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Providing services for a culturally and linguistically diverse student in a small midwestern elementary school : a qualitative case study

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1999

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PROVIDING SERVICES FOR
A CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENT
IN A SMALL MIDWESTERN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:
A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

An Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the requirements for the Degree

Specialist in Education

Candace L. Kist-Tahmasian

University of Northern Iowa

December 1999

ABSTRACT

Presented is a case study of an eight-year-old boy who is learning English as a second language in a midwestern elementary school. The number of students needing ESL and/or bilingual education is rapidly growing throughout the United States. Many non-urban schools and districts must now begin to meet these needs.

Observations of the student in various school settings were done over a period of six weeks for a total of 24 hours. Interviews of key personnel provided additional information important to the study. Three themes of concern in regard to the student's educational situation became the focus of the case study. The three concerns are as follows. First, the school lacked trained bilingual/ESL personnel to instruct the student. Second, the school lacked appropriate curricula and materials support for the student's needs. Finally, the child's reported socio-behavioral patterns were a concern of school personnel.

The research literature regarding second language acquisition and special education issues are examined and the case is presented and analyzed. A discussion follows the case analysis and recommendations are made using the most recent available research. Further areas for research are recommended.

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This Study by: Candace Kist-Tahmasian

Entitled: Providing Services for a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Student in a
Small Midwestern Elementary School: A Qualitative Case Study

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the
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This thesis is dedicated to
my husband Norek,
my son Michael,
and, my mother Elinor Kist.

Without their loving sacrifices and eternal patience,
I would not have been able to accomplish what I have.
I can never say enough thank you's to express the gratitude I feel.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The demographics of the United States have radically changed over the past thirty years. During the 1960s, changes made to immigration laws eliminated quotas that had given preference to European immigrants, resulting in an influx of immigrants from South and Central America, and Asia (McLeod, 1998). According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (1999) over 90% of the recent immigrants have come from non-English speaking countries. Therefore, schools are increasingly receiving students who do not speak English at home and who have little or no proficiency in English. Public schools are required to provide programs to help children with limited English proficiency develop competence in the language and allow them to participate in the overall educational program of their schools (Lau v. Nichols, 1974).

The number of non- or limited English speaking children has increased from 1.25 million in 1979 to 2.44 million in 1995 (Condition of Education, 1997). Between school years 1987-88 and 1993-94, the percentage of schools that provided bilingual programs declined slightly (from 20 to 18%), while the percentage providing ESL programs increased from 34 to 43%. In rural areas the percentage of schools that provided ESL programs increased by about 50%. (Bilingual and ESL programs are distinguished from each other in that in general, bilingual programs provide instruction to the students in their native language, as well as instruction in ESL, while ESL only programs provide instruction primarily in English.) As the number of English language learning children increases, so has the number vacancies for bilingual and ESL teachers. The difficulty

schools have in filling such positions is one indication that the supply of bilingual and ESL teachers is inadequate to meet the demand. In the school year 1993-94, 27% of all schools with bilingual/ESL teaching vacancies found them very difficult or impossible to fill (Education Indicator, 1999). For rural/small town schools, 30% of the vacancies were difficult or impossible to fill.

These trends are expected to continue as the number of children in the United States whose parents are immigrants is expected to grow from 5.1 million to 7.4 million between 1990 and 2000 and to 9.1 million in 2010 (Education Indicator, 1999).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe one student who required English as Second Language (ESL) services in an elementary school in northeast Iowa which until now has not had any students needing this service. Rong and Preissle (1998) in their book, Educating Immigrant Students: What We Need to Know to Meet the Challenges, document the settlement patterns for immigrants.

Historically, most immigrants have been concentrated in a handful of states, California, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Massachusetts. However, Maryland, Florida, Virginia, Georgia, Texas, New Mexico, Nevada, California, and Alaska have had more than a 50% increase in their foreign-born populations, and in other states the foreign-born population also has increased significantly. (p. 29-30)

The Des Moines Sunday Register (May 16, 1999) recently reported that

Iowa accounted for less than 1% of the immigrants coming to the United States in 1996, but the state finished in the top 10 for percentage growth in immigration between 1995 and 1996, according to the most recent statistics available from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). That growth has made immigration an issue in a number of Iowa communities where there is more than a little anxiety about whether the state is ready for a burgeoning minority population. At about 53,000, Hispanics now rival Iowa's 55,600

African-Americans as the state's largest non-Anglo group. By 2025, the number of Latinos is expected to increase to about 96,000, Iowa State University demographers say. (p. 4)

As this case study exemplifies, many of the smaller school districts outside of large urban areas in Iowa may begin to have students enroll who need ESL services. The benefit of studying one specific case in depth is that other schools in similar situations may benefit from learning how the school addressed this student's needs. Further, through case analysis and current research, recommendations are offered for this student's educational needs, taking into considerations the school's limited availability of resources. These recommendations may prove useful to school administrators, principals, general education teachers, and those training to become certified in bilingual and ESL education.

Research Questions

This is a qualitative case study in which the research questions developed as patterns evolved throughout the observation period. The following strands emerged as the most significant to be addressed.

1. What curricula and materials were chosen for the student and why?
2. What instructional strategies were used?
3. What were the behaviors of the student that led the teacher to make a pre-referral for special education evaluation?

Research Design

The design of this case study is based on the model presented by Sharan Merriam in her book, Qualitative Research in Case Study Applications in Education (1998).

According to her,

A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in the process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research. (p. 19)

Assumptions and Limitations

In her book, Merriam (1998) describes the researcher as being,

The primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data and, as such, can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information. Conversely, the investigator as human instrument is limited by being human—that is, mistakes are made, opportunities are missed, personal biases interfere. Human instruments are as fallible as any other research instrument. The extent to which a researcher has certain personality characteristics and skills necessary for this type of research needs to be assessed, just as a rating scale or survey form would be assessed in other types of research. (p. 20)

She then describes the characteristics necessary for a qualitative researcher to have to be successful in completing the necessary steps of research process. First of all, she cites a “tolerance for ambiguity” (Merriam, 1998, p. 20). Because each case study is different and unique, the researcher must determine what is important, what is missing and what it all means. Even the design of the study and the decisions that need to be made are, at times, ambiguous.

A second trait she cites is “sensitivity,” or being highly intuitive. “The researcher must be sensitive to the context and all the variables within it, including the physical

setting, the people, the overt and covert agendas, and the nonverbal behavior” (Merriam, 1998, p. 21).

A third trait is that of being a “good communicator.” This includes being able to build rapport, being empathetic, being a good listener, being a good interviewer, and a good writer. These three characteristics are “what most writers consider to be essential for those who conduct this type of research” (Merriam, 1998, pp. 23-24).

It is with these characteristics in mind that the researcher approached the data collection process, that is, observing the student and interviewing the school personnel. The informal conversations that also led to revelations of the beliefs about the student were also noted.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to have a better understanding of the case study and ensuing analysis, it is necessary to have an understanding of the framework in which the observations took place. The researcher observed the student in the classroom through the framework of several theories of second language acquisition, learning theories, training in psycho-educational assessment and seven years of experience as an ESL teacher.

Definitions

For the purposes of this paper, the phrases "culturally and linguistically diverse" or "culturally and linguistically different" will be interchangeable and sometimes abbreviated to CLD. Sharon-ann Gopaul-McNichol and Tania Thomas-Presswood (1999) in their book Working with Linguistically and Culturally Different Children: Innovative Clinical and Educational Approaches, devote the first chapter to describing the people whom they consider to belong to this population. The term essentially refers to students who are not part of the mainstream dominant culture. Although CLD includes those who identify themselves as African American or Black, Native American, Hispanic or Latino/a, Mexican American, Asian American, and so on, it also includes those who speak a non-standard form of English or a language other than English in their homes, people who have come from other countries and thus different cultures, as well as those from different socio-economic groups.

An additional acronym that often appears in the literature is "LEP" which stands for "limited-English proficient." This phrase is used less often in the more current

literature as it is thought that the word "limited" carries a negative connotation.

Associated with that acronym is "NEP," which stands for "non-English proficient." For those wanting to promote a more positive connotation, this phrase is sometimes replaced with "PEP" which stands for "potentially-English proficient." "FEP" stands for "fluent-English proficient," but refers to those for whom English is not a "native" or first language. Another more recent and easily accepted term is "ELL" which stands for English language learner. This term does not indicate a proficiency level in English.

Second Language Acquisition

It is crucial to have an understanding of the process of language acquisition before one can appropriately assess the educational environment for a culturally and linguistically diverse student. It is important to understand what is expected for first and second language acquisition and what is not. It is this understanding that will help determine whether the student is performing in a manner consistent with what may be expected of a second language learner or whether the student seems to be affected by variables outside of the range of "normal" difficulties associated with learning a new language, quite possible within the context of a new culture as well. It is a long and difficult task to become proficient in a second language. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief introduction to the theories of second language acquisition, concepts of bilingualism, how literacy in one language facilitates literacy in a second language, the concept of comprehensible input and how extraneous factors can affect academic and language performance.

The construct of the phrase “language proficiency” has a theoretical usage as well as a practical definition. The theoretical orientation refers to one's underlying capacity to handle language ability in general, regardless of the actual language spoken. In a practical sense, it refers to how much control one has over one's second language. It is generally thought of in terms of skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. While these skills are interrelated they can develop independently so that second language learners may be more advanced in one skill area than another. It is not uncommon for learners to develop listening and speaking skills at levels above their reading and writing skills, just as first language learners develop listening and speaking skills before reading and writing skills.

