

Running Head: ELLs' Mainstream Classroom Experiences

English Language Learners' Experiences in Classroom Settings: Understanding Teacher Beliefs,  
Peer Interaction, and Language Differences

By

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION..... 8

    Theoretical Framework..... 11

    Rationale..... 15

    Significance of Research..... 16

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW..... 17

    Teacher Beliefs..... 17

    Importance of Peer Interactions..... 19

    Peer Acceptance/Peer Interaction..... 21

    English Language Learners..... 25

    Importance of Teacher Perception..... 30

    Cooperative Learning..... 34

    Summary..... 39

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS..... 40

    Research Design..... 40

    Site and Participants..... 41

        School District..... 41

        English Language Learners..... 42

        School Context..... 43

        Teachers..... 43

            Mrs. Florence..... 44

            Mrs. Rooney..... 44

            Mr. Lincoln..... 44

        Children..... 44

            Ben..... 45

            Wendy..... 46

            Peter..... 46

            Henry..... 46

            Veronica..... 47

            Bailey..... 48

            Luke..... 48

ELLs' Mainstream Classroom Experiences	3
Greg.....	48
Mary.....	49
Georgia.....	50
Vinnie.....	50
Data Collection and Analysis.....	51
Overview of Study .....	51
Data Sources .....	52
Classroom Observations .....	52
Recess Observations .....	54
Interviews.....	54
Survey .....	55
Credibility .....	55
Data Analysis.....	57
Classroom Observations .....	57
Recess Observations .....	58
Interviews.....	58
Survey .....	59
Summary.....	59
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS .....	60
Overview.....	60
Mrs. Florence and Her Students.....	60
Interview and Survey.....	60
Class Observations.....	63
Math.....	64
Reading.....	64
Science.....	64
Art.....	65
Recess .....	65
Mrs. Florence's Students .....	66
Ben.....	66
Wendy.....	67
Peter.....	67
Summary.....	68
Mrs. Rooney and Her Students.....	68
Interview and Survey.....	69
Class Observations.....	72

ELLs' Mainstream Classroom Experiences	4
Math .....	72
Reading .....	72
Science .....	73
Social Studies .....	73
Art .....	74
P.E. ....	74
Recess .....	74
Mrs. Rooney's Students .....	75
Veronica .....	75
Henry .....	76
Bailey .....	77
Luke .....	77
Summary .....	77
Mr. Lincoln and His Students .....	79
Interview and Survey .....	79
Class Observations .....	82
Math .....	82
Reading .....	82
Science .....	83
Science .....	84
Art .....	84
P.E. ....	85
Recess .....	85
Mr. Lincoln's Students .....	85
Greg .....	85
Mary .....	86
Vinnie .....	87
Georgia .....	88
Summary .....	89
Survey Results .....	89
Summary .....	91
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS .....	92
Discussion of Findings and Implications .....	92
Summary of Study and Overview of Findings .....	92
What are second grade teachers' beliefs about peer interactions? .....	97

ELLs' Mainstream Classroom Experiences	5
How frequently do ELLs interact with monolingual English students? In the classroom? On the playground?.....	101
What are second grade students' thoughts and experiences about interacting with their peers in and out of a school setting? Do children consider the issue of language differences? If so, what do they do? .....	104
Implications for Future Research.....	105
Limitations .....	107
Final Thoughts .....	108
References.....	109
Appendices.....	123
Appendix A: Teacher Consent.....	123
Appendix B: Parent Consent.....	126
Appendix C: Consentimiento Del Padre.....	129
Appendix D: Student Assent Procedures.....	132
Appendix E: Classroom and Recess Peer Observation Tool.....	133
Appendix F: Teacher Interview Questions .....	136
Appendix G: Student Interview Questions .....	137
Appendix H: Second Grade Teacher Survey Questions .....	138

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. ELLs' Service Level Placement Criteria .....	118
Table 2. ELLs' Service Level, and Placement.....	119
Table 3. Focal Students: Total Observed Minutes.....	120
Table 4. Total Minutes: Audio-visual References, Observed Peer Interactions, Teacher-led Instruction.....	121
Table 5. Recess: Student Play Members and Activity .....	122

## ABSTRACT

Creating opportunities for students to engage in positive peer interactions is important because these interactions benefit students' motivation to learn, and their social, linguistic, and cognitive development. Peer interactions are particularly important for supporting English language learners' (ELL) because they are often at risk for academic difficulties. This study explored teachers' and students' perspectives of peer interaction, and it calculated the amount of time students engaged in peer interaction during the school day. Data included teacher and student interviews, class observations, and an online teacher survey. Results indicated that teachers believe peer interaction opportunities are important and they provided opportunities for students to engage in peer interactions. English language learners interacted with monolingual students and ELLs alike, and they did not gravitate toward other ELLs. Finally, ELLs did consider the issue of language differences and they preferred to speak primarily English at school and Spanish at home with parents. Implications and future research are presented.

## Chapter One

### Introduction

Teachers must constantly evaluate their beliefs and practices given the challenges that occur in schools such as mandates, curriculum shifts, and technology initiatives. Another challenge is the ever-changing student population. In particular, differences in students' first language have quickly emerged across American schools as an issue that teachers must address to support students' learning. As of 2009, 11 percent of United States (U.S.) students were English language learners (ELL). ELLs are the fastest growing subgroup of students in the U.S., with numbers increasing approximately ten percent each year (LeClair, Doll, & Jones, 2009). ELLs come to classrooms with varying levels of English proficiency and require varying degrees of support. While some ELLs have strong academic backgrounds in their first language and need English language development to succeed, other ELLs have very limited literacy skills in their first language and require more intensive interventions to attain basic literacy skills along with English language development. As with all learners, sociocultural, emotional, and economic factors also play a role in students' educational achievement. As a result, teachers must shift their mindset and pedagogical practices in order to meet the needs of their diverse populations of learners.

Although some ELLs perform well in school, many ELLs have struggled to achieve at the levels of their language-majority peers. According to the 2009 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) results, 71 percent of 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELL students scored below basic in reading, compared to only 24 percent of non-ELLs. Similarly, 75 percent of eighth-grade ELLs performed below basic while only 24 percent of non-ELLs performed below basic. Limited



progress in reading is a concern given that reading ability plays a large role in a students' decision to complete school (LeClair, et al., 2009).

The number of teachers endorsed to work with ELLs has not increased as steadily as the growth of the ELL student population in the U.S. This adds another challenge for both teachers of ELLs and their students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2002), 41 percent of teachers have ELLs in their classes, but only 12.5 percent of those teachers have eight or more hours of ELL training over the past three prior years. As of 2004, only 24 states required teachers working with ELLs to be certified as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher (Janzen, 2008). Yet, teachers of ELLs should employ a number of pedagogical practices that they may not typically consider when working with monolingual students, such as providing context-rich structured learning activities to develop academic language; providing opportunities for students to engage in all modes of literacy-reading, writing, listening and speaking; providing first and second language cognates when available; allowing clear directions and significant wait time for responses; and providing a safe and inviting classroom atmosphere for learning to take place (Williams, 2001). In addition, teachers draw on their own beliefs and experiences when implementing pedagogical practices. So, if teachers have negative or uninformed views about ELLs and they are unable to look beyond their personal beliefs about students and learning then they may have difficulty meeting the needs of their diverse populations of students.

Teachers can foster language development for all students by providing structured opportunities for classroom interaction. These practices support academic needs and can also give students a chance to build strong relationships with both teachers and peers. Developing relationships and the ability to work with others is an important skill. For example, strong relationships or successful peer interactions require students to be friendly, cooperative, helpful,

assertive and self-regulated (Fabes, Martin, & Hanish, 2006). Webb's (1982) research also suggests that peer interactions may predict achievement, and students who give and receive explanations of tasks scored higher than students who were not engaged in-group interaction. Further, Jean Piaget asserted that cooperation exposes children to views other than their own, promoting cognitive understanding of concepts (Hartup, 2006). In sum, peer interactions that allow opportunities for students to cooperate and that are implemented systematically in classroom settings can have positive effects on all students' social and academic growth.

With this in mind, the purpose of the present study is to understand how 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers and their students make sense of their school settings and how they interpret their experiences related to peer interactions. Specifically, the aim is to understand (a) 2nd grade teachers' beliefs about peer interaction and their use of cooperative learning opportunities to engage ELLs and monolingual students in interactions that might influence learning, and (b) students' thoughts and experiences regarding peer interaction in and out of school. Thus, my research questions are:

1. What are second grade teachers' beliefs about peer interactions?
2. How frequently do ELLs interact with monolingual English students? In the classroom?  
On the playground?
3. What are second grade students' thoughts and experiences about interacting with their peers in and out of a school setting? Do children consider the issue of language differences? If so, what do they do?

*English language learners* are described as those students who did not grow up in a primarily English-speaking setting and lack skills necessary to learn in an English-only setting (LeClair, Doll, Osborne, & Jones, 2009). Cummins, Bismilla, Chow, Cohen, Giampapa, Leoni, Sandhu, and Sastri (2005) state, “English language learners will engage academically to the extent that instruction affirms their identities and enables them to invest in their identities as learners” (p. 40). As the ELL population steadily grows across the country teachers are faced with the challenge of enhancing English language growth while also teaching academic content in a manner that affirms students’ identities. To affirm ELLs’ identities, teachers will need to create an environment that supports students’ confidence to engage in literacy activities (Cummins, et al., 2005). Effective teachers plan engaging and challenging lessons that provide opportunities for students to shape discourse and encourage student talk (Boyd, 2012).

Teachers who develop close relationships with students from other cultural communities act as a support system as students explore and develop peer social skills (Howes, Guerra, Fuligni, Zucker, Lee, Obregon, & Spivak, 2011). Teachers must remind themselves that student engagement is vital to academic achievement; however, this can be difficult task for ELLs because they come to school with varying levels of first and second language proficiency. Therefore, teachers will need to be a good role model to both ELLs and monolingual peers, to help them to develop social skills that encourage interaction among all students.

Determining ELLs’ literacy needs and how to support them can be challenging, especially for teachers with little ELL training. However, one approach that all teachers can take is to provide ample opportunities for ELLs to practice all modes of literacy including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. That is, literacy is interpersonal and it can be social and

academic in nature. A broad definition of literacy encompasses the ability to engage in reading and writing, contextualized within the demands of culture and community, with some level of proficiency (Cunningham, Many, Carver, Gunderson & Mosenthal, 2000). That said, ELLs are typically able to grasp interpersonal communication skills, which are context-embedded and cognitively less demanding, within two to three years of immersion and may even appear to be proficient in their second language skills based on these skills. Academic language, which is context reduced and cognitively demanding, usually takes ELLs from five to ten years to achieve proficiency (Williams, 2001). Success in school depends on students' academic language skills. Like monolingual students, ELLs benefit from opportunities to practice new language skills in the classroom setting (LeClair, et al., 2009). Teachers can implement instructional practices that help ELLs grasp academic language, such as providing clear objectives and explanations, building background, using scaffolding techniques, providing interaction opportunities, and integrating language skills. However, one of the most important steps a teacher can take is to provide a risk-free classroom environment that respects diversity (Williams, 2001).

