah, I took ESOL I or something like that. Does that constitute training? It was my sophomore year, so that's why I don't really remember too much from it."

The fact that Rachel "didn't remember too much" from her training was also evident when I asked her what specific strategies she had used to effectively teach ELL students in her classroom. Her response was, "I know that you have to write the directions on the board. That has really helped them understand." If a student is unable to speak English, and therefore unable to read and write English, writing directions on the

board does not seem like it is a particularly effective method of course modification, to say the least.

Why is the district training perceived as being so ineffective? When one looks at the context of the training as one that is mandated by law and that the school district must provide in order to be in compliance, rather than one that is seen as an integral part of preparing teachers, it is easier to understand these attitudes. While a variety of attitudes were expressed as to how teachers could be more effectively trained, such as Peter's suggestion that consultants from language institutes be hired, or that students should receive intensive language instruction before being placed in mainstream classrooms, it is not likely that the district would be willing (or able) to fund these programs. Furthermore, since more than three-fourths of the teachers who responded indicated that ELL students should not be in their classroom until they are proficient in English, it is not likely that any "grass roots" campaign initiated by teachers is forthcoming.

One final and important point needs to be made in regards to the effects of training on teacher attitudes when ELL students are mainstreamed in social studies classrooms. As a result of her findings, a major recommendation by Reeves (2002) was that in order to ameliorate the negative attitudes towards ELL inclusion, teachers needed more training. The data from this study seem to contradict this hypothesis and it appears that even with specific training to work with ELL students, three out of four teachers still would rather the students not enter their classroom until they are proficient in English.

Support

More than three fourths (76.4%) of teachers felt that their administration was not providing adequate support most or all of the time. Whether it was scheduling issues, for example class sizes which were too large, or placing ELL students in classes that were not indicative of their educational ability, or the inability to provide enough ESOL support personnel, several of the interview participants felt that a major constraint on their respective administration was determined by funding levels. Most interview participants had a very pragmatic attitude towards this and felt that their administrators were powerless to change this.

There was a broad spectrum of perceived support from ELL personnel from the participants. One in three survey respondents stated that they seldom or never received adequate support, which closely matched the percentage (35%) of participants who stated that they never met with the ELL personnel at their schools. The data seem to indicate that the amount of assistance that teachers receive depends greatly on the school at which they taught. Roger and Gary reported few, if any, problems when requesting help from ELL personnel. This differed greatly from Ralph and Steve's responses. A possible explanation for the disparity could be the socioeconomic makeup of the student bodies among the different schools. Both Ralph and Steve's schools contained a large percentage of students who were eligible for free or reduced lunch (an indicator commonly used to determine SES levels of the students). Ralph stopped asking for support after repeatedly being told no one was available, and Steve stated that even when one-third of the students in his class were considered English language learners, he received no help from the ELL personnel. Recommendations for policy changes in regards to ELL support will be

discussed later in the chapter.

Discussion of Findings: Research Question Five

Attitudes Towards the Effect on Educational Environment

In regards to the effect of including ELL students in the mainstream classroom, the data indicate that many social studies teachers appreciate the cross-cultural viewpoints and experiences these students bring with them to the mainstream social studies classroom. As mentioned in chapter four, sixty-seven participants mentioned some aspect of "diversity" as a positive effect of including these students in the mainstream classroom. This was by far the most obvious theme generated when asked about the benefits of ELL inclusion. In Reeves' (2002) study, more than 70% of the teachers felt the same way. One explanation of this widespread belief could be the impact of multicultural education training which is commonly taught to preservice teachers. Because the population of the United States is becoming more culturally diverse with each passing year, many teachers have adopted a multicultural approach when teaching social studies content. Multicultural education is an approach that values cultural differences and stresses multiple perspectives (Bennett, 2003). It seems that social studies teachers (who often teach about other cultures or ethnic groups) realize that ELL students can be a valuable resource because of their life experiences and by virtue of the fact that they have experienced phenomenon that American students have only studied in books. The role of multiculturalism will be further discussed in the final section of the results under research question six, which focuses on overall attitudes towards mainstream inclusion.