Cummins (1980) has proposed that language proficiency be thought of on two levels: Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS includes the ability to participate in complex context-embedded face-to-face communication and typically takes about two years to master. CALP requires the ability to understand and produce language typical of academic instruction and requires higher cognitive skills than BICS. Research has shown that when immigrants in the United States and Canada are schooled only in the second language (L2; as in ESL programs or immersion programs), it takes a minimum of 5 to 10 years to attain grade-level norms, and it takes even longer when students do not have a literacy base in their first language (L1; Collier, 1987, 1989, 1992, 1996; Cummins & Swain, 1986; Genesee; 1987, Ovando & Collier, 1985, 1998). However, when students are schooled in L1 and L2 (as in bilingual programs) at least through grades five or six,

they are able to maintain grade-level norms in L1 and reach grade-level norms in academic L2 in four to seven years (Collier, 1992; Genesee, 1987). Furthermore, after reaching grade-level norms, students schooled bilingually stay on or above grade level; whereas those schooled only through L2 tend to do less well in school in the upper grades (Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Cummins (1984) has identified three processes that underlie the attainment of proficiency in the second language (a) automatic habit formation, (b) conscious rule learning, and (c) natural acquisition of meaningful language. Through habit formation, learners almost unconsciously acquire common words and phrases. Automatic language habits, which are based on repeated exposure to a word, phrase, or sentence, give the learner access to automated responses in specific situations and are typical of beginning level PEP students. For example, in response to meeting someone, one generally says something like, "Hello, how are you today?" In response to that greeting, one typically answers, "Fine, thanks. And you?" regardless of how they might really be feeling.

The second process reflects a more conscious knowledge of the rules of a language. Through this process, the learner develops explicit knowledge about the second language and is able to reflect on the rules of grammar, phonology, and semantics. Finally, the third process is similar to first-language development in young children and reflects an implicit knowledge of language or, rather, the ability to use it. Through this process, language is acquired naturally and emerges through natural stages of development. Students begin with a silent period that precedes production. When production finally occurs, it emerges in word utterances, which eventually turn into

longer phrases and sentences. When a second language emerges naturally, errors are likely to occur and are a necessary part of the process, not unlike first language acquisition in which children learning to speak their first language make grammatical and lexical selection errors.

Bilingualism

Many people interpret the term bilingual to mean that one is fully fluent and literate in two languages and can function in a variety of settings with either language. In the literature, this is referred to "balanced bilingualism" (Baca & Cervantes, 1998; GoPaul-McNichol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998; Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Irujo, 1998; Ovando & Collier, 1985, 1998). As ideal as this situation may be, it rarely exists in the United States' public school population. More often than not, a person will be more proficient in one language and have some degree of proficiency in the other. Again, as language skills develop independently, it is possible for one to be more proficient in one language in one specific skill area and be more proficient in the other language in another skill area. The non-English (as applied to the United States' situation) or "home" language is not necessarily the student's dominant language. Many students may come from environments which have not encouraged the development of skills in the first language, and with a new environment and schooling, the students may be more successful in communicating through English than in their first language. This is an example of one reason why skills in both languages should be assessed in determining language proficiency.

Bilingualism can also be considered from the perspective of "additive" or "subtractive" (Baca & Cervantes, 1998; GoPaul-McNichol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998; Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Irujo, 1998; Ovando & Collier, 1985, 1998). When speakers have reached expected levels of proficiency in their first language and then "add on" another language, they are said to be experiencing "additive bilingualism" in that nothing has been taken away. In "subtractive" bilingualism, the proficiency of the first language decreases as proficiency in the second language increases. Sometimes, this results in students not being very proficient in either language for some period of time. Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukoma (1976) refer to this as "semilingualism."

Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukoma (1976) illustrate the concept of additive and subtractive bilingualism in their study of Finnish migrant children in Sweden learning the language of their host country. They found that the extent to which the native language had been developed prior to formal exposure to the second language was strongly related to how well the second language was learned. In other words, a strong foundation in the first language, Finnish, predicted success in learning Swedish as a second language. And, conversely, when the first language was not fully developed, difficulties in learning the second language appeared.

De Valenzuela (1998), however, is one of many linguists who are wary of using the term semilingual. He is concerned about how the student will be perceived with such a label. Teachers who do not understand the process of second language acquisition may become more confused and take inappropriate actions or attitudes. For example, it is natural in the process of second language acquisition for children to go through a "silent

period" in which their receptive language skills in English are more advanced than their expressive language skills. In other words, they understand more than they can communicate. He also finds the term semilingual problematic in that (a) the term suggests a difficulty in acquiring language and does not recognize that children may have lost language skills they once possessed, and (b) this term implies a resultant cognitive deficit. Some theorists do not believe that it is possible to be semilingual. Ovando and Collier (1985) stated, "Although theoretical descriptions have discussed the term 'semilingualism,' it has never been proven to exist in experimental research conducted on the issue." They perceive "the danger of a label like semilingualism is that it may go hand in hand with the label of culturally deprived, implying that the quality of the student's socio-cultural background is unacceptable" (p. 131).

Literacy

Often, the level of literacy achieved by students directly corresponds to the level of literacy of their parents. Students who are surrounded by literacy, regardless of whether it is in the native language or English, find it easier to develop the necessary pre-reading skills and literacy orientation that produce successful readers (GoPaul-McNichol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998; Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Krashen, 1996; Weinstein, 1984). Attitudes towards literacy and pre-reading skills transfer from first language to second language; therefore, even if parents are not literate in English, they will help their children immensely by reading to them and engaging them in conversation in their native language.

Just as a solid base in literacy skills transfers from the first language to the second, so do other language skills. If the first language is adequately developed it provides the necessary foundation on which to build the second language. Much of what is already mastered in a student's first language (grammatical structures, vocabulary, and phonological rules) can be transferred to the second language, especially if the second language is related to the first. For example, Saville-Troike (1984) found that children who speak Indo-European languages are more accurate in their production of English morphology and their use of English syntax than are speakers of non-Indo-European languages.

Transfer also occurs in reading such that reading achievement in English is more dependent on students' native language reading ability than on their oral proficiency in English (Saville-Troike, 1984). The underlying principle that allows for transfer between languages is that certain processes are basic to reading and speaking; once they are mastered in one language, they can be applied to another language (Genesee, 1987; Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Krashen, 1996; Perez & Torres-Guzman, 1996). It has also been suggested that cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), which includes literacy-related aspects of language, is common or "interdependent across languages" (Cummins & Swain, 1986).

Comprehensible Input

Choosing language and vocabulary that is for the most part comprehensible to second language learners is the key to their growth in the acquisition of the target language. Hamayan and Damico (1991) explain it this way.

In first language acquisition, meanings of words are often made obvious by context (Krashen, 1985). The child first understands the context, and subsequently understands the utterances associated with the context. From the early 1930's Vygotsky described this process as the primary mechanism for the development of thought and language (Vygotsky, 1987). Krashen's input hypothesis in its most basic form says simply that language acquisition progresses as the acquirer comprehends texts that are slightly beyond his or her current level of development in the target language (precisely Vygotsky's notion of the "zone of proximal development.") p. 98

Krashen (1982) posits four characteristics of optimal input for comprehension:

1. Optimal input is comprehensible, that is, the message is understandable by the learner regardless of his/her level of second language proficiency;
2. Optimal input is interesting and/or relevant;
3. Optimal input is not grammatically sequenced;
4. Optimal input must be in sufficient quantity, although it is difficult to specify just how much is enough since it depends upon the individual learner.

Ovando and Collier (1998) relate the idea of comprehensible input in second language acquisition to that of first language acquisition in children.

In first language acquisition for children, adults and older children provide natural input through caregiver speech, a modification of vocabulary and structures to enable meaningful communication with the child. Some common characteristics of caregiver speech are focusing on the here and now, shortening sentences, repeating through rephrasing, inserting pauses, modeling what the child seems to want to say, correcting errors indirectly, and focusing on communication rather than language form. (p. 95)

Very simply, the way in which adults often talk to young children provides the means for the pre-verbal youngsters to begin to process language in "comprehensible" format. The same strategies that work for children in acquiring their first language also work for them in acquiring a second.

Research has also been done that indicates the type of language used by teachers of students learning a second language is similar to that of “caregiver speech.” Ovando and Collier (1998, pp. 97-98) explain how teachers help create “comprehensible input.”

Researchers focusing on teacher talk as a course of the second language input have found modifications in speech similar to those in caregiver speech, such as nonverbal pauses, gestures, and facial expression; changes in volume and manner of delivery; simplification of syntax; repetitions, paraphrases, and expansions; use of visual aids and realia; and comprehension checks. Interactional features of teacher talk have added to the above strategies, clarification and confirmation checks, explicit error correction and modeling appropriate form, as well as introducing playfulness with language. (Smallwood, 1992)

Content-Based Instruction

One approach to teaching English language learners is to teach content as well as the language. This approach is more a philosophy than a methodology, so there are many appropriate models currently in use (Stryker & Leaver, 1997). Some examples of content-based instruction (CBI) include theme-based courses, sheltered content courses and adjunct instruction (Briton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989).

Theme-based courses are organized as a series of modules in which the language teacher teaches both subject matter and language. In sheltered content instruction, the teacher uses special methods and techniques to make the content more accessible to the ELL. Adjunct instruction requires the student be enrolled concurrently in a language course and a content course that are linked through collaboration between the two teachers (Briton, et al., 1989). These strategies work well for secondary school programs where content/subjects are already separated into departments and courses. That is, students are enrolled in subject-area classes such as English, math, science, and social

studies. For example, a secondary student needing ESL services may be enrolled in the above mentioned classes, plus an ESL class. This ESL class might conceivably try to incorporate various thematic units or modules, rotating emphasis on different subjects. For instance, there might be a thematic unit that incorporates social studies concepts and vocabulary. The next unit might be a science unit, emphasizing biology or health concepts and vocabulary.