*Interaction* is defined as “the social exchange of some duration between two individuals” (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006, p. 576). Peer interactions allow students to give and receive verbal instruction and clarification, and to respond to questions and share strategies. Peer interaction also allows students to elaborate, modify and improve understanding (Neitzel, 2009). All students can benefit from opportunities to interact with peers in the school setting, specifically when those interactions are structured so that language and academic needs are met. According to Echevarria, et al. (2013), these benefits include: deeper understanding of text, oral language development, brain stimulation, increased motivation, reduced risk, more processing time, and increased attention. Specific to ELLs, when teachers provide structured interaction and

engagement opportunities just beyond students' independent speaking levels, students are stretched to higher levels of language proficiency (Saunders & Goldenberg, 2010). Further, as Gibbons (2002) explains, when teachers provide ELLs with opportunities to learn by engaging in conversations, they are more likely to learn academic concepts and language. Thus, overall, opportunities to learn that include group work, teacher-student interactions, and student-student interaction are important to language learning for ELLs (Hite & Evans, 2006).

Teachers set a social and emotional classroom climate that students respond to based on their perception of the tone set by teachers. When teachers set a tone of harmonious teacher-student interactions and manage the classroom in such a way that students feel safe and included, students also tend to engage in positive peer interactions (Howes & Ritchie, 2002). Research suggests that when students experience conflicting teacher-student relationships this also affects their peer relationships by causing students to become withdrawn or to have aggressive or difficult interactions with peers (Howes & Shivers, 2006). Students' affective filter, triggered by a complex of negative factors that interfere with processing comprehensible input, can greatly inhibit their learning opportunities (Krashen, 1982). According to Rubin, Bukowski, and Parker (2006), peer-interactions shape the social, emotional, and cognitive functioning of students above and beyond family, school, or neighborhood influences. However, cultural differences can sometimes influence teacher-student interactions and peer interactions. That is, teachers and students often come to school from different cultural communities, or groups who share beliefs, goals, and practices. These differences in culture can cause teachers and students to have varying styles of interaction (Rogoff, 2003). Therefore, it is important that teachers recognize these differences and find commonalities between cultures and ways to welcome cultural diversity,

bridging the gap so that students feel comfortable communicating with both teachers and peers in the school setting.

Teachers must evaluate their own beliefs in order to determine how their own personal values impact their culturally diverse students. *Teacher beliefs* are broadly defined as “implicit assumptions about students, learning, classrooms, and the subject matter to be taught” (Kagan, 1992, p. 66). Teacher beliefs have also been referred to as principles of practice, personal epistemologies, perspectives, practical knowledge or orientation. Research has consistently found that teacher beliefs tend to be relatively stable and resistant to change (Brousseau, Book, & Byers, 1988; Herrmann & Duffy, 1989), and are usually associated with a coinciding style of teaching (e.g., Evertson & Weade, 1989; Martin, 1989). *Teacher self-efficacy*, which refers to teachers' beliefs about their own ability to influence students and perform professional tasks, is also important (Kagan, 1992). If teachers believe they can make a difference in students' school lives they may take on more responsibility in helping students find success. Pajares (1992) includes attitudes, values, perceptions, and theories as beliefs and claims that enculturation and one's own formal education develop beliefs.

In sum, to do well academically, ELLs need a safe, inviting classroom environment that promotes opportunities for engagement with peers through systematic instructional practices. These opportunities can have a lasting impact on the academic and social outcomes as ELLs navigate their second language. Teacher beliefs can positively or negatively affect these outcomes, depending on the correlation of beliefs and practices. Thus, it is important that teachers analyze their beliefs about their diverse populations and work toward providing a classroom climate that is conducive to learning for all students.

**Rationale**

Students who are learning English as a second language encounter many challenges when entering the U.S. public school setting. ELLs are often coming to school with limited English skills and differing cultural backgrounds than both peers and teachers. These factors can provide an intimidating reality for both ELLs, as well as for their teachers. How teachers and ELLs approach this reality can have long-lasting, substantial effects on ELLs. Therefore, there is a need to understand on these potential differences in language and culture.

One goal of the current study is to investigate teachers' and students' perspectives on this reality: How do teachers feel about working with ELL students, who come to school with cultural and linguistic differences, especially those teachers with little to no training or background in working with ELLs? Do students consider how their language and cultural differences affect their school lives and their relationships with teachers and peers? Another goal of the current study is to determine if and how teacher beliefs correspond with their pedagogical practices and how teachers approach working with ELLs and monolingual students. Do teachers feel more comfortable working with students from similar cultural backgrounds or are they able to make meaningful connections and provide equal learning opportunities for all learners?

The recent influx of ELLs into schools in the U.S. has compelled teachers to reexamine their classroom practices and to determine whether or not all students' needs are being met. This study may give teachers insight into the workings of their classrooms and how their personal beliefs are affecting their practices and student's experiences. Teachers may not have considered how their own cultural differences influence their approach to teaching.

Qualitative research involves an inquiry or investigation of a phenomenon in a systematic way. The goal in this systematic process is to: contribute to the knowledge base, improve

practices in a particular discipline, assess the value of something, or address a particular problem

(Merriam, 2009). For the present study, qualitative research will allow me to address my questions in a naturalistic setting. That is, my goal is to gather a better understanding of how participants interpret and make meaning of their interactions with others in a classroom setting.

### **Significance of Research**

This study is significant due to the changing landscape of public schools in the U.S. and the affects it has on teachers and students. As schools become more diverse, teachers face challenges in how to best meet the needs of all students, while ELLs face social, academic, and cultural challenges as they try to grasp a second language in the school setting. This study gives teachers and students a voice in how this diversity is playing out in three classrooms of one diverse elementary school. This study will also give focal teachers an opportunity to better understand their students' perspectives on classroom routines. Research findings may alert teachers as to how their actions affect students' feelings of belonging and participation in the classroom.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

In this chapter I introduced to the study topic and in Chapter 2, I review of the relevant literature to this study such as teacher beliefs, importance of interactions, peer acceptance, and issues surrounding ELLs. Chapter 3 describes the study methodology, which includes the research design, participants, data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. Finally, in Chapter 5, I present the major findings and implications, delineates the study's limitations, and outlines recommendations for future research.



## Chapter Two

This chapter reviews the literature foundational to this study's purpose and focuses on (a) teachers' beliefs in relation to their instructional practice, (b) the importance of peer interaction in relation to student learning, (c) ELLs and their needs, (d) how teachers' perception and ELL can either support or hinder their academic achievement, and (f) cooperative learning and how it supports students' academic and social growth.

### Teacher Beliefs

According to Evans, Fox, Cremaso, and McKinnon (2004), beliefs are the "knowledge or ideas accepted by an individual as true or as probable" (p. 131). Verloop, Van Driel, and Meijer (2001) state that, for teachers, components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, and intuitions are intertwined. Pajares (1992) argues that beliefs are more personal than knowledge, that beliefs include attitudes, values, perceptions, theories, and images, are developed through enculturation, social interactions, and formal schooling. If a belief is linked to one's knowledge, perceptions, and theories, then how do teachers' beliefs affect their teaching practices?

Kagan (1992) describes teacher beliefs as "tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught" (p. 65). Kagan's examination of multiple studies on teacher beliefs derived two generalizations: teacher beliefs tend to be relatively stable and resistant to change, and teacher beliefs are associated with a congruent style of teaching.

Kagan further breaks down two specific forms of teacher beliefs: teachers' sense of self-efficacy and content-specific beliefs. Self-efficacy refers to teachers' expectations concerning their ability to influence students, as well as teachers' ability to perform professional tasks. A teacher's self-efficacy has been positively linked to classroom behaviors, such as using praise

over criticism, persevering with low achievers, being task-oriented and accepting of student opinions, and raising students' levels of academic achievement. When teachers believe they can make a difference, they take responsibility for their students' failures and successes.

Content-specific beliefs include a teacher's epistemological conceptions and judgments about appropriate activities, goals, evaluations, and the nature of student learning (Kagan, 1992). Peterson, Fennema, Carpenter, and Loef (1989) found that elementary math teachers with more cognitively based views of mathematics produced stronger math problem-solving students based on teachers' more extensive use of word problems and having greater knowledge of their students' strategies. Grossman, Wilson, and Shulman (1989) found that math and science teachers with conceptual understandings of their fields emphasized conceptual explanations and modified textbooks, whereas teachers with more superficial understandings relied on prepared texts.

Based on these findings, it is important that we understand teachers' beliefs about the importance of peer interaction, specifically in classrooms with diverse populations. How are teachers' beliefs promoting or inhibiting positive peer interactions in the classroom setting? These are important questions to ask because research suggests that both positive peer interactions and cooperative learning opportunities can provide valuable academic and social experiences for students (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003; Ladd, 1990; Ladd, 1997; Ladd, Kochenderfer, and Coleman, 1997; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006; Hartup, 2006; Vandell & Hembree, 1994). If teachers believe this to be true, are they utilizing these practices in their classroom routines?

Peers play an important role in the lives of children in both academic and social settings. Peers provide opportunities for friendship, problem solving, and overall support. Children who have positive peer interactions experience higher levels of emotional wellbeing, stronger beliefs about the self, and better social interactions compared to children who have poor peer interactions (Rubin et al, 2006). Further, children with positive peer interaction experiences are more engaged and successful at academic tasks than those who have difficulties with peers (Rubin et al, 2006). Group level relationships, as well as (one-on-one) peer interactions, can also influence individuals' academic and social lives. Groups are collections of interacting individuals who have influence on each other. Group properties can shape the experiences of members by supporting the behaviors of its members and influencing individuals. Thus, peer interactions can positively influence the advancement of cognitive skills while peer and group level relationships can provide both interpersonal resources and incentives for appropriate academic functioning (Rubin et al., 2006).

Piaget claimed that cognitive development was dependent on an individual's organization of perceptions and ideas, and overcoming contradictions (Hartup, 2006). Interaction among students exposes them to ideas other than their own and involves making declaration, asking questions, exchanging information, working together, arguing, making objections, persuading others, and making comparison (Hartup, 2006). Peer interactions require a student to restructure his or her own views. Piaget believed that these types of social interaction support cognitive development for an individual.

Vygotsky (1986) asserted that learning is a social enterprise in which individuals learn through interactions with experienced members of their community, including peers. And

interpersonal exchange among children allows peers to play co-constructivist roles, in which relationship quality between interacting peers affects cognitive and social-cognitive growth and development (Rubin, et al., 2006). Further, Vygotsky introduced the idea of the “zone of proximal development” which can be described as the difference between what a learner could do independently and what he or she could do with the support of others. For a learner to cognitively advance, he or she must be stretched with problem-solving attempts just beyond this zone. While this learning at first produces external changes, the goal is for the learner to internalize new skills. Thus, exchanges between peers allow students to clarify and elaborate on each other's ideas and collaboratively solve problems.

Peer relationships occur in many settings such as family, school and community, and these relationships affect children's cognitive and social development (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003). Consequently, it is important that teachers understand the importance of fostering peer relationships in order to enhance the academic and social experiences of students. Further, they should consider fostering peer relationships in both small group and in pairs because research conducted in these types of school settings show that peer relationship are directly tied to academic and social competence (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003). Research also indicate that the size of mutual friendship networks and peer acceptance can positively influence socio-emotional adjustment, academic competence, self-concept, and school-liking (Vandell & Hembree, 1994); likewise, Ladd (1990) found that friendship and peer acceptance were strong predictors of kindergarten students' school perceptions, avoidance, and performance (Ladd, 1997).