It should be noted that only 43.9% of the survey participants stated that inclusion benefits ALL students and only 45.5% of participants stated that inclusion creates a positive educational atmosphere. It is of interest that these two questions had high rates "no opinion" responses (24 and 17, respectively). It is possible that the teachers were either reluctant to indicate negative attitudes towards ELL inclusion or that the experience varied so greatly between students that it was impossible to choose one descriptor to accurately portray their attitudes. Also, other data seem to indicate that while cultural diversity is seen as a benefit, linguistic diversity is not valued as highly because of the difficulties it contains in regards to teaching the students.

When queried about the effect on class progress, 52.8% of respondents felt that the inclusion of ELL students slowed the progress of the entire class some or most of the time. Several factors could contribute this attitude. Teachers such as Peter, whose students must take county-mandated exams at the end of the semester, mentioned that the pace of the class was slowed when ELL students were included which forced him to rush through important content at the end of every semester. Furthermore, Stacy and Peter mentioned the difficulties of teaching when a large percentage (as many as one-third) of their students were English language learners. Also, not getting enough support from ELL personnel could contribute to these attitudes.

Discussion of Findings: Research Question Six

Attitudes in General Towards Mainstreaming ELL Students

It is clear that within the county in which the study took place, there exists a broad spectrum of attitudes, whether positive or negative, towards the inclusion of ELL students

in the mainstream social studies classroom. A clear majority (76.5%) of teachers indicated that ELL students should not be included in the social studies classroom until they have attained a minimum level of English proficiency. This number is almost identical to the findings of Reeves in her 2002 study, which found that 73.4% of the teachers she surveyed felt the same way. It seems that while social studies teachers appreciate the diversity that the ELL students bring to the classroom, the teachers would rather the students be mainstreamed after spending time learning English in other classes. This is in direct opposition to studies that have confirmed that students not only can learn content and language simultaneously, but that the combined practice is more efficient, effective, and enjoyable (Crandall, 1995; Short, 1991).

On the survey instrument, teachers were asked whether or not they would support legislation making English the official language of the United States. Sixty-six percent (n=82) of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that English should be the official language by legislative decree. While it would be problematic to interpret this data as causing participants to have negative attitudes towards using language other than English in the social studies classroom, it may indicate an agreement by many of the teachers that English should be the dominant language used in both the classroom and our society. This negative attitude towards English usage in the classroom, however, can have harmful consequences in the classroom. Short (1998), for example, asserts that encouraging some communication in the home language when students work in pairs or cooperative learning groups not only benefits students cognitively, but can also support literacy in English.

Survey participants were also asked to respond to the prompt, "ELL students

should be able to acquire English within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools." A majority (60.2%; n=74) either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. This represents an underestimation by the participants of the time necessary for ELL students to gain academic language proficiency, and may contribute to negative attitudes towards ELL students who are perceived as not being as proficient in English as they could or should be. As stated earlier, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) may take as long as seven years for English Language Learners to acquire (Cummins, 1979). If a teacher believes that students should know more English than they do, this may explain some of the comments from teachers who believe that ELL students are using their inability to speak English as a "crutch" to not do as much work.

Several participants made reference to the flaws of mainstreaming practices of the school district and how students should not be allowed into their classrooms until they can read and speak English at the appropriate grade level. But researchers such as Valdés (2001) have pointed out that when ELL students are placed in separate classrooms with other non-native speakers, any opportunity for them to engage in authentic English conversations is eliminated, and thus the students' best interests are not fulfilled. However, placing an ELL student in a classroom in which the teacher does not feel prepared or willing to teach can also have far-reaching consequences.