In a sheltered content ESL program, the student might have “Sheltered English,” “Sheltered Math,” “Sheltered Science,” and “Sheltered Social Studies,” as well as a regular (general education) physical education class and art. The last two classes are often used to satisfy mainstreaming goals with students due to the nature of the classes being naturally less reliant on verbal skills.

The third approach requires the student to be concurrently enrolled in two classes. For example, the student might take the regular (general education) science class, but also be required to enroll in an ESL class that would focus on the terms, vocabulary, and related science concepts. The curriculum of the ESL class would closely follow that of the regular science class and the teachers would often collaborate so that the ELL students would be able to complete the requirements of the regular science class.

However, for elementary school children whose classroom teacher is responsible for teaching most subjects, a similar, yet necessarily different approach is used.

Whole Language

According to Ovando and Collier (1998), current ESL and bilingual approaches advocate the whole-language philosophy. The whole-language philosophy of teaching is

based upon results of language research conducted over the last 20 years analyzing the developmental process that occurs naturally as children acquire their first language (oral and written). The same natural processes are at work in second language acquisition, and increasing research evidence shows that the same strategies can be extremely effective in second language teaching (Enright & McCloskey, 1988; Freeman & Freeman, 1992; Hamayan, 1993).

Whole-language approaches focus on using language, focusing on meaning first, getting students to write early and often, accepting invented spelling for beginners, but expecting conventional spelling as students advance in the writing process, exposing students to high-quality literature and authentic texts from diverse written genres, allowing student to make choices in reading and encouraging all to be voracious readers (Willis, 1995).

Part to whole approaches to language teaching dominated first- and second- language teaching in the U.S. until the 1970's. Isolated units of language—sounds, letters, grammar rules, and words—were emphasized as a first step in learning language. Whole language emphasizes a focus on meaning first, and the parts come naturally later, as students are ready to focus on the details of language. Whole language teachers avoid the practices of teaching skills in isolation or in a strict sequence, using readers with controlled vocabulary, or using worksheets and drill. In contrast, a whole-language lesson might start with reading a story together, or collecting litter in the schoolyard and classifying it by attributes, or hand-making tortillas and eating them, or creating an origami figure.

Whole language principles are very humanistic, respecting the strengths each student brings to the classroom and encourage discovery learning through extensive social interaction, with students and teachers are partners in the learning process. Curriculum is constantly negotiated to meet the students' interest and needs. Building on the students' prior knowledge and experiences, in a culturally and linguistically diverse class, the rich linguistic and culture resources shared by students and teacher create a dynamic, empowering context for learning. Whole language allows self-correction to emerge by addressing accuracy through engagement in functional contexts that emphasize fluency over accuracy. (Ovando and Collier, 1998, pp. 113-114)

Affective Variables

Motivation and Attitude

Although the process of second language acquisition as described is typical for most second language learners, individual variables may influence the rate and level of proficiency attained. Variables such as motivation and attitude can influence students' learning in positive or negative ways. Students can be influenced by their own motivation and attitude, that of their parents and community, as well as the attitude the teacher holds for them (Gopaul-McNichol & Thomas-Presswood, 1999).

The student's attitude toward the dominant (English-speaking) culture may influence how proficient the student may become in the second language. If the student has a positive attitude, which increases motivation, the result will be greater second language proficiency. Conversely, if a student has a negative attitude, and motivation is low, the level of proficiency may also be low (Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

The attitudes of the parents and community also greatly influence the child (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Ogbu, 1992). When parents encourage the child to learn the second language and are also involved in learning the language, children are usually more motivated to learn. When parents have a negative attitude towards learning the target language or speak negatively of the members of the dominant culture, the students are less likely to progress quickly in learning the target language.

Also, negative attitudes held by school personnel toward the speech of nonnative speakers present major pedagogical barriers to both PEP and CLD students. Whether

consciously or unconsciously applied, these attitudes can result in the lowering of expectations (Brophy, 1983; Cummins, 1986) and inappropriate referrals (Rodriquez, Prieto, & Rued, 1984) for special education consideration.

Personality Traits

Personality traits are another variable that may affect second language learning. Personality traits include levels of self-esteem, extroversion, anxiety, comfort in risk-taking, sensitivity to rejection, empathy, inhibition, and tolerance of ambiguity (Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

Ellis (1992) describes the differences as “an approach to learning” (p. 203). He describes an “active” approach to learning as one having a high tolerance for ambiguity, being a persistent problem-solver, someone who enjoys making decisions, and is very independent. In contrast, a “passive” approach to learning is one who has a low tolerance for ambiguity, wants the teacher to explain everything, does not enjoy discovery learning, and relies heavily on others. He attributes these different approaches to an individual’s combination of personality, accustomed style of instruction and having a positive or negative attitude towards learning the language.

Cognitive Factors

Intelligence has traditionally been measured by intelligence (IQ) tests, however, these tests often become a test of language proficiency, especially for CLD students. There has been substantial research indicating that language proficiency accounts for a large portion of the test variability in IQ tests (Hamayan & Damico, 1991). In fact, according to them,

When dealing with the normal and above-normal range of variation, it is not always the “intelligent” students who master the second language easily. The students who may be identified as having “low intelligence” are not necessarily the ones who will have more than the usual difficulties with the second language. Factors other than intelligence seem to play a larger role in these cases. (p. 48)

One of these other factors is learning styles (being field dependent or field independent), and the match or mismatch with the way the language is being taught (Ellis, 1992; Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

Another cognitive style that Ellis discusses (1992) is reflectivity and impulsivity. He purports that, “Individuals who have a reflective cognitive style tend to mull things over when making a decision. Conversely, an impulsive person tends to make a quick guess when faces with uncertainty” (p. 195). Therefore, students who think things through more will make fewer errors.

The preferred way in which students take in information can either be aural or visual. Many people are considered bimodal, and learning via one mode or the other does not contribute significantly to a difference in outcome. But for about 25% of all learners, the mode of instruction does influence their success as learners (Ellis, 1992).

Problems of Special Education Placements for CLD Students

In the past, CLD children have often been misdiagnosed and misplaced thus resulting in an overrepresentation in special education programs (Bernstein, 1989). Mercer (1973) in her classic study reported that Mexican-American children were placed in classes for the mentally retarded at a rate of ten times as often as their Anglo peers. Chandler and Plakos (1971) found that Mexican-American students were placed in

classes for educable mentally retarded at rates two to three times higher than their Anglo counterparts.

Ironically, there is now evidence that these and other court cases, which were decided in favor of those who complained that school districts had erroneously placed non-Anglo students--especially those with limited English proficiency--into special education programs, has led some school districts to hesitate to place even eligible non-Anglo students in special education programs, regardless of their educational needs (Bergin, 1980; Vasquez-Chairez, 1988). Data collected by the California State Department of Education pupil count verifies the trend of shifting from over-identification of minorities in special education to under-representation (Vasquez-Chairez, 1988).

Historically, there have also been many problems with the special education referral process. These problems occur whether or not the student who is referred is culturally and linguistically different. Algozzine, Christenson, and Ysseldyke (1982) reported that a national survey of directors of special education revealed that 92% of students referred to special education were evaluated, and 73% of those who were evaluated were found eligible for services. Ten years later, in 1992, some of the same researchers reported that in some cases, depending on the type of assessment procedures that are used, virtually, all of the students referred are found to be eligible for special education (Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurston, 1992). Research such as this supports the conclusion that the most important decision made in the entire assessment process is the decision by a regular classroom teacher to refer a student for assessment.

Some teachers may refer CLD students for special education consideration without considering that differences in expressive language may be due to differences in culture and language proficiency or language use. Some teachers may have negative attitudes towards CLD students and may therefore be quicker to refer students for assessment. Finally, the professionals interpreting the test results of CLD students may fail to take into consideration factors such as language dominance, language proficiency, and cultural differences. Well-trained professionals are needed to be able to distinguish between academic difficulties resulting from true physiologically-based disabilities and those resulting from environmental, social, experiential, linguistic, or cultural factors.

Students who do not possess an intrinsic impairment or disability but who are undereducated or "mis-educated" cannot be considered special education students. For example, some students have been out of school for a period of years due to political unrest or instability in their country of origin and so their schooling has been disrupted. Because they have not been in school, they are seriously behind their peers in all academic areas. Other students have received minimal or poorly conceived support services in their current school environment. For these students, lack of progress can be explained by poor or inadequate instruction. In other words, external conditions rather than a condition within the learner are disabling the child. In comparison, special education is for those students who have a documented disability or handicapping condition that they bring to the learning situation and that seriously impedes their achievement despite the fact that they are offered an adequate and continuous educational program.

Assessment of Individuals Through the Means of

Oral and/or Written Language

Academic Assessment

When it seems necessary to assess a student through oral or written language who is still learning to communicate through English, there are a number of behavior and learning variables that complicate the evaluation. One such variable is the similarity of linguistic behaviors seen in students who are learning English as a second language and students who are experiencing native language learning impairments. Students learning a second language will be expected to experience difficulties in grammatical forms, lexical selection, fluency, and comprehension on a basic level. Although these are markers that indicate communicative difficulty in monolingual English speakers, they cannot be interpreted in the same context for ELL students. When these problematic behaviors are observed in ELL students, they may only indicate difficulty in English and not necessarily an intrinsic language-learning impairment.