Peer acceptance or socio-metric status refers to the level of like or dislike of an individual by his or her peers. Gifford-Smith and Brownell (2002) maintain that low peer acceptance may have a negative influence on student outcomes such as: delinquency, school failure, and psychological maladjustment. Peer acceptance involves a student's relationships with members of their peer groups and is defined in terms of group members' sentiments toward the student, and the degree to which these sentiments are in agreement (Ladd, 1997, p. 1183). To determine contributions of peer relationships, including peer acceptance, on student's early school adjustment, Ladd, et al. (1997) conducted a study of 200 children in full-day kindergarten. Three variables were measured: friendship, peer acceptance, and peer victimization. To measure friendship, children were shown pictures of classmates and asked if they had any best friends in the class. Then, number of friends was determined by summing reciprocated friendship nominations received by each child. Peer acceptance was measured using a peer-rating tool in which children were asked to sort classmates' pictures based on how much they liked to play with each child. Peer victimization was measured using a self-report scale. Specifically, children were asked to identify which types and to what extent they had experienced these types of peer aggression: being picked on, being hit or kicked, having kids say mean things to them, and having kids say bad things about them to other kids. Researchers also had adjustment criteria which included school affect, as measured by loneliness and social dissatisfaction; school liking and avoidance, measured using a nine item school liking subscale; and school performance, assessed with a standardized academic readiness scale and teachers' rating of student involvement in classroom activities. Finally, children's levels of engagement were also measured using the Teacher Rating Scale of School Adjustment (Ladd, et al, 1997).

Ladd, et al. (1997) found that children with more friends, higher levels of peer acceptance and lower levels of peer victimization had higher levels of school liking. Children with fewer social resources and less positive peer experiences tended to be less satisfied with their own social circumstance and also developed negative feelings about classmates. Children who were victimized early in the school year were more likely to avoid school as the year went on, possibly because victimization weakened students' sense of security and safety at school. Peer victimization, number of classroom friendships and peer acceptance predicted changes in academic readiness over the school year, consistent with the hypothesis that children who are accepted by peers feel included and experience higher levels of motivation and opportunity in scholastic tasks; whereas children who are disliked by peers experience higher levels of exclusion and lower levels of scholastic performance. Children who were more engaged in scholastic activities developed a larger number of friendships as the school year progressed. Overall, this study supports the hypothesis that peer relationships influenced school adjustment more so than school adjustment determined peer relationships. Further, this study supports the idea that teachers should help students develop positive interaction with peers to promote a classroom community that allows students access to social resources, which could enhance their school experience both academically and socially.

Buhs and Ladd's (2001) study hypothesized that the "effects of peer rejection on children's social and academic adjustment are mediated by two processes: (a) the negative treatment that rejected children are likely to receive from peers, and (b) changes in children's participation patterns in the classroom. In their longitudinal study, Buhs and Ladd (2001) examined 399 kindergarten students from 31 classrooms. Peer acceptance or rejection and negative peer treatment were measured in both fall and spring. Peer acceptance or rejection was

measured through positive and negative nominations by classmates, as well as averaged ratings, which were obtained by asking students to sort classmates into categories based on how much they liked to play with classmates. Negative peer treatment was measured through “children’s self reports of victimization, teacher’s ratings of peer exclusion, and observer’s reports of children’s unsuccessful entry bids during free-play peer activities” (pg. 554). Cooperative and autonomous classroom participation, as well as also school adjustment [(achievement-readiness test) and emotional adjustment (loneliness)] were also measured in both fall and spring.

Buhs and Ladd (2001) found that peer maltreatment and reduced classroom participation mediated the effects of peer rejection. Rejected children were treated more negatively by classmates, and were also less likely to participate adaptively in classroom activities. These findings suggest that rejected children may avoid classroom activities altogether, with the fear that peer support will not be offered. This behavior may widen the distance between rejected children and peers because rejected children may not value peer interaction in the same way as accepted children. Furthermore, the fear of stigmatization may discourage classmates from interacting with rejected children.

Matthews and Kesner (2003) conducted a study of first grade students in a teacher-described “open classroom” with the goal of analyzing how children at different peer- and reading-status hierarchy experienced collaborative literacy events in the classroom. The teacher in the study, Ms. Kendall had an open classroom that allowed students to interact during center activities for one hour per day and work collaboratively on group activities several times per week. Matthews and Kesner (2003) gathered data pertaining to peer status, peer interactions, and reading ability was collected periodically throughout one academic year during literacy instruction. Peer status was determined based on whom children interacted with during

unstructured time, teacher input, and peer nomination. Peer interaction was determined by ways in which children participated with classmates during collaborative literacy events. Reading ability was measured in October and June and was analyzed based on the child's oral reading behavior, recognition of high-frequency words and phonemic awareness.

Matthews and Kesner (2003) found that children entered collaborative literacy activities with preconceived ideas of their peer status and literacy skills. Although most children were eager to participate in the peer-only activities, some lacked the social skills to communicate and interact positively with their peers. The children's personal histories of social and academic interactions helped determine their level of confidence and competence when approaching collaborative learning activities. Status may have determined the amount of success students had in coordinating behavior. Matthews and Kesner (2003) found that most students were motivated to participate in peer-only literacy activities and were able to navigate through these activities successfully with their peers. Strong reading skills and high peer status contributed to students' positive peer-activity experiences. For some, strong reading skills were not enough to help them positively interact with peers. Students with low peer status had difficulties positively interacting with group members, regardless of high reading abilities. Their ideas were often rejected or discounted because they lacked the social skills to interact positively with peers. For less competent readers, mutual interest was not enough to guarantee a positive collaboration experience. Instead, these students sometimes struggled to keep up with group members and became less interested in tasks. Matthews and Kesner (2003) note the importance of teacher awareness as to where their students fall in the academic and social hierarchies of their classrooms.



Peer acceptance, or socio-metric status, can have a strong impact on students' academic and social well being in a school setting. These studies suggest that students who are accepted by peers have higher levels of school liking, while those with fewer social resources, or friends, tend to feel less safe and secure at school and tend to avoid school as the years pass. Students have preconceived ideas about their status, both academically and socially. These preconceived ideas and personal histories determine students' level of confidence when approaching new situations in the school setting.

In sum, these findings promote the idea that teachers should engage in practices that support positive peer interaction and they should include cooperative learning opportunities for students. This awareness may help teachers to avoid potential problems such as student exclusion and maximize equity within groups. Cohen (1994) explains practices that teachers may use to modify status effects and maximize equity within groups. These include assigning competence to low-status students and providing activities that require different levels of ability. These practices may not eliminate inequities but they can minimize effects. Teachers can provide a safer and more secure environment for students when they maximize the level of equity experienced by everyone in the classroom community.

### **English Language Learners**

The growing population of ELLs in schools in the U.S. cannot be ignored. Between 1989 and 2006 the number of ELL students in U.S. schools grew almost 150 percent. In 2005, more than five million school-age children were classified as ELLs, which represents more than 10% of the overall student population (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2010). Further ELLs represents approximately 180 languages. It is predicted that, by 2015, ELLs will make up approximately

30% of the overall school population. According to Li and Zhang (2004), approximately 40% of the school age population will be made up of children who speak a language other than English by 2050. More than 80% of prekindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students classified as ELLs are born in the United States (Echevarria, et al., 2010).

While 10% of English speaking students fail to complete high school, the numbers are significantly higher for ELLs. For those language minority students who spoke English, more than 30% fail to complete high school. For those language minority students who spoke English with difficulty, 51% failed to complete high school. Spanish speaking students are also less likely than their peers to attend college (August & Shanahan, 2006).

Overall, ELLs are not reaching or maintaining academic skills at a rate that will allow them to be successful in college or the workforce. An estimated 30-40% of elementary students fail to reach an acceptable level of English proficiency before moving on to middle school (Grant & Wong, 2003). Their limited English skills are hindering their ability to keep up with peers in a school setting. When questioning high school students who were ELLs about their experiences, Gunderson (2008) learned that ELLs' biggest complaint was that they had little to no access to native English speakers.

Another notable consideration is teacher preparation for working with ELLs. Teaching ELLs is a complicated task, one that requires extensive training. Consider the scenario of having ELL students with varying languages and varying literacy skill levels in your classroom? It is no surprise that teachers report a high level of frustration when trying to meet the needs of their ELLs. Sadly, few teachers receive the professional development necessary to have a positive impact on student learning. Echevarria, Powers, and Short (2006) reported that, "41.2 percent of 2,984,781 public school teachers reported teaching limited English proficiency (LEP) students,

but only 12.5 percent had had eight or more hours of training in the past three years” (p. 196).

With ELLs accounting for more than 10 percent of the overall school population and lagging behind in academic growth and graduation rates, there should be a stronger focus on providing adequate training to teachers. It is crucial that teachers have high expectations for their ELL students.

Hawkins (2004) explores the disconnect between “what is known (and by whom) and what it is that we need to know and take into account to make informed decisions about schooling and instructional designs for ELLs” (p. 14). She proposes a theoretical framework for conducting research that might inform stakeholders of the best practices and policies for educating ELLs. Hawkins pulls from many fields (anthropology, social psychology, cognitive psychology, sociology, cultural studies, literary theory, critical theory, communications, new literacy studies, semiotics, and linguistics) of research to communicate the ways in which we “conceptualize classrooms as spaces in which language and literacy skills develop through situated social practices” (p. 14). Hawkins describes classrooms as “complex ecological systems, with multiple, complex and often interdependent components and characteristics that students must negotiate (both socially and academically) in order to come to participate” (p. 15). Hawkins explores theoretical constructs that should be considered when researching and serving ELLs in their classrooms.

*Communities of Learners and Communities of Practice* represent an environment in which communities engage in cultural practices where students take on different roles over time. The focus is learning through social interaction and co-construction of meaning (community of learning) or coming together around specific tasks (community of practice). The view of both

communities of learning and communities of practice centers around distribution of knowledge across a community rather than possession by one individual.

Vygotsky's (1987) *zone of proximal development* is a construct in which a learner, or apprentice, collaborates with teachers and more expert peers to gain new forms of interaction, language, and thinking. Vygotsky's concept relies on creating an environment in which valued skills are available to learners through scaffolding from more experienced peers.

*Multiple Social Languages* intersect in the classroom setting. Social languages are "different styles of language that communicate different socially situated identities (who is acting) and socially situated activities (what is being done)" (p. 17). Social languages reflect and create social contexts linked to social groups, cultures, and historical formations. Fluent English speakers have a level of sociocultural sophistication to know which social languages are appropriate for specific settings. Cummins (1986) basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic learning skills (CALPS) distinguish between informal social language and formal, academic language. It is often claimed that students acquire BICS, which they use to socialize with their peers, before developing CALPS, more content-specific abstract language.

*Identity*, which is changing and fluid, is defined by Gee (2001) as "being recognized as a certain "kind of person," in a given context." Hawkins (2004) describes the identities taken on by individuals as an integration of an individual's diverse sociocultural experiences, sociocultural experiences of others interacting, structure and flow of language, interaction negotiation and participation, and the overarching cultural setting in which interaction takes place. Although individuals attempt to present themselves in certain ways, identities are co-constructed throughout social interactions and identities only "work" if recognized by others involved in the

interaction. Prior experiences and sociocultural backgrounds also influence individuals' interactions (Bernstein, 1990). Since these socially constructed identities determine access for learners they are important to consider when studying ELLs' classroom interactions.

*Power* is a social construct that “validates and enforces specific claims to know in specific ways” (Hawkins, 2004). Each environment operates with a value system reflected by the larger community, in which certain ideas and meanings are privileged and participants' voices are not all equal. Lemke (1995) explains that inequitable power relations in schools and devices that mediate these inequities, such as curricula and instructional designs, give varying statuses to classrooms' diverse populations of learners.