Multiculturalism vs. Assimilation: Final Reflections

This study has deliberately focused on themes previously established in research studies (e.g., training, support, course modification, and time) to examine and describe the attitudes of teachers towards mainstream inclusion of ELL students in the social

studies classroom. Further thought on the issue of teachers' appreciation of cultural diversity versus the perceived lack of appreciation for linguistic diversity needs to be addressed. Teachers in this study seem to welcome the cultural diversity ELL students bring to the classroom yet at the same time encourage linguistic assimilation as a condition of student success. Attitudes such as these are referred to as "pluralism." According to Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997), pluralism has become the mainstream articulation of multiculturalism and it operates on the assumption that emphasis (on multiculturalism) does not disrupt the dominant Western narratives. "Such pluralism tolerates the existence of salsa, it even enjoys Mexican restaurants, but it bans Spanish as a medium of instruction in American schools" (McCarthy, 1995, p. 262). The fact that 66.7% of the teachers in this study support legislation making English the official language of the U.S., could indicate that many teachers may see their role in the classroom as that of an assimilation agent, with the goal of homogenizing their student population. Historically, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with the large influx of immigrants into this country, schools were expected to "Americanize" students with little respect for maintaining home culture or language. It seems that many teachers in the current study feel the same way.

Also, the underlying question of "Who is responsible for teaching ELL students English?" seems important. If social studies teachers consider themselves to be more "content-centered" than "student-centered," then they may feel that the task of teaching students English is beyond the scope of what they are trained to do and feel efficacious at doing. Several researchers (Applebee, 1993; Barnes, 1990, Cuban, 1993) have found that many secondary classroom teachers focus more on content than on actively engaging

students in the learning process. Situations such as these may exclude ELL learners from meaningful instruction because too little thought is given to the pedagogic methods necessary to meaningfully transmit the content. This belief, along with ineffective training could be one possible explanation why so many teachers simply use bilingual students in their classes to act as teacher-aides to help teach the curriculum and help ELL students complete their work.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following is a list of recommendations for future research into the schooling experience of both mainstream teachers and ELL students at the high school level.

First, the current data set contains the responses of 123 participants within the district of study. Due to the methods used, it is impossible for me to know which teachers did not respond to the survey. It is possible that some department chairpersons never shared the survey with their respective teachers. If this is the case, then valuable data which may change the results of the study are missing. Therefore, obtaining aggregate demographic data from the school district in regards to the total population of social studies teachers would allow me to see the ways in which the respondents differ from the total population of high school social studies teachers. Characteristics such as years of teaching, gender, native language proficiency, ethnicity, and type of ELL training can possibly all have a significant effect on attitudes towards mainstream inclusion of these students. Also, a change in the design of the study which allows the researcher to distribute the surveys to the teachers in person could guarantee that all teachers have the opportunity to complete and return the survey instrument.

Also, this study is entirely descriptive in nature. While the Social Constructivist paradigm has been used as a possible explanation for some teacher attitudes, I have largely avoided making any statements that imply strict causation. Using the existing data, bivariate statistical analyses could be used to identify statistically significant patterns between factors measured on the survey instrument. For example, how does ethnicity or dual language proficiency correlate to allowing students to use their native language in the social studies classroom? Does type of training (college coursework versus district inservice) determine attitudes towards ELL inclusion more than say, gender or years teaching? All of these analyses could be computed using the existing data and therefore would not necessitate designing or conducting another study.

Furthermore, in an effort to understand the attitudes of teachers towards current ELL mainstreaming practices, other researchers should gather data on the attitudes of teachers from a variety of disciplines, not just social studies. Disciplines such as science, and math contain complex content and concepts that ELL students are expected to learn in mainstream settings and understanding teacher attitudes towards these practices could provide invaluable data to help improve pedagogy in the content areas. Possibly the most daunting task faced by teachers with ELL students mainstreamed is teaching these students English. While the current school district and college training requirements are more rigorous (300 hours vs. 60 hours in the district) for English teachers, a study of their attitudes towards their own efficacy might offer valuable insight as to what the school district or universities who serve these students may do to better prepare them for the classroom. Also, the school district at which the study was conducted is neither the largest, nor even the most linguistically diverse in Florida. Conducting studies in larger

and more linguistically diverse school districts such as Miami-Dade County, or Orange County which serves the students of Los Angeles, California, could yield a wealth of information for future researchers.