Behavioral Assessment

Researchers have pointed out some difficulties in identifying second language students for referral using procedures designed for mainstream, monolingual youngsters. They point out that if behaviors that are included on problem behavior checklists for native speakers were applied to normally developing second language learners, they would result in misidentification of these learners as disabled. Willig (1986) states,

Many child characteristics that are considered to be symptomatic of learning disability in monolingual children are so closely related to language, that when applied to children trying to function in an unfamiliar language, they simply describe aspects of the second language learning situation. (p. 167)

For example, in the area of language development, such checklists often include behaviors such as "speaks infrequently," "refuses to answer questions" or "has poor comprehension." While these may indicate potential problems for native speakers, in many cases they can lead to misjudgment of second language learners (Ortiz & Maldonado-Colon, 1986). This is why it is important for educators and school professionals to have an understanding of the process and variables involved in second language acquisition. Teachers may also assume that once the child has basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) that they also have the cognitive academic language proficiency skills (CALPS) as well. As defined earlier, these types of skills are related, but take differing amounts of time to develop. It is erroneous to think that because a child can converse with friends and teachers in English before school and during lunch that they understand and can perform all the academic tasks required of them in between.

Attention and Memory Problems

When students have few prior experiences on which to relate new information, they may find it difficult to pay attention and to remember (Fradd et al., 1989). They may also become restless and inattentive which could resemble characteristics associated with attention deficit disorder, with or without hyperactivity.

Social and Emotional Assessment

Students in the process of learning how to function successfully in a new language and culture might predictably experience social trauma and emotional problems (Fradd, Barona, & Santos de Barona, 1989).

Summary

There are many variables which influence an individual's language acquisition. The process of language acquisition is like many other processes. It takes time and sometimes the steps are painstakingly small. It can also confuse those who are not aware of the variables involved. For example, while it may appear that a child communicates easily in the second language (BICS) that does not guarantee that the child has the skills to perform at the same level academically (CALP). School administrators and educators must have a working knowledge of the process of second language development in order to have a greater understanding of the possible differences in language production of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

The Restructuring of Special Education Assessment

The traditional goal of special education assessment has been diagnostic; evaluators thought they needed to know the etiology and diagnostic category of a child's problem to know what type of intervention was appropriate (Baca & De Valenzuela, 1994).

However, the goal of assessment has now become advocacy oriented. In this approach, the assumption that the problem lies within the child is reserved as a last possibility, with the immediate assumption being that the manifest problem lies in interactions between the student and the educational context.

No longer is the authority of a standardized test battery, administered in a formal testing situation by an unfamiliar examiner, accepted as valid. Rather, curricular adaptations by the classroom teacher, in consultation with peers or colleagues is the first step in student assistance and assessment. This process of "prereferral intervention" assumes that the child is able to learn in the general classroom and that modifications to the regular program, with varying levels of support, will offer the student an effective and enriching education program. Information regarding the results of these curricular modifications is applicable to any post-referral special education assessment and, therefore, should be well documented.

When formal assessment is identified as necessary, a variety of information must be gathered. This should include a review of existing records, the results of prereferral interventions and curricular adaptations, work samples, formal and informal assessment, and observations. No one individual's observations or evaluation interpretations should have precedence; as with prereferral interventions, this process too necessitates a collaborative effort. (p. 5)

Federal legislation, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA), also requires that a multidisciplinary team participate in the assessment and diagnostic process (Gonzalez, Brusca-Vega, & Yawkey, 1996).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Although the people germane to this study might not conventionally be referred to as “participants,” this is the term that will be used to refer to the individuals who were instrumental in this case. The participants in this case study were the researcher, the student, the elementary school principal, the teacher and two teacher’s aides that worked directly with the student. A third teacher’s aide, although not one with whom the student had daily contact, was an important resource to the school because she was the only one in the school who could speak Spanish.

The Researcher

The researcher was a second year graduate student assigned to a school psychologist during a practicum placement who served this school. During the course of a conversation between the school principal, supervising psychologist, and researcher, the principal mentioned that he had two ESL students, one of whom he was considering referring for special education evaluation.

The researcher volunteered to do an observation of the student. After a 30-minute observation of the student in the ESL room with the teacher’s aide, the researcher concluded that based on her formal educational training in Teaching English to Speaker’s of Other Languages (TESOL) and over seven years of teaching and administrative experience in this field, that the student in question did not need further evaluation for special education services. However, since the researcher’s conclusion was not in

agreement with the classroom teacher, the researcher was given permission to study the case more in depth.

The Student

The student was an eight-year-old Hispanic male with limited English speaking, oral comprehension, reading, and writing skills. He had emigrated from Mexico with his family about six months before the observations began. He had been briefly enrolled in two other out-of-state schools before coming to this school.

The Principal

The principal of this elementary school is also the district's special education coordinator. He holds two Master's degrees, one in Educational Administration and one in Special Education. He has been employed with the school district for twenty-one years. He was first a teacher, then a principal, and later added the assignment of the special education coordinator for the district.

Every student who enrolls in the district is required to fill out a Home Language Survey. One of the questions that it asks is, "What language is spoken in the home?" Whenever a language other than English is reported, the principal gives the student a language proficiency test called the Language Assessment Scales (LAS; Duncan & De Avila, 1990, 1994).

The Second Grade Classroom Teacher; Ms. B

For purposes of reference, the second grade classroom teacher will be referred to as Ms. B. The student was placed in a class with 20 other students and a teacher who had 28 years of experience. She had been an employee in the district for 24 years. She had a

B.A. in elementary education and had taken additional courses over the years to maintain her state teaching certification. She had no training in ESL or bilingual education, but had taken required courses in Human Relations and multicultural education.

Teacher's aides

First teacher's aide; Ms. A. Over the course of the observation period, there were two different teacher's aides that were assigned to work with the student. For purposes of reference, the first teacher's aide will be referred to as Ms. A. Ms A had been trained as a sign language interpreter. She had originally been hired by the district to work with a deaf child, part-time in the pre-school program. According to her, after an unsuccessful attempt to hire a part-time bilingual teacher's aide, the principal hired her to work part-time with the ESL student. She had been working with the student for about two months when the observation period began. However, less than two weeks into the observation period, she left the district for a full-time position in sign language interpretation in another district.

Second teacher's aide; Ms C. A second unsuccessful search was conducted for a bilingual teacher's aide. For purposes of reference, the second teacher's aide will be referred to as Ms. C. The second aide that was hired had been a teacher's aide in special education classrooms and had most recently worked as a special education school secretary, but had no experience in ESL or bilingual classrooms.

Third teacher's aide; Ms. D. Ms. D was the only person in the building who could speak Spanish. When Julio and his sister first arrived, Ms. D was released from her regular duties as a teacher's aide in a special education classroom, to help acquaint the children with everything in the school.

Setting

The setting is a K-5th grade elementary school with an enrollment of 278 students. It is located in northeast Iowa in a community with a population of about 8000. It is one of three elementary schools in the district. While there have been a few ESL students in the district in the past, there have not been any enrolled in this school.

Second Grade Classroom; Ms. B

The second grade classroom is one of two second grade classrooms in the school. There are 20 students and 1 teacher.

ESL Room; Ms. A and Ms. C

The ESL room was a small room located within the library that was also used to store audio-visual equipment, extra or out-of-circulation books, a couple of bookcases, student desks and several boxes of teachers' classroom things. There were two tables, six chairs, and a chalkboard. There were two students (Julio and his sister) and one teacher's aide.

Instrumentation

The design of this case study was such that no standardized instruments were used. Observations were recorded and analyzed for patterns. An interview protocol was developed and used to elicit information from the principal and the teacher's aides. This

protocol is found in the appendix. Information was also gained via conversations with the student's classroom teacher, and the parents of the student through the aid of a Spanish-speaking interpreter. Information gained from observations, interviews and conversations were used in the case study.

Procedure

Observations

Observational data were gathered over a period of six weeks, twice a week, two hours a day, for a total of 24 hours. The researcher sat in the classroom with the student and recorded observations of the interactions and activities between the student and the teacher or teacher's aide. The researcher was an observer, not a participant in the classroom. Written running records were the method of recording the data. After each day of observation, the researcher examined the data, (the running records) and placed each event under a category. Over the first week, or 4 hours of observational recordings, several categories had developed. By the end of the second week, or 8 hours of observational recordings, there were three categories that clearly had more entries than the other categories. The researcher began to focus on the themes of curriculum and materials, instructional strategies, and socialization and behaviors of the student.

Eighty percent of the observational time (or 20 hours) was spent in the ESL room. Ten percent of the time (or 2 hours) was spent observing in the second grade classroom of the student. Another 10% (or 2 hours) of the observational time was spent following the student around to four different teaching centers. This was a special instructional day

in which all the students in the school were re-grouped across grades and rotated between four learning centers throughout the school.

Interviews

An additional 6 hours (or an additional 25% of the time spent in observation) was spent interviewing the principal (1 hour), teacher's aides (3 hours), in informal conversations with school staff, including the student's homeroom teacher (1 hour) and the student's parents (1 hour).

The principal was interviewed at the end of the observational period. The teacher's aides were interviewed at the beginning of the observational period. The first aide was interviewed the first day of observations and the second aide was interviewed on the second day she was observed. The student's classroom teacher met with the researcher twice during the first week of observations to discuss the educational needs of the student. The researcher did not ask the teacher the formal interview questions as found in the appendix because the teacher unsolicitedly shared much of the same information. The researcher felt that no more information would have been gained from a formal interview with the teacher than was shared informally. The informal interviews/conversations revealed most of the same information that would have been forthcoming from the formal interview found in the appendix.

The information gained from interviews and from informal conversations with school personnel lends support in understanding some of the observations.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY

Background Information

The subject of the case study is an eight-year-old boy in second grade who will be referred to as Julio. Julio lives in a small city (population 8000) in northeast Iowa with his father, mother, sister, and brother. His family emigrated from Mexico less than a year ago. The children enrolled in the present school in Iowa in November of 1998. Since the time of their enrollment, their attendance had been good. Each had missed only a few times due to illness or doctors' appointments.