*Multiple literacies*, or new literacies, refer to skills needed to “send and interpret messages through multiple media and modes in (rapidly changing) local and global contexts, and to align meanings within situated social practices” (Hawkins, 2004). It is important that educators consider these ongoing changes and whether or not school practices provide learners with necessary skills to function in a world of multiple literacies.

Hawkins views classrooms as ecological systems, where a co-dependence of factors “construct and define the nature of the learning that takes place.” She proposes that educators take on the responsibility of offering students access to knowledge and forms of language that will allow them a participant status in communities of their choice by considering ways in which the classroom environment provides students with access to engagement, connecting curriculum and pedagogy to home practices, providing an environment that values all students, and promoting equitable social and power relations. Considering Hawkins' theoretical constructs may encourage educators to consider the range of factors that influence ELLs' learning experience in the school setting.

It is important that teachers consider the diverse needs of their students when planning cooperative learning and peer interaction opportunities. It may be particularly challenging when considering ELLs due to cultural and social positioning. That is, learning opportunities can cause social tensions and anxiety for ELLs, especially because ELLs consider themselves a subordinate group in the mainstream classroom (Yoon, 2007). However, teachers who engage in culturally relevant practices create opportunities for all students to build trusting relationships with their peers. That is, these teachers consider social, academic, and cultural needs of student when approaching pedagogy.

To understand how middle school teachers' were providing or limiting opportunities for ELLs to participate in literacy learning, Yoon (2007) conducted a case study of two mainstream teachers, Mr. Brown and Mrs. Young. In addition to observing the ELLs in these mainstream classrooms, Yoon also observed them in their ESL classroom setting.

While neither teacher had received any professional development in working with ELLs, both teachers had two ELLs in his or her classroom. Mr. Brown taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade and he described himself as a general education teacher. For him this meant that he did not provide extra support to his ELLs unless they asked for help because he felt this was the job of ESL teacher. Mr. Brown's class was student-centered and whole- and small-group discussions did take place throughout the semester. Much of the discussion emphasis was focused around American culture, none of which the ELLs could relate to. Examples included the television show *Survivor*, the Sunday paper, American football, and facts from popular beverages' bottle caps. Mr. Brown's approach limited the opportunities for ELLs, Jun and Natasha, to participate and encouraged resistance from mainstream students' acceptance for ELLs as legitimate partners. Mr. Brown

described Jun, an ELL student from South Korea, as quiet, shy and non-participatory. In contrast, the ESL teacher described Jun as animated active, participatory, and funny. Jun explained that he didn't want to talk in Mr. Brown's class but he didn't know why, and that he did talk a lot in the ESL class because he felt more comfortable there.

Neither ELLs felt comfortable working with mainstream classmates, likely because mainstream students showed resistance toward working with them. Even though Mr. Brown's class was highly interactive and student centered, both ELLs felt isolated from their mainstream peers, who did not trust their academic skills and did not wish to work with them in group or partner situations.

Mrs. Young, who also taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade, believed it was her responsibility to include ELLs in her lesson planning and instruction. She engaged them and celebrated their cultural differences in class. She made all students, including ELLs, important members of the classroom community. She also made a point to pair ELLs with supportive native English-speaking partners. In Mrs. Young's class, mainstream peers were willing to offer support to ELLs when needed, possibly because Mrs. Brown modeled acceptance and importance of all students' cultures and experiences. She encouraged all her students to share, respect, and value cultural differences.

Dae and Ana, the two ELLs in Mrs. Young's class, started out the semester as quiet students who rarely participated. Yoon (2007) observed that Dae and Ana became more active participants as the semester continued, possibly due to their peers' positive attitudes toward them. Mrs. Young provided a classroom environment in which all students were viewed as powerful participants who were academically capable. Furthermore, Dae and Ana were able to positively interact with their native English-speaking classmates without losing their identity as ELLs.

Mr. Young and Mrs. Brown provide examples of how teachers can promote or inhibit the experiences and opportunities ELLs have in the mainstream classroom setting. Mr. Brown viewed himself as a teacher for mainstream students only and made few efforts to engage ELLs or include them in participatory activities of any kind. As a result, his ELLs felt isolated and uncomfortable and had few opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue with classmates. Mrs. Young, in contrast, viewed it her responsibility to engage all students, no matter their background or language capabilities. She understood her students' cultural and social needs and accommodated those needs accordingly. Mrs. Young's classroom setting allowed all students, including ELLs, to actively participate in a comfortable and inviting environment where all students were viewed as important citizens.

As evident in Yoon's (2007) study, culturally relevant pedagogy provides learners with an opportunity to be viewed as legitimate and capable members of their classroom communities. When culturally relevant pedagogy is not implemented, ELLs can find themselves in powerless, uninviting circumstances. Teachers must model behaviors that incorporate ELLs, as well as all other students, as acceptable members of the classroom community.

In a qualitative study, Gersten (1999) studied four monolingual English-speaking teachers, who taught 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade, to understand the challenges they faced when working with ELLs. Briefly, all four teachers had been teaching in the district less than five years. None of the teachers had formal ELL training on how to support ELL, except for the summer workshops and a series of 1-hour district in-service meetings at their school.

Classroom observations and teacher interviews were gathered over four months. The observational tool measured the following instructional constructs: (a) challenge, involvement, and success of students; (b) teacher scaffolding, mediation, and feedback; and (c) teacher respect



for cultural diversity. Teacher interviews were conducted to gather information regarding teaching experience and issues related to language arts instruction for ELLs. Teachers were also questioned after classroom observations in order for researchers to gather information regarding lesson purpose and instructional strategies.

Gersten (1999) found that teachers struggled between process and product. Whereas teachers valued and encouraged students to express ideas, to analyze, and to summarize, they were also concerned with the product of written work and students' English-language spelling scores on standardized achievement tests. The latter forced teachers into relying on instructional practices that involved little risk or challenge. Teachers also reduced the cognitive demands of students, with one teacher admitting to using 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade grammar materials. According to Gersten (1999), teachers reduced cognitive demands for a number of reasons, including: desire to see some success from students, curriculum ambiguities, and distance between teachers and students. Teachers struggled to connect with their students, partly due to differences in culture, class, and religion. Gersten's suggested solution to the issue of distance between teacher and student is for teachers to provide cooperative groups, readers' and writers' workshops, and more activities that allow students and teachers to engage in intellectual and interpersonal communication.

Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, and Savoy (2012) studied a teacher's ability to foster an emotionally supportive classroom environment through positive teacher-student interactions. Students who have positive relationships with teachers are three times more engaged than students with poor teacher relationships (Klem & Connell, 2004), perform better academically (Rimm-Kaufman & Chiu, 2007; Wentzel, 1998), and choose more cognitively complex activities (Howes & Smith, 1995). Reyes, et al. (2012) found that classrooms with positive climate and

teachers sensitive to academic, social, and emotional needs had students who were more engaged and who felt connected to the teacher and lesson. Therefore, it is important that teachers understand the impact of the relationship they build with students and the overall effect that these relationships have on the whole student, both academically and socially.

According to Krashen (1982), students' affective filter, a barrier between the learner and language input, increases when they view themselves as outsiders in the classroom. This lowers their desire and motivation to participate in language learning opportunities. Teachers can support ELLs and all learners by providing culturally relevant pedagogy and viewing themselves as educators for *all* students, not just some students. These studies suggest that ELLs react accordingly: When they are viewed as relevant, capable members of their community they engage in the learning process. It cannot be an option for teachers to reduce the cognitive demands for ELLs. Instead, teachers should provide rich learning opportunities that motivate and engage students to actively participate.

### **Cooperative Learning**

Cooperative learning provides benefits to students' academic and social growth. That is, cooperative learning opportunities promote peer interaction, which can, in turn, positively affect academic achievement, promote self-esteem, improve interpersonal relationships, and improve attitudes toward school and peers (Slavin, 1994). However, providing cooperative-learning opportunities for students requires detailed planning by teachers, with special consideration for teaching students appropriate interactional skills, preparing the physical space accordingly, and providing challenging and engaging learning tasks.

To understand teachers' perceptions of how cooperative learning worked in their classrooms and the difficulties they encountered, Gillies and Boyle (2010) studied ten teachers, two males and eight females, from five different schools. Teachers' years of experience ranged from six to eight years and they taught students, whose ages ranged from 11 to 14 years old. All teachers volunteered to take part in a two-day workshop prior to implementing cooperative learning pedagogy in their classrooms. Workshop topics included: establishing task interdependence, teaching small-group skills needed to facilitate cooperation, designing activities for individual accountability for group members, constructing complex tasks to promote engagement and thinking, and designing assessment criteria and rubrics to measure students' academic growth.

Data collected over one school year included audio taped cooperative learning lessons, classroom observations, and teacher interviews. Data were analyzed to determine teachers' successes and difficulties as they implemented cooperative learning. Findings suggest teachers were implementing better management and structure to lessons, providing more challenging lessons, and providing a happier, more enjoyable class environment for students. On the other hand, difficulties included students socializing more than working on academic tasks, time management, and organization of activities. Nonetheless, teachers reflected positively on their experience with incorporating cooperative learning into their classroom instruction. Teachers described students' ability to talk about their understanding of new topics or tasks, rather than just reiteration of what they heard. Students also demonstrated an ability to work harmoniously because they had common goals (Gillies & Boyle, 2010). Further, while some teachers felt challenged by implementing cooperative learning instruction, most teachers saw the benefits of its practice, especially when their students expressed more enjoyment and engagement in the

learning process. Gillies and Boyle (2010) suggest teachers consider these factors when implementing cooperative learning: composition and size of groups, types of tasks, mode of instruction (direct or small group), patterns of communication for students, and types of academic and social behavior expectations for students.

Stevens and Slavin (1995) conducted a two-year study of cooperative learning and its effect on students' active involvement and achievement. The study included 1,012 2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students from 21 treatment classrooms and 24 comparison classrooms in five elementary schools. Measures included pre- and post-tests for reading and math achievement, attitude, and social relations.

After two years, students taught in classes in which teachers implemented cooperative learning methods outperformed their peers on standardized measures of reading vocabulary, comprehension, language expression, and mathematic computation (Stevens & Slavin, 1995). Further, students in cooperative learning settings indicated that they had significantly more friends compared to students in traditional settings. Students in cooperative learning settings also experienced meaningful peer interactions and positive interdependence as they worked together to achieve common goals, and they had more positive perceptions of their abilities in reading and language arts compared to students in traditional settings, possibly due to the reduced role of competition in cooperative classrooms.

Students with learning disabilities or who are identified as gifted also benefit from cooperative learning activities. For example, when students with learning disabilities are in classes where teachers used cooperative learning, they experienced positive academic achievement, as well as better social acceptance. Specifically, a student with a learning disability taught in a cooperative learning setting is 50% more likely to have a friend compared to student

with a learning disability taught in a traditional classroom. Further, students who are gifted had much higher achievement when taught in a cooperative learning classrooms compared to students who are gift and taught in traditional settings, possibly due to the students' role of providing elaborative explanations to classmates.

While Stevens and Slavin (1995) describe a cooperative learning classroom as one that provides “students with more active learning experiences, equal access to learning by all students, and a more supportive social environment for the students and teachers” (p. 24-25), Vaughn (2002) defines cooperative learning as “the instructional use of small heterogeneous groups of students who work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning” (p. 359). Regardless, Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1987) identify five basic elements of cooperative learning that support student successful: positive interdependence, promotive interaction, individual and group accountability, collaborative skills, and group processing. Through positive interdependence, students have an understanding that they are linked to other group members and must commit to the success of the group in addition to their own. This promotes collaboration among group members. Promotive interaction refers to group members’ cooperation and collaboration in task performance. Individual and group accountability refer to the group’s accountability in achieving goals, with individuals making their own contributions to the group’s task in achieving goals. Collaborative skills are those that students need to acquire to perform effectively in the group setting, such as leadership, decision-making, and communication skills. Finally, group processing takes place when members discuss progress and helpful group decisions in order to make necessary changes.