While analyzing survey and interview data, it is apparent that teachers' attitudes are only marginally related to their training for working with ELL students. An important question future research could address is, "From where do these attitudes come?" The Social Constructivist paradigm can be a useful tool to answer this question. When you contrast the phrases "Including ELL students in my classroom contains no discernable benefits," with "ELL students are an invaluable resource in my classroom ," it seems that teachers' attitudes come directly from their daily interactions (i.e., the "reality" they construct) with these students. Even pedagogic methodology, to a certain degree is significantly impacted. Take for instance the interview participant who had success using ELL students as mentors and translators and contrast that with the other participant who stated, "When I paired up ELL kids, one kid was just copying all the other kid's work." It seems that teacher attitudes may come mainly from individual observations/interactions by the teacher with the ELL students. If teachers happen to have a student who has the maturity and is willing to help others, than pairing students can become a viable alternative. When teachers have students who socialize instead of working when they are assigned to group work (a stalwart of the social studies curriculum), then it doesn't become an option to utilize the resource in your classroom. However, this is a judgment that teachers have to make on a "case by case" basis.

Using other data gathering methods may also provide useful. Future researchers may want to conduct qualitative observations in the mainstream classrooms to record the

experiences of both teachers and ELL students in this setting. While researchers like myself have to assume that attitudes of teachers translate directly to behaviors in the classroom, if teachers are observed while teaching ELL students, more information can be gleaned as to how attitudes are translated to pedagogy and treatment of students. It is possible that extended observation of ELL students in the mainstream setting has the potential to bring teachers' and students' implicit attitudes and assumptions to the surface.

This study focuses on the voices of teachers, and although teachers are an important part of the mainstream process, feedback from other important members of this community is needed. Administrators, ELL personnel (including bilingual aides) and the ELL students themselves are all very important shareholders in the mainstreaming process. By uncovering the perspectives of these populations, it is possible that the ELL students' needs as well as those of everyone involved in the process can be better-met.

The descriptive nature of this study asked teachers to discuss or write about their attitudes towards ELL students, in general. A future study might make an effort to differentiate between different types of ELL students based on several factors such as culture, level of English spoken, and ethnicity. By paying particular attention to different types of ELL students, researchers may gain valuable information that allows future teachers address the variety of needs of different students. Also, by focusing on specific ELL students during the inquiry process, some of the “no opinion” answers may not occur because teachers do not feel comfortable making blanket statements which apply to a wide variety of students.

The issue of funding should also be addressed based on the participants' comments and attitudes. Since the experiences of mainstream social studies teachers

varied greatly from school to school, an analysis of how funding is allocated to each school seems worth undertaking. If some schools are funded at lower levels than others, creating a more equitable funding policy may alleviate some of the perceived support problems reported by teachers.

This study also highlights the need for future research into culturally and linguistically relevant schooling for both ELL students and those English proficient students from other cultures. An integral component of the "democratic classroom" is giving all students a voice. Qualitative researchers could conduct interviews and make observations to see just how effectively teachers are creating opportunities for ELL and ethnically diverse students to have their voices heard. If systematic deficiencies are identified, then training may be implemented to address this issue. Since so many teachers mentioned the cultural advantages of linguistically diverse classrooms, pedagogic methods which allow ELL students to contribute and have a voice in the social studies classroom can't help but benefit all learners. Also, particular attention should be paid to the perceived deficiencies of current educational policy with regard to specific remedies available to the school district.