Julio and his sister are currently the only two students in the whole district that are in need of English as a Second Language services. The school district has an enrollment of 1833 students, grades kindergarten through 12th. There are 3 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 1 high school. This elementary school has an enrollment of 278 students, grades kindergarten through 5th.

Results of a Language Proficiency Test

When the student first enrolled, the principal administered the Language Assessment Scales (LAS; Duncan & De Avila, 1990, 1994). He reported that this is standard procedure whenever the Home Language Survey, which is routinely given to all enrolling students, indicates that the student's first language is not English. Julio's scores indicated that he lacked proficiency in English reading, writing, listening/comprehension and speaking skills. The observations of the researcher support that conclusion as well.

Therefore, the principal was required to provide language support and assistance for the student in order to meet his educational needs.

Summary of Observational Notes

The student was observed in the ESL room for a total of 20 hours. Sometimes his sister was also in the room during the observations, and sometimes it was just the teacher's aide and the student. The following descriptions are intended to provide a glimpse into the educational environment of the student. These related incidents are by no means the sum total educational experience of the child, but are representative samples. They represent what was happening in the child's second grade classroom and in the ESL room under two different teacher's aides. The following descriptions of worksheets and activities represent a typical day for the student with each instructor. The researcher also included comments and behaviors of the student that might be useful as examples to refer to in the discussion section.

Ms. A: First Teacher's Aide

The teacher's aide was assigned the primary responsibility for teaching the student English. The researcher spent an hour prior to the first observation interviewing Ms. A, using the formal interview protocol (see Appendix).

Interview with Ms. A

As mentioned previously, Ms. A was originally hired by the school district on a part-time basis to interpret for a hearing impaired preschool child. Ms. A had attended a community college program for 9 months to prepare for certification as a sign language interpreter. She had no training in teaching or in ESL.

To prepare for instruction of the students, she generally copied pages from phonics workbooks and drew on her experience working in a pre-school classroom and her own experiences as a student.

She said that her expectations for the student were low. She said that she thought “he must be LD” (a label from special education terminology meaning one who has learning disabilities.) As an example, she pointed to the board on which was written,

Today is Wednesday, February 11, 1999.

Yesterday was Tuesday, February 10, 1999.

Tomorrow will be Thursday, February 12, 1999.

She said that Julio could not figure out the days of the week. She said that she used to tell Julio to do one (fill in the blanks for one sentence) and his sister to do one, and she would do one. She said that the only one Julio could do and get right was “yesterday.” She said if she gave him a different one to do, he would get it wrong. She said the way he could figure out what to write in the blanks for the sentence beginning with “Yesterday...” was by looking at what had been written the day before for the sentence beginning with “Today...”

She also said he was “way behind” in every subject for his age. She said she could understand that for English and reading, but not for math. She thought that since the numbers are the same in Spanish and English, that he should be able to do the same math as the other second graders.

When asked about curriculum and materials, she said there were none. She said that she used the phonics workbooks that were intended for use with elementary age

students. She used the handwriting and math workbooks from his second grade classroom.

When asked about communication between home and school, she said that the student's parents don't speak English either. She said that there was one teacher's aide in the building that did speak Spanish, so usually, she would have to be the one to speak to the parents. Or, often times, this aide would give the message to the students in Spanish and tell them to tell their parents.

When asked whether she had an awareness of any social or emotional needs of the child, she said that she knew "he didn't get along with the other kids too well on the playground sometimes."

Typical Day: Opening Exercises

Every day, Ms. A starts classtime by having the students (Julio and his sister) write, copy, or fill in the blanks to the following sentences on the chalkboard. Then they read together,

"Today is Wednesday, February 11, 1999."

"Yesterday was Tuesday, February 10, 1999."

"Tomorrow will be Thursday, February 12, 1999."

Typical Day: Lunch Menu

Most days, Ms. A discussed the lunch menu for the day. For example, on one day, Ms. A named off the items that the students would be served for lunch. "Hamburger on a bun, tator tots, lettuce salad, and peaches." She then proceeded to try to discuss what each item was.

“Hamburger, do you know what hamburger is?”

The students repeated the word, “Hamburger.”

Ms. A prompted, “Like when you go to McDonald’s, you get hamburgers.” The students looked at each other, looked at her and Julio’s sister said, “Yes.”

“Tator tots,” Ms. A continued. “Tator tots are made from potatoes, but they taste more like French fries.” She went on to discuss the next item on the menu.

“Lettuce salad,” she said. “You know what lettuce salad is, right?”

“Yes,” the sister nodded, “salade” she said to Julio in Spanish. He nodded his head slightly.

“Peaches are fruit. They’re orange and sweet.” At this point the teacher’s aide ended the discussion of lunch and went on to the phonics worksheets of the day.

Typical Day: Worksheet 1

Ms. A put the following letters on the chalkboard: a, i, u. Then she pointed to each letter and said the “short vowel sound” for the letter. She gave the students a worksheet with pictures of objects. Below each picture was a one-syllable word, most of which were three letter words with the middle letter, the vowel, left out. Ms. A said the word, and the students were supposed to fill in the missing letter, choosing from a, i, or u. The following list is a sample of the student’s worksheet (without the pictures) and the words that the teacher’s aide said.

	<u>Student’s Worksheet</u>	<u>Teacher’s Words</u>
1.	b_g	bug
2.	r_t	rat

- | | | |
|-----|------|------|
| 3. | w_ng | wing |
| 4. | p_g | pig |
| 5. | t_b | tub |
| 6. | c_n | can |
| 7. | t_ck | tack |
| 8. | d_ck | duck |
| 9. | m_lk | milk |
| 10. | s_x | six |

During the time that the students were doing the worksheet, and listening to the teacher's aide, they tried to repeat the words to themselves so as to hear the vowel sound again. Ms. A would tell them to "keep their eyes on their own paper." Once Julio tried to see what letter his sister had written down on her paper, but his sister didn't want him to see, and called out, "Teacher, Julio looking me paper." Then Ms. A frowned at Julio and placed a book upright between the siblings.

When the students were finished, Ms. A wrote the words on the board and said them again. The students checked their papers to see if the letters they had written matched what she had written on the chalkboard. When the students had a correct answer, they would say "good job" to themselves. When their answers were incorrect, Ms. A had them erase the incorrect letter, and write in the correct answer. When they were done correcting the worksheets, the students received a sticker from Ms. A to put on their paper. Julio said, "This is very cool" (in reference to the sticker he chose). His

sister said, “This is gro___.” (The last part of the word was inaudible.) The teacher said, “Stickers are very reinforcing with them.” Then she said to Julio’s sister, “Give me that back.” She was referring to the sheet of stickers. The sister complied and said, “Okay.”

Typical Day: Worksheet 2

A new worksheet was given to the students. Ms. A read the directions for this worksheet. “Say the word. Color the picture that it names.” The teacher’s aide read each word for the student. The words were one-syllable words, with long vowel sounds. For example, there was a picture of a gate and a goat. The word printed on the worksheet was gate. Another example was kite and coat, where the printed word was kite. When the students finished, they were each given another sticker to put on the paper. Julio said, “One more. What do here?” pointing at the next worksheet.

Typical Day: Worksheet 3

Ms. A said, “Something new.” Then she read the directions. “Color each picture whose name has a short sound of O. The teacher’s aide pronounced the words, elongating the vowel sound for emphasis. There were pictures of each of the items on the worksheet, but no letters/words. The students circled the pictures instead of coloring them. Ms. A said to me, “They don’t like to color the pictures, so I told them they could just circle the pictures whenever the directions say to color them.” Below is a sample of the words that Ms. A read.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. top | 6. tack |
| 2. pop—she added, “like a balloon” | 7. box |
| 3. cup | 8. pot |

4. lock

9. rock

5. sock

10. hot

When the students finished the worksheet, the teacher's aide had them correct their papers. She wrote the words she had said on the chalkboard, pronounced each one again, and underlined the vowels. If the word had a short O sound, she circled the word to indicate that the students should have circled the corresponding picture. Again, the students received a sticker upon completion of correcting the papers. Julio said, "This is a very cool car. Oh, beautiful car. I want more page."

Teacher said, "One more."

Julio said, "Ten more."

Typical Day: Worksheet 4

The teacher's aide handed the students another worksheet and said, "Remember when we did this? Circle the pictures whose names rhyme." She gave an example of words that rhyme; man and can. The students had already started to put their pencils on the worksheets.

"Wait, wait, listen," Ms. A said. "Number one, ox, axe, box, fox."

"Oh my goodness," said Julio quietly, looking at his worksheet.

"Number two," said the teacher's aide, "remember to circle three. Listen. Dot, pot, hot, cat."

"Number three," she continued, "pop, top, cup, mop. Number four: dog, tag, log, frog." When she finished reading the words, she began to write them on the chalkboard. She read each list again, and crossed out the word that didn't rhyme with the others.

“Oh my goodness,” Julio said as he corrected the errors on his worksheet. Then, he said, “Stickers _____. (The last part of the request was inaudible.) One more page for me?”

Ms A: “It’s time for math.”

Julio: “What is math?”

Ms. A: “Numbers.”

Julio: “Yeah. And stickers.”

He was looking at the sticker sheet with the cars on it. Ms. A took the sheet away from him and said, “I’m going to find different stickers.”

Typical Day: Worksheet 5

Ms. A gave Julio a math addition worksheet and a sheet with numbers written on it. The second sheet was one that Julio had copied. The first row had numbers 1-10 written across the page. The second row had numbers 11-20, the third row had numbers 21-30, and so on. He used this sheet to help him find the answers to the addition problems. The teacher’s aide had him read each problem aloud. She modeled the first one for him, “Two plus three is five.”