Vaughn’s (2002) study examined the effects of cooperative learning on students of color, defined as students in Bermuda “living outside the United States who would be classified in this

country as students of color or minority students” (p. 360). Twenty-one 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade math students participated in 12-week cooperative learning program known as Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD). Students’ achievement and attitude were measured pretest and posttests. Specifically, they were administered the California Achievement Test (CAT) to measure math achievement and Peterson’s Attitude Toward Mathematics Scale to measure attitude. Results indicated positive effects of cooperative learning on both achievement and attitude (Vaugh, 2002). For achievement, differences in pre- and posttests for computation and application were statically significant. Pre- and posttest attitude scores also strongly support the use of cooperative learning. Not only did students perform better academically but their overall attitudes toward math improved greatly.

A study of 105 4<sup>th</sup> grade Hispanic students, who were also classified as economically disadvantaged, were studied to understand their academic achievement and self-esteem of student in a traditional and cooperative learning setting (Lampe, Rooze, & Tallent-Runnels, 1996). Students were administered a pre- and post-tested using social studies unit tests and the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, School Form. Teachers used *Brown Book Training* (Johnson et al., 1990) to help them implement cooperative learning activities. In addition, the following cooperative learning components were implemented: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, social skill development, and group processing. Students in the traditional setting learned the same academic content as students in the cooperative learning setting, but through whole-class, teacher-directed, textbook-centered instruction.

Lampe, et al. (1996) found differences in achievement between students in the traditional and cooperative learning classes. For academic achievement, cooperative learning group

instruction was more effective than traditional instruction, but self-esteem showed no difference based on instruction. Students in cooperative learning group were involved in frequent verbal interaction opportunities, which included opportunities for summarizing, explaining, clarifying, encouraging, probing, extending, and questioning.

Cooperative learning experiences can provide students with a number of positive social and academic benefits, including a more enjoyable learning environment, higher levels of academic achievement, more friends, positive attitudes and motivation, and stronger student engagement. Cooperative learning strategies provide opportunities for ELLs to engage in and practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in an academic setting, which can enhance students' academic language skills.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I explained the role of teachers' beliefs in relation to their instructional practice, as well as the importance of peer interaction in relation to student learning. Further, I presented information about ELLs and their needs and how teachers' perceptions of ELL can either support or hinder their academic achievement. Finally, I reviewed the literature on cooperative learning and how it supports students' academic and social growth. In the next chapter I present the method and methodology of the present study.

**Chapter Three****Research Design**

The purpose of the present study was to understand 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers' beliefs about peer interaction and their use of peer interaction and cooperative learning opportunities for ELLs and monolingual students, and to understand 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students' thoughts and experiences regarding peer interaction in and out of school. Specifically, the research questions were:

1. What are second grade teachers' beliefs about peer interactions?
2. How frequently do ELLs interact with monolingual English students in the classroom and on the playground?
3. What are second grade students' thoughts and experiences about interacting with their peers in and out of a school setting? Do children consider the issue of language differences? If so, what do they do?

Qualitative research methods are the best means for understanding teachers' and students' beliefs about their experiences. Qualitative research takes place in a natural environment or setting in order to understand the complexity of participants' social interactions expressed in their daily lives and the meanings attributed to these actions (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Conducting research in a natural setting is important because, according to Smith (1987), human acts are context sensitive. Qualitative researchers must situate themselves in the subjects' natural settings to study the contextual features that influence the subjects. Therefore, qualitative research is (a) carried out in a natural setting, (b) focused on context, (c) evolving and emergent, (d) fundamentally interpretive, drawing from a number methods that respect participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).



When conducting a qualitative study, the researcher collects and analyzes the data, which has advantages and disadvantages. Advantages include the researcher's ability to be responsive and adaptive, as well as utilize verbal and nonverbal communication, process information quickly, clarify and summarize information, and check with respondents for accuracy of interpretation (Merriam, 2009). However, one disadvantage to qualitative research is the researcher's biases. My biases are identified later in this chapter and were monitored throughout the study.

### **Site and Participants**

**School District.** Woodside School District (all sites and participants were given pseudonyms), the district in which this study took place, is located near a large city in the Midwest portion of the United States. The district serves more than 25,000 students and is comprised of 33 elementary schools. The district services a diverse range of students: 65% of the students are classified as white, 15% are classified as Hispanic, 10% are classified as African American and the remaining 10% of the students represent a variety of other ethnicities. Further, approximately 36% of the population is from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and more than 10% of the student population is made up of ELLs.

With respect to district initiatives, within the past five years, Woodside School District focused on implementing a reading and math curricula that included many technology components that were available to students, teachers, and parents. Teachers were strongly encouraged to utilize these resources and to support teachers, all classroom teachers were supplied personal laptops and handheld tablets, and classrooms were equipped with Apple TVs and document cameras.

**English Language Learners.** The number of ELLs in the school district has increased significantly over the past ten years. For example, in 2001 there were 590 ELLs across the district, compared to 3,187 in 2013. Also, 68% of the ELLs were enrolled in prekindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. While Woodside School District's ELLs represent 84 languages, 78% of the ELLs speak Spanish as their first language. All states must have a system of identifying language(s) spoken in students' homes to determine which students need language support due to limited English proficiency. When Woodside District families first enroll their children in a school, they are asked to complete a home language survey. If the family indicates that English is not the primary language spoken at home, the ELL Office is notified and schedules an appointment with the family. Once parental permission is given, ELL students are given the IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT), an English proficiency assessment, which assesses reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, to determine placement in school. The IPT oral test assesses four areas: vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and verbal expression. The IPT early literacy test assesses eight domains of early reading and four domains of early writing skills. The Pre-IPT test is administered to ELL children as young as pre-school age. Pre-school ELL students also have the option to attend the district's pre-kindergarten program free of charge for the entire school year prior to kindergarten. Based on the level of English proficiency determined by IPT composite and Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment (KELPA) scores, school-age students may either be placed in their neighborhood school or an ELL center school, where other ELLs who lack a certain level of English proficiency attend. (See Table 1 for placement criteria.) However, parents do have the option of declining center placement or ELL support altogether. If parents do choose for their child to attend the ELL center school, students are often bussed out of their neighborhood to attend a center school. Further, once a student is considered ELL and

parents have given permission for services, that student then takes the Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment each spring, starting in kindergarten, to determine growth and whether changes in services are needed. All ELLs take the KELPA each year, regardless of the school they attend. ELL students attending neighborhood schools receive ELL services from ELL endorsed teachers and/or ELL aides. Students may exit from ELL services by scoring at the proficient level on the KELPA for two consecutive years. If students do not show enough growth on the KELPA test to be moved out of the center school they may be given additional assessments to determine needs or to check for concerns outside of being an English language learner.

**School Context** Eagle Elementary School (EES), the school in which the study took place, has a population of just under 400 students and nearly 50% of the students are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Also, more than 13% of Eagle's students are ELLs, and their language abilities range from "proficient" to "center beginner." Students identified as center beginner, as well as "center advanced" have scores low enough on both the IPT and KELPA to qualify for center placement. For students at EES who are identified as center beginner or center advanced, parents were given the opportunity to enroll their child(ren) into a center school, but declined center placement in favor of their child(ren) attending their neighborhood school.

To support ELLs, there were four individuals at EES who have an English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement and could provide support to the students who are ELLs: one special education teacher, one first grade teacher, the librarian, and the reading specialist. Further, one reading aide had been specially trained to work with ELLs. In addition to supporting ELLs enrolled at EES based on parent request, teachers must determine how to best meet the needs of

ELL students who are “pushed” into the school from center schools because they are not making adequate progress at the center.

**Teachers.** Second grade teachers at EES were recruited for the study (See Appendix A). Second grade was chosen over other elementary grades based on the larger number of ELL students in this grade level. Further, the ELLs in these classes represented a range of abilities and they were distributed among all three classrooms. All three of the second grade teachers are experienced educators but none have an English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement. Two teachers are female and one teacher is male.

*Mrs. Florence.* Mrs. Florence has been teaching for 22 years. She holds a bachelor’s degree in elementary education with minors in early childhood and reading, and a master’s degree in reading. She has not obtained an ESL endorsement but has participated in approximately ten hours of district-and building-provided staff development in working with ELLs. Three of the twenty students in her classroom are ELLs.

*Mrs. Rooney.* Mrs. Rooney has been teaching for 30 years and she holds a master’s degree in education. She has not obtained English as a Second Language endorsement but has participated in approximately five hours of building-provided staff development in working with ELLs. Four of the nineteen students in her classroom are ELLs.

*Mr. Lincoln.* Mr. Lincoln has been teaching for three years. He holds bachelor’s degrees in elementary education, history and secondary education. He has not obtained ESL endorsement and has not yet received district-or building-provided staff development in working with ELLs. Two of the twenty students in his classroom are ELLs.

**Children.** ELLs and monolingual students were recruited to participant in the study. Consent forms were sent home with all students in all three classrooms (See Appendix B, C, and

D). Based on the consent forms returned, two ELLs and two monolingual students from two of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms were selected, and only one ELL and two monolingual students was selected from the third 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom. Since more than two monolingual students from two of three 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms returned the consent forms, monolingual students were chosen based on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) percentiles and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) scores, which are administered by the schools. Students within the average range (25<sup>th</sup>-75<sup>th</sup> percentile) were chosen over monolingual students with scores outside the normal range.

*Ben.* Ben is an ELL student in Mrs. Florence's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom. According to his home language survey, Ben's first language is Spanish and he lives with his parents and two older sisters. While he uses Spanish most often when in his home setting, his parents speak both English and Spanish with him but they most often speak Spanish with each other. His parents also prefer to read in English and write in Spanish.

Since Ben's first language is Spanish he was initially given the Pre-Oral Language Proficiency Test (Pre-IPT) in September 2011 to determine ELL service needs. Due to his ELL status he was automatically accepted into the district's pre-kindergarten program for the 2011-2012 school year, but he did not attend. He was given another IPT prior to kindergarten. He received a score that placed him in an ELL-center school instead of his home (neighborhood) school. He attended the center school for one year before moving to his neighborhood school for first grade. His service level designation for first grade, based on his Spring 2013 KELPA score, was aide/reading. This meant that Ben qualified for 60 minutes of ELL support each week, which was provided by the ELL aide. Ben's spring 2014 KELPA score placed him at the reading only service level for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, which meant that he qualified for 30 minutes of ELL

support each week. The ELL aide and a reading specialist provided this support. (See Table 1 for ELLs' service levels, and placement.)

Due to Ben's combined ELL status and literacy needs he received 60 minutes of small group reading intervention daily, along with 60 minutes of weekly ELL aide support for all of first grade and half of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Ben's benchmark literacy scores greatly improved by the middle of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and his small group reading intervention time was reduced from 60 to 30 minutes.

*Wendy.* Wendy is a student in Mrs. Florence's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom. She is an English-speaking monolingual student who lives at home with her mother and father. Wendy has attended Eagle Elementary School since kindergarten. She has tested at the benchmark level on all literacy skills tests given in kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Wendy was chosen to take part in this study because she was one of only two monolingual students whose parents gave permission for participation.