Lastly, and possibly most important, more research is needed to examine the teacher preparation programs both at the university level and district inservice. A common undercurrent in both the interview data and survey data is the common perception that current training is ineffective. The school district should conduct follow-up interviews with teachers who have undergone the training to determine how teachers feel about its effectiveness. A rich source of data is the teachers in the district itself. Focus groups of content-area teachers could be asked to create a list of the most

important teacher needs in respect to teaching content to ELL students. Follow-up training at predetermined intervals may also help teachers feel more efficacious, a sentiment stated explicitly by Steve. As mentioned by Peter, the school district may want to investigate ways to utilize language acquisition specialists in the training process so that teachers will be equipped with specific strategies to take into the classroom. Unfortunately, ELL students like any other "special population" within the school, receive inadequate funding and inadequate attention from both administration and school districts. While it would be naive to think that research such as mine would be the catalyst for systemic change within such a large bureaucracy, it is hoped that the school district will listen to the voices of its teachers, many of whom admit that the current practices are failing ELL students. The next section will discuss recommendations for future policy at both the university level and at the school district level.

Recommendations for future policy

Since the Florida Consent Decree has been in effect, preservice teachers have been required to take college courses to help them effectively teach ELL students in the mainstream setting. Smith (2005) conducted research as to preservice teachers' perceptions of knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards working with ELL students. More research is needed as to the efficacy of these college courses, possibly by identifying teachers who have participated in these courses and then measuring attitudes after they have been in the classroom teaching ELL students. By identifying components of the courses that are perceived as effective or ineffective and tailoring instruction accordingly, college professors can improve the quality of instruction and increase the efficacy of their

graduates.

Also, the school district should conduct research as to the effectiveness of the inservice training that they offer their teachers to teach ELL students. Since most of the interviewees in the study made comments as to the ineffective nature of this training, it seems worthwhile to examine feedback from teachers who participate in an effort to tailor the training to the needs of the people who are implementing it in the classroom. If a common perception of teachers is that this training is not meeting their needs, then other training can be designed to increase teacher efficacy in this area.

Several teachers who participated in the study commented about scheduling issues in regards to mainstreaming practices. Whether it was scheduling too many ELL students in one classroom or placing ELL students in classes that did not match their cognitive ability, the district should make an effort to include teacher recommendations when creating schedules for ELL students. Since teachers are the people responsible for implementing policy, giving them a "voice" in the process can only help both the teachers and ELL students.

Since social constructivism was used as the theoretical framework for interpreting the results of this study, it seems important to discuss the implications of policy on the reality construction of teachers with ELL students in their mainstream classrooms. The teaching profession (i.e., the "teacher world") is often fraught with time constraints, large class sizes, lack of resources or support, and a host of other issues that may hamper teacher-effectiveness. The Florida "class size" amendment has the goal of limiting the number of students each teacher is responsible for teaching each day. The assumption is that fewer students will equal higher-quality instruction to those students in Florida

classrooms. Another assumption of mine is that if policy makers were to increase the planning time and decrease the amount of students (and grading) for which teachers are responsible, then teacher attitudes would be significantly impacted. However, with the policy changes planned for the 2007-2008 school year (more classes and less planning time for all high school teachers), it is unlikely that meaningful change in current practices is in the near future of the school district.

Finally, a wide disparity was reported as to the availability of ELL personnel to help mainstream teachers who have ELL students mainstreamed in their classroom. The ELL coordinator at the school district should strive to make ELL support more equitable between schools and across the entire school district. Since all demographic data point to the continued trend of increasing numbers of ELL students in the school district, these issues need to be addressed in the immediate future to ameliorate the belief shared by many teachers that current mainstreaming practices are "failing" the students.