Julio read the next problem. “Four plus one is six.” Actually, he had written the correct answer after looking at his number line. But, instead of saying the correct number, five, he said, “six.” Ms. A said that he frequently confuses the numbers 5, 6, and 7. She said that he usually has added the numbers correctly, and he can say all of them, but he sometimes confuses which word goes with which number.

Typical Day: Worksheets 6-10

Julio did four more worksheets in math. All addition, two using the number line, and two without consulting the number line.

Handwriting

Julio was told to copy two pages of letters into his handwriting notebook. This day's letters were upper and lower case Q and R.

Ms. B: Second-Grade Classroom Teacher

The student was observed on two occasions in his second grade classroom, each time for a period of one hour. Prior to coming to the class to observe, the researcher had discussed the purpose of the observations with the teacher and secured permission from her to observe her classroom. However, on both occasions when the researcher entered the classroom to observe, she was approached by the classroom teacher and urged to "tutor" the student. For example, upon entering the classroom the first time, the teacher said, "Oh, I'm so glad you're here. I kind of run out of things for him to do, you know. I always have to hunt stuff up to copy for him to have something to color." The researcher explained that she was only there to observe the student within the context of the classroom.

Typical Day of Observation in Second-Grade Classroom

When the researcher entered the room, the student was sitting at his desk. The students were working on a worksheet in regard to book they were reading in class. Julio also had a paper or worksheet on his desk, but he was not very engaged by it. He also had some colored pencils on his desk, and the worksheet had some colored places, but it

was incomplete. Julio was looking around the room, watching other students, looking at things on the walls. After a few minutes, the teacher called all of the students to the front of the room for some “group instruction.”

The teacher sat on a chair next to a large tablet of paper. On this paper was written some vocabulary words. The students were all seated on the floor in front of her. She read the first word on the list and asked the students if they knew what the word meant. The first word was “initiate.” Many of the students raised their hands, including Julio. The teacher called on one of the students to give an answer. The child’s name was Kayla. She said, “It means to start something.”

The teacher said, “Yes, Kayla, it does mean to start. Did anyone else find a different definition? Jordan? What did you find?” (Jordan also had his hand raised.)

“To begin to do something you never did before.”

“Yes, said the teacher, “and in the story we’ve been reading, what did the main character initiate? Keely?”

“He, the boy who wanted to buy the dogs, initiated a plan to make some money, so he would have enough money to buy the puppies.”

“Okay, that’s right, boys and girls. Now, what’s this next word? Bailey?”

“Congregate.”

“Yes, and what does that word mean?” Again, most of the children, including Julio raised their hands. “Julio?” she had called on him.

Julio and the others put down their hands. He looked at the teacher, and then at the other children, but didn’t say anything. The teacher then called on Robert for a

definition. The teacher went through the rest of the list of words this way, then the children were told to return to their desks and put things away, in preparation to leave the classroom to go to lunch.

Ms. C: Second Teacher's Aide

This was the week that Ms. C replaced Ms. A as the teacher's aide assigned to teach the ESL classes.

Interview with Ms. C

The second person hired for the teacher's aide position will be referred to as Ms. C.

To prepare for instruction, during her one hour of paid "preparation" time, she looked for work sheets and through some of the magazines stored in the ESL room to copy. There were also now a few ESL materials in the room that had arrived from somewhere.

Her expectations were also that the student was "LD." She said, "he was always behind." For example, when he copied something from the chalkboard, he would often write the wrong letter and have to go back and change it.

When asked about a curriculum for the student, she said she used whatever she could find. She tried to teach each student new vocabulary words each week. For Julio, she made up a list of words from the worksheets she had used with him the week before. His sister's classroom teacher, on the other hand, gave her the same list of words that she gave to everyone else in the class. The sister and Ms. C would choose 10 of the 20 words on her list to work on during the week. The sister would take a spelling test with Ms. C

each week, the day before she would take the test with the rest of her class in her classroom. (This is a great example of how one can modify and adapt the regular grade level curriculum to fit the abilities/needs of the ELL.)

Ms. C did not believe that Julio was at the appropriate level of education for his age. When asked if she was aware of any social or emotional needs of the child, she said that the classroom teacher had told her that he hits and pushes other children on the playground. She said that he'd been sent to the principal's office for it. The classroom teacher had come to her and asked her to talk to the child about his behavior of the playground. (This is an example of the second-grade classroom teacher not taking responsibility for the student as a member of her class.)

She spends about two hours a day with the child. He comes to the ESL room whenever his class is not at recess, or in "specials," that is, art, music, P.E., library. She sees his greatest strengths as being that he's "friendly, outgoing, happy, eager to try and tries hard." She said his weaknesses are "not being able to speak English and the physical problems with peers."

Her educational preparation was two years of graphic arts, and 14 years as a teacher's aide/associate, and school secretary. She also has a brother with special needs.

The following description of worksheets and activities are typical for a day in her classroom.

Typical Day: Worksheet 1

The first worksheet Ms. C gave the students today was entitled, "Short Vowel Test." For each number, the worksheet had one picture and two big letters, A and B. The

teacher's aide read two sentences and the students had to circle A, if the first sentence described the picture, or B if the second sentence described the picture. The following sentences are examples taken from the worksheet.

1. A. Tad has a fan.
 B. Todd has fun.
2. A. Jan's pen is in a box.
 B. Kim's pin is not in a box.
3. A. The gift is in the bag.
 B. The quilt is on the bed.
4. A. The men set up the tent.
 B. The man on the bus left.

Upon completion of the worksheet, Ms. C. wrote the sentences on the board and circled the letter of the correct sentence. She then pointed out the words of distinction in each picture.

Subtraction Flash Cards

Ms. C had brought a cup full of coins for Julio to use for manipulatives when working on math concepts. In this activity, Julio picked a flash card, read the equation and used the coins, or his fingers to figure out the answer if he could not figure it out in his head. These were one-digit math problems, such as "7 take away 2 is 5."

Connect the Dots/ Typical Day: Worksheet 2

Ms. C gave Julio a worksheet that was a "connect the dots" puzzle using the numbers 1-10. Mrs. C pronounced each the names of the numbers as Julio found them

and drew the connecting lines. At number 6, the teacher began to write the numbers on the chalkboard. She tried to sound out each letter after she wrote the word. When she got to “eight,” and she realized there were some silent letters, and told Julio “that is a hard one.” For “nine,” she had Julio spell it out after he said it.

When all the dots were connected, it was a picture of a house. Julio then started to erase one of the lines of the house. Ms. C asked him if it was “too crooked” and whether he was “trying to make it a straight line.”

Julio said, “Better,” as he looked at the newly drawn line.

Ms. C said, “That looks better, much better.”

Julio said, “No. More this.” He requested his teacher to hold the pencil in place on the paper so he could use it as a straight edge. He then started adding to the picture and coloring it. When he was finished, he showed us his product. “I draw me brother, Hector.” He had drawn a face looking out the window. Julio pointed to the picture’s head and added “his hair.”

Ms. C asked, “Does Hector have a lot of hair?”

“Yes,” giggled Julio. “Like a girl.”

Typical Day: Worksheet 3

The next worksheet gave the directions “to match the number with the word and the objects.” For example,

<u>Number</u>	<u>Word</u>	<u>Objects</u> (in place of text, there would be pictures)
1	two	3 diamonds
2	one	2 squares

3	three	4 circles
4	five	1 diamond
5	four	5 rectangles

Julio read each number, drew a line to the corresponding written word and then drew a line to the corresponding picture. He did not have trouble making the connections or pronouncing the numbers, although he had some difficulty with saying the names of the shapes.

Typical Day: Worksheet 4

Worksheet 4 was a “hidden objects” puzzle. There was a large picture that had been drawn to look like a river scene. There was a river, trees, wildlife, clouds in the sky, and so on. However, within the shadows and the way in which the picture was drawn, other shapes could be found. Below the picture were 15 shapes and words to describe them. Ms. C pronounced the words for the students, but they were already busy looking the picture to find the “hidden objects.” Some of the hidden objects/words were—anvil, duck, squirrel, witch’s hat, boot, snake, fish, orange, banana, and pencil.

Typical Day: Worksheet 5

This worksheet had all the letters of the alphabet, uppercase, and lowercase, printed in dashes. The students first traced over the dashes then drew the letters five times.

Typical Day: Matching Game

Ms. C had made a matching game using a list of words with pictures that had been used in a unit of study in an ESL workbook that had ordered by the school. She had

made two copies of the page, colored the pictures with colored pencils, cut out the cards, and laminated them. The students and she then took turns turning over two cards at a time, trying to remember where the “matches” could be found. The students really showed a lot of enthusiasm when playing this game. They were also more “talkative” because they were having fun and teasing each other. Julio said, “Me, the winner. Ms. C, the loser!”

Other Activities Worth Reporting

Ms. C also used different activities throughout the period of observation as springboards for teaching new vocabulary and for engaging as many senses as possible in the learning process. At one point, the researcher observed grass growing in Styrofoam cups and Ms. C explained an activity in which the students went outside and dug up dirt, planted seeds, and watched the grass grow over the course of a couple of weeks. She reported that the grass growing activity had led to a discussion of spring and planting gardens, vegetable names and words used to express tastes, likes and dislikes, and so on. She reported additional such “hands-on” activities that included coloring Easter eggs, and, reading the directions and discussing the vocabulary associated with making microwave popcorn.

Additional Information from Interviews

The Principal

The principal of this elementary school was also the “Special Programs Coordinator” for the district. He administered the English language proficiency test (LAS) when the students enrolled in the school. Although the LAS scores indicated that

the student was a “non-English speaker,” the principal said that the student had “some skills.”

The principal stated that his expectations for the student are that he will become fluent both orally and in written usage. He said that the local Area Education Agency (AEA) provided resources to order for use with the students.

He said that he believed that the student was below the appropriate level of education for his age.