*Peter.* Peter is a student in Mrs. Florence's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom. He is an English-speaking monolingual student who lives at home with his mother and father. Peter has attended Eagle Elementary School since kindergarten. He has tested at the benchmark level on all literacy skills tests given in kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Peter was chosen to take part in this study because he was one of only two monolingual students in Mrs. Florence's classroom whose parents gave permission for participation.

*Henry.* Henry is an ELL student in Mrs. Rooney's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom. According to his home language survey Henry's first language is English and he lives with his mother, grandparents, and one older sister. While Henry uses English most often when in his home setting, his mother and grandparents speak both English and Spanish with him. Further, while his

mother reads and writes in both English and Spanish, the adults in his home most often speak Spanish with each other.

Henry was first given the Pre-IPT in September 2011 to determine his ELL needs. Due to his ELL status he was automatically accepted into the district's pre-kindergarten program for the 2011-2012 school year, which he attended free of charge. In June of 2012 he was given the IPT to determine his ELL status for kindergarten. Henry's kindergarten service level was aide/reading, which qualified him for 60 minutes of weekly support from the ELL aide or reading specialist. Henry received support from the ELL aide because his early literacy scores were above benchmark, and he did not need support from the reading specialist. Based on his spring 2012 KELPA scores Henry was at the pre-proficient service level for 1<sup>st</sup> grade. His 1<sup>st</sup> grade early literacy test results were again above benchmark. This meant he received no ELL aide or reading specialist support throughout the year. His spring 2013 KELPA scores placed him at the reading only service level for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Although this service level required only 30 minutes of support from an ELL aide or reading specialist, Henry received 60 minutes of small group ELL aide support each week.

*Veronica.* Veronica is an ELL student in Mrs. Rooney's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom. According to her home language survey, Veronica learned to speak both English and Spanish simultaneously at home and she still uses both languages in her home. Her parents also use both English and Spanish when communicating with each other and Veronica's mother can read and write in both English and Spanish.

Veronica was first given the IPT in June of 2012 to determine her service level needs for kindergarten. Her IPT scores indicated a need for center placement for the kindergarten school year rather than her home (neighborhood) school. Her spring 2013 KELPA score indicated a

service level need of reading only for 1<sup>st</sup> grade. She left the center school and attended her home school, Eagle Elementary, for 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Although her service level was reading only, Veronica received 60 minutes of weekly ELL aide support as well as 60 minutes of daily small group reading intervention support. These supports were put in place based on Veronica's early literacy screening results and ELL needs. Veronica's spring 2014 KELPA results indicated a service level of aide/reading for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Veronica again received 60 minutes of weekly ELL aide support and 60 minutes of daily small group reading instruction until January 2015, when her early literacy screening results indicated a need for less intensive small group reading instruction. From January to May 2015, Veronica received 60 minutes of weekly ELL aide support and 30 minutes of daily small group reading instruction.

*Bailey.* Bailey is a student in Mrs. Rooney's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom. She is an English-speaking monolingual student who lives at home with her mother and father. Bailey has attended Eagle Elementary School since kindergarten. Bailey's literacy skills test results displayed a need for intervention during all of kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Bailey's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade literacy skills test results showed no need for continued intervention. Bailey was chosen to take part in this study because her parents allowed participation and she displayed normal-range literacy skills for a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader.

*Luke.* Luke is a student in Mrs. Rooney's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom. He is an English-speaking monolingual student who lives at home with his mother, father and an older sister. Luke was new to Eagle Elementary School as a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader. Luke's literacy skills test results displayed a need for intervention throughout the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> grade school year. He was chosen to take part in this study because he was the only monolingual male student whose parents gave consent for participation.



*Greg.* Greg is an ELL student in Mr. Lincoln's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom. According to his home language survey, Spanish is Greg's first language and he lives with his parents and an older brother and sisters. Greg speaks Spanish most often when at home and when speaking to his parents. Further, his parents most often speak Spanish with each other and they also prefer to read and write in Spanish.

Since Greg's first language is Spanish he was initially given the Pre-IPT in September 2011 to determine ELL service needs. Due to his ELL status he was automatically accepted into the district's pre-kindergarten program for the 2011-2012 school year, which he attended free of charge. He was given another IPT in May of 2012, prior to kindergarten. He received a score that placed him in an ELL-center school instead of his home (neighborhood) school. He attended the center school for one year before moving to his neighborhood school for first grade. His service level designation for first grade, based on his Spring 2013 KELPA score, was reading only. This meant that Greg qualified for 30 minutes of ELL support each week. The ELL aide provided this service. Greg's spring 2014 KELPA score placed him at the reading/aide service level for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, which meant that he qualified for 60 minutes of ELL support each week. The ELL aide provided this support. Along with ELL aide support, Greg received 60 minutes of daily small group reading intervention for all of first grade. For 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Greg received 30 minutes of daily small group reading instruction and 60 minutes of weekly ELL aide support.

*Mary.* Mary is an ELL student in Mr. Lincoln's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom. According to her home language survey, Mary's first language is Spanish and she lives with her parents and one older sister. Mary speaks both Spanish and English at home, although her parents speak primarily Spanish.

Since Mary's first language is Spanish she was initially given the Pre-IPT in September 2011 to determine ELL service needs. Due to her ELL status she was automatically accepted into the district's pre-kindergarten program for the 2011-2012 school year, which she attended free of charge. She was given another IPT in May of 2012, prior to kindergarten. She received a score that placed her in an ELL-center school instead of her home (neighborhood) school. She attended the center school for one year before moving to her neighborhood school for first grade. Mary's spring 2012 KELPA score indicated a service level need of reading only for 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Due to Mary's literacy needs based on her early literacy screening results she received 60 minutes of weekly ELL aide support and 60 minutes of daily small group reading instruction. Mary's spring 2013 KELPA results also indicated a service level need of reading only for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Instead of the recommended 30 minutes of weekly ELL aide support, Mary continued to receive 60 minutes of weekly ELL aide support and 60 minutes of daily small group reading instruction.

*Georgia.* Georgia is a student in Mr. Lincoln's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom. She is an English-speaking monolingual student who lives at home with her mother, father and younger brother. Georgia has attended Eagle Elementary School since kindergarten. She tested at the benchmark level on all literacy skills tests given in kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Georgia was chosen to take part in this study because her parents gave consent for participation and she displayed typical language skills based on literacy assessments.

*Vinnie.* Vinnie is a student in Mr. Lincoln's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom. He is an English-speaking monolingual student who lives at home with his mother and three older siblings. Vinnie has attended Eagle Elementary School since kindergarten. He has tested at the benchmark level on all literacy skills tests given in kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Vinnie was chosen to take part

in this study because his parents gave consent for participation and he displayed typical language skills based on literacy assessments.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

### **Overview of Study**

This study was conducted over approximately four weeks. In week one, an online survey was administered to all classroom elementary teachers in Woodside School District. In week two, classroom and recess observations took place in both Mr. Lincoln's and Mrs. Rooney's rooms and all three focal 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers were interviewed. Initially, I planned to observe the teachers and focal students during small group activities or a time the teacher indicated students were engaged in cooperative learning activities. Due to time and scheduling restraints, all observations took place during whole group instruction and recess. Classroom observations were conducted for the following subjects: science, social studies, language arts, math, art, and physical education (PE). In week three, classroom and recess observations were completed for Mr. Lincoln's class and Mrs. Rooney's, while Mrs. Florence's class was observed for the first time. Focal student interviews also took place during week three. During week four, classroom and recess observations were completed for Mrs. Florence's class.

### **Data Sources**

The data sources for this study included (a) classroom observation field notes, (b) recess observation field notes, (c) teacher interviews, (d) student interviews, and (e) teacher surveys. The aim of collecting these data was to capture peer interaction and cooperative learning opportunities of ELLs and monolingual students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom and playground

setting, as well as better understanding student and teacher perspectives and attitudes toward peer interaction and cooperative learning experiences.

**Classroom Observation.** Observation is a method best used to discover interactions in a natural social setting. According to Schwandt (2007), observation for qualitative research purposes is characterized by the following traits: (a) events, actions, meanings, and norms are viewed from perspectives of those being studied, (b) attention is placed on details, (c) events and actions are understood best when set within a specific social context, (d) the observer makes a strong effort to avoid premature theoretical ideas, though some initial theoretical framework will shape the observational interpretations. Observations took place in the classroom setting during whole group activities and during free play recess.

Mrs. Rooney's class and Mr. Lincoln's class were both observed on six occasions, while Mrs. Florence's was only observed on five occasions due to absences and conflicts with school activities (e.g., assembly). Observations were not videotaped. Mrs. Rooney's class was observed during each of the following whole-group lessons: art, PE, math, reading, science and social studies. Mr. Lincoln's class was observed during these whole-group lessons: art, PE, math, reading, and two science lessons. Mrs. Florence's class was observed during these whole-group lessons: art, math, reading, and two science lessons. Although the original plan was to observe science and social studies, time and school conflicts prevented me from doing so in both Mr. Lincoln's class and Mrs. Florence's class. Classroom observations lasted between 21-48 minutes. Within each observation teacher and focal students were observed and behaviors coded in one-minute increments (See Appendix H). Notes were also taken and included specific information about the student behaviors and interaction tone, as well as teacher behaviors observed. There were one-minute time frames in which more than one observed teacher or student behavior was

coded. Overall, I gathered at least five minutes of data for each student for a total of 15-20 minutes of student data during classroom observations (See Table 2).

Prior to classroom observations, I reminded teachers that I would be observing and asked for recommendations of the best place to sit and quietly observe while teachers were instructing. For homeroom observations, which included math, reading, science and social studies lessons, I consistently placed myself in the same location, where I could clearly see the teacher and all focal students. Some teachers chose to tell their students I was coming and asked their students to ignore me or pretend like I was not present.

For classroom observations of cooperative learning interaction, I looked for times in which teachers provided opportunities for students to interact with a partner, with peers in a small group, or with the whole class (See Appendix E). I also looked for times in which teachers encouraged engagement by providing structured interaction opportunities that included positive interdependence, promotive interaction, individual and group accountability, collaborative skills, and group processing (Johnson et al., 1990). Examples of cooperative learning strategies that might have been observed were: partner activities, structured learning teams, pairs check, student interviewing, or think-pair-share. Specific student behaviors also were sought out during classroom observations such as: Did focus students initiate communication and maintain conversations with teachers and classmates? Did focus students cooperate with teacher and peer requests? Were focus students actively involved in classroom activities? Did ELLs initiate interactions with peers and teachers and self-advocate by communicating needs to peers and teachers? Did ELLs display any negative behaviors that discouraged students or teachers from interacting with them, such as aggressive or uncooperative behaviors, negative expressions or negative body language?

**Recess Observations.** All three sections of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade attended recess twice a day, each for approximately 20 minutes. I observed each class twice on different days, and recess observations ranged from 16 minutes to 29 minutes, depending on how long teachers allowed for recess. The goal of recess observations was to gather information about how ELLs and monolingual students interact with their peers in a non-structured environment, or outside of the classroom setting. Recess observations were coded for activity, student behavior, and language use (See Appendix E).

**Interviews.** A researcher's job in the in-depth interview process is to follow the line of inquiry and ask questions in an unbiased manner (Yin, 2014). Further, the goal of an interview is to uncover a participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest, not as the researcher views it (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). With this in mind, three 2<sup>nd</sup> grade focal teachers participated in one in-depth one-on-one interview. These interviews took place during teacher plan times or before school during the second week of the study. The focus of the interviews was to gather information about the teachers' beliefs about peer interaction and cooperative learning and how these strategies affect ELL and monolingual students, both socially and academically (See Appendix F). Teachers were asked about the use of cooperative learning structures because they are a way to facilitate peer interactions. Follow-up questions based on survey responses were also included in the interview, such as questions asking teachers to elaborate on survey answers regarding benefits and challenges in working with ELLs.