As I look back five years, and recall the first time Juanita walked into my classroom (and thus planted the "seed" which would grow to be this study), I think about how scary and overwhelming it must have been to be sitting in a classroom in which nothing being said could be understood. Her story has had a happy ending (her aunt recently told me that she's in gifted classes at an area magnet high school) but I can not help but imagine how many other ELL students fall through the cracks and never find success at school. Interview data and survey responses from teachers in this county lead me to believe that there are many caring and compassionate social studies teachers who do the very best they can to help ELL students reach their full potential. However, the fact that three-fourths of social studies teachers who responded to my survey would

prefer that ELL students not be in their classroom until they have learned English tells me that the school district in which this study took place either can not or will not make their schools places where ELL students are accepted in the same manner as their English-speaking students. It is my hope that this study can be one small part of the solution to some of the problems faced by ELL students not only in this school district, but in classrooms across the entire U.S.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey (Page 1)

Section A

Please read each statement and circle only one response which best describes your attitude.

1. The inclusion of ELL students in my social studies classroom creates a positive educational atmosphere.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

2. The inclusion of ELL students in social studies classrooms benefits all students.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

3. ELL students should not be included in social studies classrooms until they have attained a minimum level of English proficiency.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

4. ELL students should avoid using their native language while in my classroom.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

5. ELL students should be able to acquire English within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

6. Social studies teachers do not have enough time to deal with the needs of ELL students.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

7. It is a good idea to simplify coursework for ELL students.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

8. It is a good idea to assign less coursework to ELL students.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

9. It is a good idea to allow ELL students more time to complete coursework.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

(Continued on next page)

Appendix A: (Continued)

10. Teachers should not give ELL students a failing grade if the students display effort.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

11. Teachers should not modify assignments for ELL students enrolled in social studies classrooms.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

12. The modification of coursework for ELL students would be difficult to justify to English-speaking students.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

13. I had adequate training in college courses to teach ELL students effectively.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

14. My district offers effective training that would help me teach ELL students more effectively.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

15. I would welcome the inclusion of ELL students in my social studies class.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

16. I would support legislation making English the official language of the U.S.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

17. Until students have learned to speak English, I shouldn't expect too much from them in my class.

Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

Appendix B: Interview Guide (from Reeves, 2002)

1. Tell me about your history as a teacher:
 - a. How many years of experience teaching?
 - b. Have you taught any other subjects besides social studies?
 - c. At how many schools have you taught (including presently)? What kinds of schools were they (private/public)?
 - d. What is the number of ELL students you have in your classroom now? How many different languages are spoken by your students?
 - e. How would you characterize these students' ability to speak English currently?
 - f. What is the nature of your training for working with ELL students?
2. What are the challenges of including ELL students in your classes?
 - a. What would your reaction be to receiving more ELL students in your classes?
 - b. How do you think students' native culture may impact their performance as a student in your class?
 - c. How do you think ELL students' ability to speak their native language affects their performance as a student in your class?
 - d. What is the biggest obstacle faced by social studies teachers to effectively teach ELL students who are mainstreamed into their classroom?
3. What are the benefits of including ELL students in your classes?
4. Tell me about the training you have received in working with ELL students.
 - a. What can your administration do to better support you?
 - b. What training would you recommend for social studies teachers of ELL students?
 - c. Describe the support you receive from the ELL teacher at your school.
5. Please describe your feelings the first time an ELL student enrolled in one of your classes.
 - a. Have your attitudes towards ELL inclusion changed over time?
6. What techniques or strategies have been successful in your experience with ELL students who are mainstreamed in your classroom? What techniques have been unsuccessful?
7. How would you characterize your attitude towards mainstreaming using the terms positive, neutral, or negative?
8. How would you characterize your philosophy regarding how and what you teach in your social studies classroom?

Appendix C: Letter to Department Chairpersons

Dear Social Studies Department Chair:

My name is Jason O'Brien, and I am a doctoral student at the University of South Florida. I have been given permission to conduct a research study in Hillsborough County to uncover the attitudes of high school social studies teachers regarding the inclusion of English Language Learners (ELL) in social studies classrooms. I would like your participation.