When asked how staff members at the school communicate with the student or the student’s parents, he answered that the students had “enough English that if you spend time at it, you can make the connection.”

The principal was not aware of any social or emotional needs of the child. The principal did not see the child on a regular basis.

The Second-Grade Classroom Teacher

As was stated earlier, the researcher did not ask the classroom teacher for a formal interview. The researcher felt that she had gained substantial information from the teacher through conversations and that no additional useful information would have been gained from asking the teacher the questions found in the Appendix.

The teacher told the researcher on more than one occasion that she thought the student was behind grade-level in Spanish. She based this on a conversation she had had with the one teacher’s aide who could speak Spanish. The researcher cannot comment on how the Spanish speaking teacher’s aide ascertained this information. The teacher felt

that since the child was behind grade level in his first language (Spanish), that he must have a learning disability and should therefore be staffed into special education classes.

The teacher did not devise a curriculum for the student. She said that she did not have any materials for him. She said anything that had come from the AEA office must be in the ESL room.

The teacher said that the Spanish speaking teacher's aide was the best person to talk to if I needed to find out information about Julio's family.

The teacher also said that Julio had been pushing, shoving, and hitting students on the playground. She said that she had sent him to the principal's office, but "even that didn't seem to have any effect on him." She also asked the teacher's aide to talk to him about expectations for behavior at school.

Another concern that the second grade classroom teacher had was that she said that she thought the student had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). She said she thought that because Julio was not always attentive to instruction, that he seemed restless. That he was often off-task, and working on the things he should be.

The Student's Parents

The interactions between the school and the home were limited. There were limited resources within the school to address the communication needs of the parents. There was one teacher's aide at the school (Ms. D) who was bilingual in English and Spanish and offered to translate for the school. The parents did not feel comfortable in relying on their understanding of English, and did not feel comfortable speaking English (conversation with the parents, March 29, 1999). They did not have a telephone, so

messages were usually delivered via the students or through the teacher's aide on her own time after school hours. The parents were enthusiastic about their son learning English. In fact, they said that one of reasons they didn't stay in Texas (and came to Iowa) was so that their children could learn English. They admitted that it was difficult for them at times to be so isolated from family and Spanish-speaking friends, neighbors, TV and newspapers, but that they thought it was the best way to ensure that their children would learn English. They said that if they had stayed in Texas that the children would only speak Spanish because most of the people they would have been around would have spoken Spanish to them. The parents felt that being here, where there were few Spanish speakers, would necessitate their children's learning of English. They thought it was important for their children's future success to be able to speak English well.

CHAPTER 5

CASE ANALYSIS

From this case, three important themes emerged. One of the most important themes that was evident was that the lack of bilingual/ESL and teacher trained personnel effected the quality of instruction received by the student. Secondly, there were few appropriate ESL materials available for the student. Materials that were adapted to use with the student were often still inappropriate. And finally, although not directly observed by the researcher, the socialization and behaviors of the student were directly related to his inability to communicate with his peers and adults within the school.

Lack of Bilingual or ESL Certified Personnel

The effects of not having bilingual or ESL trained and certified personnel are clearly evident in many examples of the observational notes. The teacher's aides who had been assigned primary responsibility for ESL instruction had no experience in teaching, or in bilingual/ESL instruction. Neither did the classroom teacher to whom the child had been assigned.

For example, the first aide used to talk about the lunch menu on a daily basis. The idea of teaching food and food related vocabulary is a very good one. In fact, food is often one of the basic elements of any beginning ESL curriculum. This is due to the fact that everyone has a schema related to food. This is related to Vygotsky's idea of scaffolding, or the "zone of proximal development." There is something already in place (food) on which to build something new (English vocabulary) and ideas about food (Vygotsky, 1978; Freeman & Freeman, 1994). However, the way in which the aide went

about “teaching” the food vocabulary, was probably not highly effective. She did not offer clear explanations. She did not offer visual aides or tangible objects. Probably without even realizing it, she relied on a lot of English vocabulary and a lot of presumptions about what the children may or may not have known about food and their English word equivalents.

Another example of not being trained in instructional strategies was evident in the multitudes of worksheets given to the student. The first teacher’s aide, in particular, was relying very heavily on the visual and auditory senses, and not offering much in terms of diverse learning styles (Ellis, 1992; Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). Not only were worksheets the primary means of instruction, the first teacher’s aide had a limited knowledge of the way in which to use them. For example, she insisted that the students, “keep your eyes on your own papers.” Not only may this have been a new experience for the children culturally, it may also have been a signal that the child, did not have a clear understanding of the expectations for completing the worksheet.

The classroom teacher also demonstrated a lack of understanding in learning strategies for second language learners. The example of the incident that was shared from her classroom (in which she called on Julio and he could not or did not give an answer) could have been approached differently had she been aware of instructional strategies that work well for students learning a second language (Gonzalez, Brusca-Vega, & Yawkey, 1996; GoPaul-McNichol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998; Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Ovando & Collier, 1985, 1998). For example, she could have prepared Julio ahead of time for the vocabulary word for which she would ask him to give a

definition. Or, Julio and the teacher's aide could have worked on the vocabulary words during some of the time he was in the ESL room.

Lack of Appropriate Materials and Curriculum

Most of the worksheets that were used by the teacher's aides were not designed for use with English as second language learners. While it is understood that they used whatever materials were available, it does not make the materials any more appropriate. For example, many of the phonics-based worksheets used by Ms. A asked for auditory discrimination skills and English vocabulary that beginning ESL students generally do not have. Asking students to identify discrete short vowel sounds without any visual support is not only frustrating to the students (because their skills are not that refined yet), but is of limited usefulness (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

Another example, is the "connect the dots" and hidden object type worksheets. While these may be more "fun" for the student, there is very little educational value to these lessons. Drawing lines from one number to the next may teach number sequence, but the child's math skills had been shown to be already beyond that. And, while the teacher may have thought that she was teaching the vocabulary of the hidden objects words, it is not realistic to think that the students will retain a working definition of words that they have been exposed to outside the context of other words, as in sentences, paragraphs, stories (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

The classroom teacher did not have appropriate materials for the student either. She told the researcher that she mostly tried to find papers for Julio to color. The fact that she does not offer Julio academic challenges or instruction might indicate that she

has low expectations for his academic success. It did not appear to the researcher that during the observations of her classroom that she had made any attempts to modify curriculum or instruction so that Julio could successfully participate in classroom activities (Baca & Cervantes, 1998; Baca & De Valenzuela, 1994; GoPaul-McNichol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998; Ovando & Collier, 1998).

Social and Behavioral Patterns

Within the ESL room, the student was not observed to have any social or behavioral problems. Of course, within the ESL room, the student was either one-on-one with the teacher's aide, or was with the teacher's aide and his sister. So it is fair to say that the student-teacher ratio was low. Secondly, the teacher's aide did attempt to the best of her ability to make the instruction and curriculum fit the student's needs, which is often a source of many behavior problems exhibited by children.

The researcher had the opportunity to observe the student outside of the ESL room the day that the students were re-grouped across grades. In honor of Dr. Suess's birthday, the teachers in the school had organized a special morning of activities to emphasize reading and the contributions of this author. Within each of the classrooms, the students "counted-off" into groups of A, B, C, & D. Then, all the A's got together in one activity center, all the B's got together in another center and so on. The activities included listening to a short biography of the author and hearing a story read, watching a short film that had been made based on one of his stories, eating green eggs and ham while hearing the story read, and coloring pages of their favorite Dr. Suess characters.

Most of the teachers had purchased and were wearing the large oversized hats that were made famous by the story, "The Cat in the Hat."

During these activities, the researcher did not observe any negative physical interaction with peers as the homeroom teacher had reported. However, the researcher did not observe many positive interactions either, especially among his same age/grade peers. The student was observed to interact with a younger student during a coloring activity in the art room. The two students sat next to each other within a larger group of students. The group sat on the floor and colored pictures. Julio and the younger student shared crayons and enjoyed looking at each other's artistic creations.

Affective Variables Effecting Julio

Motivation and Attitude

According to the researcher's observations and the reports of the teacher's aides, Julio has a positive attitude towards learning. However, his motivation at this points seems to be highly extrinsic, for example receiving stickers for completing worksheets. Julio's parents, according to the interview done with them, are very supportive of their children learning English.

Personality Traits

Although no formal assessments were given to measure personality traits, it seemed that, based on the researcher's years of experience working with ELLs that Julio seemed to fall within the range of what would be considered normal, or average, for levels of self-esteem, extroversion, anxiety, risk-taking, sensitivity to rejection, empathy, inhibition, and tolerance of ambiguity. In other words, based on the researcher's

experience as a teacher working with children for more than seven years, and training as a school psychologist in behavioral assessments, Julio did not seem to exhibit any extremes in personality traits.

Cognitive Factors

Again, no formal tests were given to Julio to determine an IQ score, however, the researcher did see growth in language skills over the six week period of observations. For example, during one of the first observations, Julio confused the names of the numbers 5, 6, and 7. However, in later observations, it was noticed by the researcher that this was no longer a problem. He was consistent in the correct use of the number names.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Lack of Bilingual or ESL Certified Personnel

The significance of this problem is evident in the lack of the use of effective, research-based strategies in instructional practices. Neither of the teacher's aides, nor the classroom teacher had any training in bilingual or ESL instruction. Therefore, they were left to develop their own strategies. According to the interviews, neither of the teacher's aides had a clear understanding of what was expected of them when they had first applied for the job. Both aides indicated dissatisfaction in the job due to their own lack of training in instructional strategies and expressed some resentment that they had to be responsible to design the lessons, make copies of the worksheets, and so on each day. They had previously had the experience of those being the teacher's duties, with their duties being to help the student within the class under the supervision of the regular classroom teacher. In this case, the classroom teacher did not seem to take ownership for the responsibility of educating the student. This was demonstrated by the researcher's observations and interview information from the teacher's aides that (a) she did not help the teacher's aides develop appropriate educational materials for him, (b) the only time she approached the teacher's aide for information regarding the student's progress was the day of parent-teacher conferences, (c) she did not make adaptations to the curriculum to include the student in the regular class activities during the times he was in her classroom (at least during the times that the researcher observed).