Students were interviewed only once during the study, after the first two weeks of observations. The eleven focus students (two monolingual students and two ELLs from Mrs. Rooney's and Mr. Lincoln's class; two monolingual students and one ELL from Mrs. Florence's class) were interviewed. The purpose of the student interviews was to understand the students'

relationships with peers and language use in and out of school. Questions were related to students' experiences with peers and teachers and how, if at all, language affects these experiences (See Appendix G). One-on-one student interviews took place in the reading office during times when classroom instruction was not going on. Student interviews lasted anywhere from three to eight minutes in length.

**Survey.** One online survey was distributed to all elementary teachers in Woodside district, with the exception of reading specialists and special education teachers. A total of 698 teachers received the survey and 122 participated, a total of 18%. The survey was distributed through Qualtrics online survey software and was sent to teachers via Woodside District's test coordinator. Surveys, along with consent information, were emailed to teachers at the start of week one. A follow-up email was sent at the start of week two to remind teachers that the survey was still open for participation for one more week. The survey was closed after being accessible for two weeks. All responses were anonymous, with the exception of the three focal teachers taking part in observations and interviews. These three teachers' responses were used to help guide interview questions. Survey questions were related to teachers' experiences in working with ELLs, and their beliefs about peer interactions and cooperative learning in the classroom setting (see Appendix H).

**Credibility.** Establishing credibility is an important consideration in doing qualitative research. One means of establishing credibility is through triangulation because it allows the researcher to check the integrity of inferences drawn upon from various sources and to establish credibility (Schwandt, 2007). To triangulate data, I compared and crosschecked data from observations, surveys, and interviews. Another way to establish credibility is through member checking. Member checking is a method in which the researcher solicits feedback from

participants in an effort to verify findings or assure findings are valid (Merriam, 2009). To complete member checks, I provided teacher participants with summaries of my tentative findings from the study. I also talked to teachers after observations to obtain further information about instructional strategies used or activities chosen. This helped me gather a better understanding of decisions made by teachers. Member checks also provided a better understanding of participants' actions or intentions and also allowed me to challenge interpretations. For example, one student spent most of one lesson with his head on his desk and was clearly distraught. Following the lesson, during my conversation with the student's teacher, I learned that the student was upset because the ELL aide was unavailable for his small-group instruction, which usually took place during the time of my observation.

Finally, when collecting qualitative data it helps to reveal one's subjectivities, which I do here. I am a teacher at EES and have a professional relationship with all teachers. I am a familiar face to student participants and have worked with some of them directly as the reading specialist. I am Hispanic and both parents are Spanish speakers. My mother was an English language learner when she attended elementary school in the 1950s. My parents did not speak Spanish in our household and none of my siblings or I can speak Spanish. Due to my family history, coursework at KU, and experience as a classroom teacher and reading specialist, I am a strong believer in providing ELLs with a safe learning environment and ample opportunities to practice their literacy skills. I believe these opportunities can have a positive impact on students, both academically and socially. As the researcher, it was important that I critically self-reflect on my own assumptions, biases, theoretical orientation and my relationship to the study and its participants. Along with self-reflection, Merriam (2009) suggests adequate engagement in data collection, variation in sample selection, and thick descriptions to contextualize the study for



readers. Since I conducted this research independently I also discussed the process, findings, and interpretations with colleagues and my research committee as a way to review and examine.

## **Data Analysis**

**Classroom Observations.** During classroom observations, a checklist was used to record student behaviors, student tone, and teacher behaviors. Specific behaviors were coded in one-minute increments per student. Frequency of students' interactions with peers, tasks and teachers, such as engagement and communication, were determined. Descriptive accounts of observations also were recorded and coded for themes, via interpretive analyses.

Focal students' behaviors were originally categorized under the following actions: leading or directing peers/activity, peer collaboration, following/listening to peers, independently working, peer conflict, or off-task. Once observations were completed, peer interaction behaviors were simplified to the following behaviors: leading interaction, following or listening interaction, or collaborative interaction. During each one-minute observation, the tone of peer interaction, if present, was also observed and categorized as positive, neutral, or negative (conflicting). Peer interactions were the focus of the observations due to the impact these interpersonal resources can have on students' cognitive skills (Rubin, et al., 2006). Teacher behaviors were observed and analyzed because their decisions regarding interactions can modify status effects and maximize equity within student groups. When teachers provide an environment in which all students feel like valued members, ELLs may feel more comfortable about being active members of the classroom community, regardless of language or academic differences. Furthermore, these interactions can minimize effects of inequalities and provide students with a safe and more secure learning environment (Cohen, 1994).

Teacher behaviors were originally categorized under the following actions: teaching, supporting, managing, or not present (See Appendix H). Once observations were completed and analyzed, 'teaching' and 'supporting' were merged to represent teacher behaviors that supported learning the content (e.g., giving directions, providing feedback, listening, positive support, and clarifying), while 'managing behaviors' and 'not present' remain the same.

**Recess Observations.** Focal students were observed in one-minute increments multiple times during each recess observation. Recess observations for each student were originally coded for play member(s) (i.e., monolingual students, ELLs, both, or no companion), language usage (i.e., English, Spanish, both, or none), and activity (e.g., kickball, soccer, equipment, grass, hopscotch, four square, homework, and timeout area) (See Appendix H). I placed myself in a central location on the playground where I could see all activity locations and could also hear most student interactions. Once observations were completed, activities were reorganized to represent three main categories (a) blacktop, which included kickball, hopscotch, and four square; (b) equipment, including play on a grass field; and (c) timeout. These changes were made because students most often chose to play on the equipment or blacktop. Timeouts could involve the time some students were required to complete homework assignments because their work was missing or late; however, no focal students were observed doing this. Language use was eliminated because no focal students were observed speaking any language other than English.

**Interviews.** Both teacher and student interviews were transcribed verbatim. The transcript were read and reread to identify categories and themes related to teachers' beliefs about peer interactions and how they do (do not) encourage peer interactions and cooperative learning activities. Teachers were asked to share their beliefs about students interacting with teachers and peers, and to share information about the opportunities they provide for interaction

and cooperative learning in their classrooms. Teachers were also asked to share their experiences in working with ELLs, including professional development opportunities, lesson planning, challenges, and benefits.

Students were asked questions about language use in and out of school, as well as who they interacted with in and out of school. Students were also asked to share information about classroom participation. These responses were considered when analyzing students' behaviors classroom and recess observations.

**Survey.** Survey results were coded to identify themes and trends in teachers' responses about peer interactions and cooperative learning activities, and the response frequency of themes is reported. Survey results were also analyzed for similarities and trends consistent with focal teachers' interview responses and student and teacher behaviors.

## **Summary**

The aim of this qualitative study was to understand teachers' beliefs about peer interactions and more specifically, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers' beliefs about peer interaction. Another aim of this study was to understand ELL and monolingual English 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students' thoughts and experiences regarding peer interaction in and out of school and their opportunities to engage in peer interactions. Qualitative data were collected to understand teachers' and students' beliefs, as well as students' opportunities to engage in peer interactions. In the following chapter, I report the results.

**CHAPTER FOUR****Overview**

Three 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers and 11 students participated in this study with a purpose of gaining a better understanding of teachers' and students' perceptions of peer interaction, the types of peer interactions teachers planned and the types of peer interactions ELLs' experiences in and out of school. Data collected included teacher interviews, teacher surveys, student interviews, classroom observations and recess observations and were used to address three questions: (a) What are second grade teachers' beliefs about peer interactions? (b) How frequently do ELLs interact with monolingual English students? In the classroom? On the playground? and (c) What are second grade students' thoughts and experiences about interacting with their peers in and out of a school setting? Do children consider the issue of language differences? If so, what do they do?

In this chapter, I describe each classroom starting with Mrs. Florence's class, followed by Mrs. Rooney's class and then Mr. Lincoln's class. With respect to each class, first, focal teacher interview and survey results are presented. Second, classroom and recess observation results are shared, including coded behavior data on peer interactions, teacher-led instruction, audiovisual references, and play members and activities. Third, student interview results are presented for all focal ELL and monolingual students. Finally, Woodside District teacher survey results are presented.

**Mrs. Florence and Her Students**

**Interview and Survey.** Mrs. Florence believes it is important that monolingual English students and ELLs have opportunities to engage in both peer interactions and cooperative

learning activities. Her purpose for having students interact in class is “that they are going to have to (interact with others)...all their lives, and they are going to have to problem solve and brainstorm, and sometimes it’s a lot easier to just do it with another person.” However, she does not believe students should be expected to interact with all peers because “some personalities just don’t match.” During her interview, Mrs. Florence stated that her students do a lot of group activities “and sometimes they are paired with peers as a higher student may be helping a lower student, but not necessarily giving them answers.” When asked about the opportunities for peer interaction that she provides, Mrs. Florence gave the example of Junior Achievement, a program that teaches students about the business world and how to work together and problem solve with the help of a community volunteer. She also gives her students opportunities to interact with her through “all kinds of conversations.” She provides teacher interaction opportunities because “they (students) feel more comfortable with me.”

Mrs. Florence finds cooperative learning opportunities to be important to students’ academic growth. According to her survey, she provides the following cooperative learning opportunities for her students: partners, structured learning teams, pairs check, and think-pair-share. Her survey results indicate that she groups monolingual English students and ELLs together daily during cooperative learning activities. Mrs. Florence also stated that she provides daily cooperative learning opportunities during the following activities: language arts, math, science, social studies, recess, and social interaction. However, during her interview, Mrs. Florence clarified that she provides cooperative learning opportunities most days, but that it doesn’t happen “with the time frame all the time.” She believes cooperative learning opportunities are important because “they (students) will have to learn how to get along with

each other and unless you are going to work on a computer your entire life, you need to work with different types of people, different personalities, different levels of people.”

Mrs. Florence's survey results indicated that ELLs feel somewhat reluctant to work with monolingual English students, while monolingual students feel indifferent about working with ELL students. During her interview, she shared that sometimes “they (ELLs and monolinguals) get frustrated and they don't know how to help each other, and so they don't try as hard as I think they would if they had a little more assistance.” She notices that monolingual English students sometimes assume ELLs always need assistance, but “usually this only occurs when students (ELL) are low academically.” Mrs. Florence also noted in the survey that ELLs are sometimes apprehensive when talking in front of their peers, yet she notices few differences in how monolingual English and ELLs interact with each other. Mrs. Florence reported that she does not provide ELLs much opportunity to work with each other in the classroom because there are only three ELLs, one of whom was new to EES in early May. However, she did indicate that her ELLs work with each other most often when they see the ELL aide for small group support.

Mrs. Florence's identified two challenges. The first and her biggest challenge is communicating with parents of ELLs due to the language difference. However, she utilizes the interpreters provided by the district ELL office to help her communicate to parents and translate documents. The second challenge Mrs. Florence identified is how to help one particular ELL who “sometimes gets her languages mixed around.” Mrs. Florence and a peer helper try to guide the student without giving her answers. Mrs. Florence thinks helping the student solve problems is more challenging because “she (student) is low (academically).”

Mrs. Florence believes parent support to be a benefit in working with ELLs. She finds parents of ELLs to be “very supportive on the whole [and] they want the children to do well.”