I have included in this envelope a survey for each of the social studies teachers in your department. Only social studies teachers who currently have an ELL student in their classroom should complete the survey. Please give each teacher both a survey and one of the self addressed, stamped envelopes which I have provided. Please explain that you will collect the completed surveys (if participants are comfortable with that) or that he or she can mail the surveys directly to me. Please collect all unused, self-addressed, stamped envelopes and place them back in the folder from which these surveys came.

Please return any surveys you collect to Dennis Holt via the school's mail service no later than the last week of classes for this school year. Thank you so much for your help!

If you have any questions or comments for me, feel free to contact me at jobrien3@tampabay.rr.com, or at home at (813) 258-3676.

Thank you for your help,

Appendix D: Cover letter to teachers

Dear Social Studies Teacher:

My name is Jason O'Brien, and I am a doctoral student at the University of South Florida. I have been given permission to conduct a research study in Hillsborough County to uncover the attitudes of high school social studies teachers regarding the inclusion of English Language Learners (ELL) in social studies classrooms. I would like your participation.

The following pages contain a survey that will help me to gather data about attitudes of teachers towards mainstreaming ELLs in content area classrooms. This survey is completely **voluntary** and completely **anonymous**. You can return the completed survey to the envelope I have provided to your department chairperson, or you may mail it to the University of South Florida where I will collect it (stamped envelopes are provided).

You should only complete this survey if you currently have a student in your social studies classroom who **does not speak English as his or her native language** or whose **inability to speak English interferes with the child's academic progress**.

If you choose to participate, I thank you in advance. Please return the completed survey to your department chairperson, or mail it to me using the envelope I have included. **Please return this to me no later than the last day of the school year.**

If you have any questions regarding this survey or would like more information, please contact me at jobrien3@tampabay.rr.com or via phone at home (813) 258-3676.

Thank you for your time,

Jason O'Brien

Appendix E: Informed Consent for research participants

Informed Consent

Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of South Florida

Information for People Who Take Part in Research Studies

The following information is being presented to help you decide whether or not you want to take part in a minimal risk research study. Please read this carefully. If you do not understand anything, ask the person in charge of the study.

Title of Study: High School Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Inclusion of ELL Students in Mainstream Classrooms

Principal Investigator: Jason O'Brien

Study Location(s): Hillsborough County High Schools

You are being asked to participate because I am interested in the attitudes of social studies teachers who have English Language Learners mainstreamed in their classrooms.

General Information about the Research Study

The purpose of this research study is to explore the affects that English Language Learners have on the attitudes of high school social studies teachers in the mainstream classroom. There is very little research regarding social studies teachers' attitudes in these mainstreamed settings so it is hoped that this study will help with future policy decisions regarding this population.

Plan of Study

You are being asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding your attitudes towards having English Language Learners in your social studies classroom. The survey will also gather demographic data that will help me describe the teachers from whom the data is collected. The survey should not take more than 30 minutes to complete.

Payment for Participation

You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

Benefits of Being a Part of this Research Study

By taking part in this study, you will increase the overall knowledge about the attitudes of social studies teachers who have English Language learners enrolled in their mainstream classrooms.

Appendix E: (Continued)

Risks of Being a Part of this Research Study

Since this survey is **completely** voluntary and anonymous there are no risks to the participant.

Confidentiality of Your Records

Your privacy and research records will be kept confidential to the extent of the law. Authorized research personnel, employees of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the USF Institutional Review Board and its staff, and any other individuals acting on behalf of USF, may inspect the records from this research project.

The results of this study may be published. However, the data obtained from you will be combined with data from others in the publication. The published results will not include your name or any other information that would personally identify you in any way. The data from this study will be controlled solely by the principal investigator in a secure, locked area so that no one has access to it. At the conclusion of the data analysis, the data will be destroyed.