The methods of instruction observed by the teacher and teacher's aides do not reflect the research-based methods or "input" theories of Krashen (1981, 1982, 1996) as earlier described. (The input theories posit that a second language is learned best when the input is comprehensible to the child.) The second teacher's aide did, however, employ the language learning strategy of engaging the students in activities that stimulate an interest and elicit natural conversation, and prompt vocabulary acquisition in a nonthreatening environment (Gonzalez et al, 1996; GoPaul-McNichol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998; Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Ovando & Collier, 1998).

It is really the responsibility of the school district to meet the linguistic needs of the student as was determined by the Supreme Court in 1974 in *Lau v. Nichols*. In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that by not providing appropriate language instruction to Chinese American students, the actions of the San Francisco school system violated the students' rights under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Court stated because the students did not know English, and that because English was the primary vehicle of instruction, it was not reasonable to require the students to learn English before they could effectively benefit from public education. The Court did not specify a particular method to correct the situation, but a task force of the then U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's Office of Civil Rights developed in 1975 what came to be known as the "Lau Remedies." The Lau Remedies focused on identification of LEP students, the assessment of their language proficiency and academic performance, and their placement in appropriate educational programs. Although bilingual/ESL certified

teachers may be difficult to find, there are alternative methods to providing a more appropriate education for the student than was evidenced in this case.

Lack of Appropriate Materials

There were very few resources available to the teacher's aides from which to create daily lessons. This is why the first teacher's aide used workbooks available to her through her work with speech and language impaired children. She was also instructed by the regular classroom teacher to work with the student on math skills and handwriting. So, at least once a day, the student would be told to copy or write the alphabet as well as numbers. He would also be asked to say the alphabet and numbers. The teacher's aide would correct his pronunciation of the letter names and numbers.

The use of the phonics worksheets was also inappropriate, as the student did not have the vocabulary in English to be able to name the pictures. Developmentally, this discrete approach to learning the sounds of English is not considered to be very effective (Ovando & Collier, 1998). As stated by the teacher's aide, sometimes it was not clear to her, what the pictures were supposed to be depicting.

The second teacher's aide, Ms. C was able to use some of the workbooks designed specifically for ESL students. However, the content of these worksheets most often centered on what is commonly referred to in ESL literature as "survival" English. "Survival English" teaches the concepts and vocabulary related to that which an adult immigrant or refugee would most want to know how to communicate during the first few days and weeks upon arriving in the United States. Chapters included terms for family, grocery and restaurant items and procedures, asking for directions, and so forth. These

worksheets use the appropriate level of vocabulary and sentence structure, but the content did not always correlate to a second grade curriculum.

Social and Behavioral Patterns

The type of negative social and physical behaviors, pushing, shoving, and hitting other students, that had been reported to the researcher by the classroom teacher were not observed by the researcher. This was not surprising to the researcher however, since these incidents were reported to have occurred most often during recess, a time when the researcher could not be available to observe the student. However, the reason that this still emerged as a primary concern of the researcher is because of the effects that the research literature shows low teacher expectations and negative attitudes of teachers have on students (Brophy, 1983; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Rist, 1997). These studies show that teachers greatly influence students by creating an image for self-fulfilling prophecies, as well as providing a model for other students regarding the way to treat students within the class.

In regard to the teacher's concerns about Julio's reported social and behavioral concerns, the teacher interpreted his physical interactions with other students as acts of aggression or "rough play." Even though the researcher, who has also been trained as a school psychologist to assess the function of behaviors, did not see these behaviors exhibited during her observations, she would offer for consideration that this might be one of the few ways in which the student has found to express himself to his classmates. As the researcher observed, the student does not interact much with the students within the classroom. This may in part be due to the attitudes of the teacher (Rist, 1997) which

seem to be to avoid interaction with him. Her attitudes influence the students in the classroom because (a) she may avoid interaction with Julio because she is uncomfortable with the language barrier, thereby, (b) she models to other student to avoid interaction. So, when the student does have an opportunity to engage other boys in interaction, physical contact may be the only means he has found to be effective for him to get their attention.

Another concern that the teacher had was that the child had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The teacher were probably not aware of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) requirements for diagnosing ADHD, but the first requirement is that symptoms have to have been persistent for at least 6 months to a degree that is maladaptive and inconsistent with developmental level. The teacher had only observed the child for 2 months when she began to diagnose him with ADHD. More importantly, one should consider that the symptoms of ADHD and learning to function in a second language might look a lot alike. For example, if someone doesn't fully understanding the language or the lesson for prolonged periods of time over days and weeks, there might be a possibility that the inattention and distractibility could be due to boredom and fatigue rather than ADHD.

Summary

Teachers and special education evaluators need to understand the process of learning a second language and recognize that what might be a concern for a native English speaking student, might be explained in a ELL as part of the process of second language acquisition. A special education referral is not the appropriate course of action

when the real barrier is language. It is the responsibility of the teacher and of the school to find the appropriate resources for the education of the student. Those resources may include learning new teaching strategies, employing different texts and seeking out experts to guide them through the process.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Recommendations

For this particular case, it is the recommendation of the researcher that the teacher's aide go to the student's classroom to provide support and assistance to the student. There are several reasons for this recommendation. First of all, children learn language best in situations where they are involved in (a) "real" communicative interactions and (b) content-based or whole language instruction (Ovando & Collier, 1998; Stryker & Leaver, 1997). The goal of most ESL programs is to support classroom instruction in teaching the students English. This goal might be best accomplished within the student's second grade classroom. The new reconstruction of education calls for adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of the student within the classroom (Baca & De Valenzuela, 1994).

Second, the teacher's aides are not certified teachers. Neither of the ones that held the position had the educational background or training in child development, instructional methodology, or second language acquisition.

Third, in order for the student to achieve at the academic level of his peers, he should be spending the majority of his day with his peers as opposed to being pulled out. In terms of learning English, children learn quickly from their peers. They are more likely to acquire the language quickly if they are given the opportunity to hear the language being spoken by many children rather than by one teacher's aide. The teacher

could incorporate strategies such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring to help Julio engage more in the classroom learning.

Fourth, perhaps the aggressiveness in Julio's play will diminish, as he becomes more accepted as a part of the class. As mentioned earlier, this may be his attempt to get attention from his peers. Perhaps since he cannot verbally communicate with them, his physical reaching out (pushing, shoving, and pulling) is his misguided attempt to get his peers to notice him and get involved with them. Perhaps the children would accept him more as a part of their class if he were in the classroom with them all day.

Another suggestion would be to negotiate some flexibility with the teachers' aides union, so that someone with specific qualifications could transfer into hard-to-fill position without losing benefits. This is the main reason, according to the third, Spanish-speaking teacher's aide, that she did not accept the teacher's aide position of working with Julio.

Overall, the researcher would suggest that the school undertake an examination of its resources and commitment to providing an appropriate education for all students. There are many ways in which the school could begin this reflective self-examination. For instance, the school could pay teachers, or offer an incentive to them, to get a bilingual/ESL endorsement. Or, the district could arrange for in-services to be conducted on-site for professional development and growth in understanding the process of second language acquisition. The school could also begin to purchase materials for a professional library, which would include books on second language acquisition, and strategies for inclusion of ESL students in the regular classroom.

Summary

As a qualitative case study in how services were provided for one ESL student in a rural/small town, this study provided a description and prescription for service based on the unique characteristics of the case study. Through observations and analysis, three thematic strands emerged. The issue of how to best serve the needs of one LEP student when there are no certified bilingual/ESL teachers available became important. The issue of curriculum and materials was also a concern, as well as the behavior of the student as related to his communicative competence in English.

Conclusion

As was presented at the beginning of the paper, demographers predict that language minority students will become the majority of students in public education within the next quarter century. Public schools that have never had CLD students are beginning to see them enroll and many are at a loss at how to best serve their needs. Schools should take a pro-active approach, so that when the students do arrive, they can be welcomed by everyone, because everyone feels capable and comfortable with them in their class.

Directions for Further Research

As the number of language minority students continues to increase in the schools, more and more schools which have had previously not had CLD students will begin to look for ways to serve their educational needs. It is vital to continue to research methods and solutions that can be applied to smaller districts with limited resources and funds. Future research related to this case study could include the examination of middle school

and high school age students whose needs are very different from an elementary school-aged child. In addition to not having as much time available to attend school, due to age, they also have developmental issues and financial/career/educational decisions to make. Any lessons from this work that would assist in the instruction of second language learners should be shared with other professionals in education. This is clearly worthy of future field research. This study was limited to one student, therefore the generalizability of the case is limited. However, the strength of this case study is found in its timeliness. It can serve as a call to action for school districts that may also soon find themselves with ELL students at their doorstep. It is hoped that this case study will stimulate people to consider the issues *a priori* to the need.

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APPENDIX

Interview Protocol

1. Name:

Position in the school:

2. How did you prepare for instruction of the student?
3. What are your expectations for the student?
4. How did you devise the curriculum for this student? Where did (do) you locate appropriate materials?
5. Do you believe the student is at the appropriate level of education for his age?
6. How do staff members at the school communicate with the student or the student's parents?
7. Are you aware of any social/emotional needs of the child?
8. How much time do you spend with the child during each day/week? How was the child's schedule determined?
9. What do you see as the child's greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
10. What is your educational preparation?