Volunteering to Be Part of this Research Study

Your decision to participate in this research study is completely **voluntary**. You are free to participate in this research study or to withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty from anyone in the Hillsborough County school district or from anyone affiliated with this study for choosing not to participate.

Questions and Contacts

- If you have any questions about this research study, contact me at (813) 258-3676 or email at jobrien3@tampabay.rr.com
- If you have questions about your rights as a person who is taking part in a research study, you may contact the Division of Research Integrity and Compliance of the University of South Florida at (813) 974-5638.

Appendix F: Research Questions with Corresponding Survey Questions

Research Question #1: What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards ELL students using their native language to learn in their mainstream social studies classrooms?

Survey Questions:

A-4. ELL students should avoid using their native language while in my classroom.

B-3. I allow an ELL student to use his/her native language in my class.

B-4. I provide materials for ELL students in their own language.

Research Question #2: What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards modifying coursework for ELLs in their mainstream social studies classrooms?

Survey Questions:

A-7. It is a good idea to simplify coursework for ELL students.

A-8. It is a good idea to assign less coursework to ELL students.

A-9. It is a good idea to allow ELL students more time to complete coursework.

A-10. Teachers should not give ELL students a failing grade if the student displays effort.

A-11. Teachers should not modify assignments for ELL students enrolled in social studies classrooms.

A-12. The modification of coursework for ELL students would be difficult to justify to other students.

A-17. Until students have learned to speak English, I shouldn't expect too much from them in my class.

B-1. I allow ELL students more time to complete their coursework.

B-2. I give ELL students less coursework than other students.

B-5. Effort is more important than achievement when I grade ELL students.

Appendix F (continued)

Research Question #3: What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the amount of time required to teach ELLs in their mainstream social studies classrooms?

Survey Questions:

A-6. Social studies teachers do not have enough time to deal with the needs of ELL students.

B-6. The inclusion of ELL of ELL students in my classes increases my workload.

B-7. ELL students require more of my time than other students.

Research Question #4: What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards training and support they receive to teach ELLs in their mainstream social studies classrooms?

Survey Questions:

A-13. I had adequate training in college courses to teach ELL students effectively.

A-14. My district offers effective training that would help me teach ELL students more effectively.

B-9. I receive adequate support from school administrators when ELL students are in my class.

B-10. I receive adequate support from ELL staff when ELL students are in my class.

B-11. I conference with the ELL teacher.

Research Question #5: What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes towards the effect on the education environment when ELLs are mainstreamed in their social studies classrooms?

Survey Questions:

A-1. The inclusion of ELL students in my classroom creates a positive educational atmosphere.

Appendix F (continued)

A-2. The inclusion of ELL students in social studies classrooms benefits all students.

B-8. The inclusion of ELL students in my class slows the progress of the entire class.

Research Question #6: What are high school social studies teachers' attitudes, in general, towards mainstreaming ELLs in their social studies classrooms?

Survey Questions:

A-3. ELL students should not be included in social studies classrooms until they have attained a minimum level of English proficiency.

A-15. I would welcome the inclusion of ELL students in my social studies class.

A-16. I would support legislation making English the official language of the U.S.

About the Author

Jason O'Brien received both his Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Secondary Social Science Education from the University of South Florida. At the time of the study, he had been teaching undergraduate and graduate courses at the University of South Florida for eight years. He entered the Ph.D. program in the Fall of 2000.

While in the Ph.D. program, Mr. O'Brien co-authored the book "Passport to Learning: Teaching Social Studies to ESL Students," the first book of its kind in the field of social studies. He has presented at five national conferences and four state conferences. Mr. O'Brien has taught high school social studies at Tampa Catholic High School in Tampa, Florida for the past three years and before that was a fifth, fourth, and third grade social studies teacher at Sacred Heart Academy in Tampa, Florida.