She rarely has any behavior issues and most of the students, according to Mrs. Florence, want to achieve at a high level. She also believes that EES's ELL aide is a beneficial resource to ELLs because the ELLs are able to work together regularly in a small group setting on language activities.

Although she feels like she can connect with her ELLs, she wishes she knew more about her ELLs' backgrounds in order to better connect with them because, "they (ELL) have another culture and just to share that culture with them a little bit more, because sometimes they are kind of quiet and they don't give you a lot of details." When asked what she would do differently to support her students' social and academic school experience, Mrs. Florence said she would have more time for working one-on-one every day.

**Class Observation.** Mrs. Florence's students were observed on six occasions, once when Mrs. Florence taught math, reading and science lessons in her classroom, as well as during art and PE. Of the 175 minutes observed, 97 observed minutes or 55% of the time was teacher-led instruction, 44 minutes or 25% of the time involved peer interactions, and the teacher made audiovisual references (engaged students in technology-enhanced instruction) during 42 minutes or 24% of the time (See Table 3). Note that during some one-minute observation, more than one behavior was coded. For example, an audiovisual reference may have been made during the same minute that a student was observed interacting with peers. (See Tables 2 and 3 for more detailed information about each classroom observation.) Field notes also were collected for three students in Mrs. Florence's class, one ELL and two monolingual English student during class observations.

**Math.** Mrs. Florence's math observation began with students checking morning work, taking timed math-fact tests, and then the remainder of the lesson involved reviewing geometric

shapes. While checking morning work, some students began debating the correct answer to a story problem. Instead of stepping in, Mrs. Florence let the whole class continue the discussion for a few minutes before intervening. Consequently, during the 42-minute observation, 26 minutes or 62% of the time was teacher-led instruction, 15 minutes or 36% of the time was used for peer interactions, and teacher made audiovisual references during 13 minutes or 31% of the observed time.

**Reading.** During the reading session, Mrs. Florence helped the whole class summarize a play they had read the previous day. Then they choral-read a short expository text with Mrs. Florence and completed a sequencing graphic organizer about the text. Lastly, the teacher asked them to write a response in their journals that addressed a question related to the text. In short, 41 minutes of the 48-minute observation or 85% of the time involved teacher-led instruction, the teacher made audiovisual references during 14 minutes or 34% of the observed time, and peers engaged in interactions for five minutes or 12% of the time.

**Science.** The first ten minutes of this science lesson was dedicated to the “student of the week,” who shared her "All About Me" poster. Then the students took out science packets regarding the human body, specifically muscles, as Mrs. Florence projected a document on a screen. Since this was a review, Mrs. Florence asked students questions to check for their understanding and then students were given about three minutes to complete an "Activity Fun" page with their teammates before checking their answers as a whole class. Thirteen minutes of the 22-minute science lesson or 59% of the time consisted of whole-class teacher-led instruction, the teacher made audiovisual references during 8 minutes or 36% of the observed time and students engaged in peer interactions for five minutes or 23% of the time.



During the second science lesson that was observed, Mrs. Florence reviewed food groups by leading a whole class discussion and then she asked students to work on a handout independently. While students worked independently, Mrs. Florence walked around the room and provided support to individual students. At one point she asked the students to work with partners to complete the handout but most students did not respond to her request. Overall, eight minutes of the 30-minute observations or 27 minutes of the time involved teacher-led instruction, the teacher made audiovisual references during eight minutes or 27% of the observed time, peers engaged in interactions during six minutes or 26% of the times and students engaged in 10 minutes of independently work, which accounted for 33% of the observed time.

*Art.* During this 33 minute observation, students wrapped the teacups they made with wrapping they also made in during previous are session. As students sat at tables in small groups of four, they first worked in wrapping the present and then they decorated paper kites while the art teacher, Mrs. J, helped individuals. Students were allowed to whisper with their peers decorating the kites. So, unlike math, reading and science, students engaged in 17 minutes peer interactions, which accounted for 52% of the time, and only nine minutes of teacher-led instruction, which accounted for 27% of the observation. During seven minutes there were no peer interactions and no instruction. Students worked independently while Mrs. J was at her desk.

*Recess Observations.* Mrs. Florence's class was observed during two recess sessions, totaling 43 minutes. Her focal students spent the majority of their time, 38 of 42 observed minutes, playing on the equipment. Ben, an ELL, spent all but one observed minute on the equipment and playing tag with five or more students. He spent that minute in timeout. Peter spent almost all of his observed recess minutes playing tag with Ben and playing with friends on the equipment. Wendy spent almost all of her observed recess minutes swinging on the

equipment with two monolingual English friends. See Table 4 for the amount of times each student was observed during recess and the type of activity in which they engaged.

### **Mrs. Florence's Students**

**Ben.** Ben, an ELL, revealed during his interview that he could speak both English and Spanish, but speaks English most often at school. The only times he might speak Spanish at school are when he sees his older sister in the building or speaks to Cheyenne, a fellow ELL classmate. According to Ben, his parents prefer that he speak Spanish at home. "They don't let me talk English, just when I play with my friends on x-box." However, he said that he does sometimes will speak to his sisters in English at home. When at school, Ben prefers to work with, play with and eat with a handful of monolingual English classmates. When asked if he plays with these same classmates outside of school he stated, "Yeah...but I don't like go to their house, I play on the x-box." Otherwise, when at home, Ben plays with his older sisters or his cousins. When asked what he wished his teacher would do differently to help him learn and enjoy school, Ben said he wished she would provide more options related to games and activities, rather than just puzzles, drawing, and "Heads up Seven Up."

Ben was observed in the classroom for 59 minutes. During those 59 minutes, he spent 27% of his time engaged in peer interactions, all of which were positive. Ben followed directions and was on tasks when being observed, and he was only observed off-task one time and was redirected. During whole class activities, he was observed raising his hand to offer answers only a few times instruction but he was able to share answers when called on without raising his hand. Finally, Ben collaborated well with others during peer interactions.

**Wendy.** Wendy is a monolingual English student. When asked whom she chooses to talk to, work with, or play with at school, Wendy said she prefers Noel and Molly because they are her friends. When working in the classroom she collaborates with Shelly, Tonya and Nick because they are all part of her cooperative learning team. When asked about language use, Wendy was aware that Shelly, an ELL, speaks both Spanish and English. Wendy reported that she does not play with her school friends when at home. Instead, she plays with a neighbor and her little brother.

Wendy indicated that in class she raises her hand to ask questions or answer her teacher's questions. When working on classwork, Wendy follows the class rule of 'ask three before me,' implemented by her teacher earlier in the year. This means that Wendy asks three classmates for help before asking her teacher. She chooses to ask Nick, Dan or Melissa when following the 'ask three before me' rule because "they're good at answering questions."

Wendy was observed for 58 minutes during class activities. During those 58 minutes, she spent 26% of her time engaged in peer interactions, all of which were positive. During class activities, Mrs. Florence often asked Wendy to provide support to classmates who were struggling with directions or tasks. She was also frequently asked to think aloud through her math work during whole-group instruction. Not surprisingly, Wendy was not observed engaging in off-task behaviors.

**Peter.** Peter is a monolingual English student. When asked whom he talks to, works with, and plays with at school, Peter named a handful of monolingual English boys and Ben, an ELL classmate. He likes to work with these classmates because they are all his friends. Peter most prefers to work with and play with Nate, a fellow classmate, because they are best friends. When he has questions about classwork he chooses to ask for help, he said Nate or Ben because they

are smart. When not at school, Peter plays with three monolingual English classmates, Nate, Tyler, and Logan. When asked why he does not play with other school friends, like Ben, Peter said it was because they live nowhere near his house.

Peter was observed in the classroom for 58 minutes. During those 58 minutes, he spent 22% of his time engaged in peer interactions, all of which were positive. Although Peter was fairly quiet throughout observations, he willingly collaborated with peers during interaction opportunities but otherwise worked independently. Also, he rarely raised his hand during whole-class instruction but was always attentive and compliant. Finally, Peter was never observed off-task.

**Summary.** Mrs. Florence believed peer interactions and cooperative learning activities to be important to all students because they will have to work to get along with others their entire lives. She admitted that she tried to provide these opportunities daily but it didn't always work out that way. Cooperative learning was most often observed in the form of shoulder partner and small group interaction. Mrs. Florence also indicated that ELLs feel somewhat reluctant to work with monolingual English students; however, based on class observations and student interviews, this does not seem to be the case for her current students.

Mrs. Florence's class was observed for a total of 175 minutes over five lessons and two recess periods, and students were engaged in peer interactions during 25% of this time. With respect to the times Mrs. Florence was teaching (i.e., math, reading, science), 55% of the time was teacher-led instruction and 19% of the time students were engaged in peer interaction.

**Interview.** Mrs. Rooney reported that it is important for all students to engage in both peer interactions and cooperative learning opportunities for both academic and social growth benefits. Based on survey results, she provides cooperative learning opportunities such as partnering and structured learning teams for language arts, math and recess. Also, based on survey results, Mrs. Rooney provides cooperative learning opportunities a few times a month.

Overall, Mrs. Rooney finds that all her students behave, “pretty much like immature second graders. They have their good times and their bad times.” She does not see a significant difference in how monolingual English students and ELLs interact with peers. Mrs. Rooney indicated that her ELLs and monolingual English students are willing to work together in cooperative learning situations. However, she has noticed that her ELLs show more engagement when working with their ELL peers versus monolingual English students but she does not see any Spanish language use between ELLs. When grouping ELLs and monolingual English students together Mrs. Rooney does consider ELLs’ writing skills, because “that sometimes is an issue...but as far as personalities, I don’t really...single them out in any way.” While she doesn’t provide any specific opportunities for ELLs to interact with only other ELLs, Mrs. Rooney thinks it might happen at recess, but it would be by the students’ choice. ELLs might also work together in the classroom if the ELL aide is in the room supporting them on a task. She doesn’t provide any specific modifications for her ELLs other than individual help, if needed. Mrs. Rooney report that her ELLs are “really high functioning as far as their ability to work with others or work with me,” so she doesn’t plan lessons any differently or use any particular strategies to specifically support them. She finds them to be high functioning socially, but says

academically, "it's a mixed bag." Mrs. Rooney has been teaching ELLs for years and sees a wide range of differences in academic abilities among them.

Mrs. Rooney does encounter some challenges when working with ELLs, such as communicating with parent communication particularly since there is no one in the building to help with translation. However, Mrs. Rooney does have some documents translated into Spanish by personnel in the district ELL office so that she can send them home to parents. That said, she also relies on students to read, translate, and explain some documents to their parents. Mrs. Rooney has one student whose mother does not speak English, "so that is an ongoing issue." Further, Mrs. Rooney thinks that she sometimes does not hear back from this particular parent because, "the student is kind of playing both ends." That is, this particular ELL student is performing on grade level academically yet often does not complete work. Mrs. Rooney reports that the student's reasons for work incompleteness are that she and her mother don't understand it. Finally, Mrs. Rooney has also noticed that, "some of the parents kind of...hold back, a little bit sensitive about their...communication and that kind of thing...In the past it's been an issue whether everyone in the family was legal or not...And so, you know, I can't blame them for being kind of quiet about it."

Mrs. Rooney indicated student communication to be a benefit to working with ELLs because she spends so much time with all her students. Another benefit she reported is that her ELL students are social and play fairly well with other students. Mrs. Rooney further reported that she has good relationships with her ELLs. She also said that her ELL students are academically high functioning, with the exception of one student. Although this one ELL struggles more than her peer, she is a hard worker. Along this line, Mrs. Rooney has been pleased with the most recent language arts program implemented by the school district because

the program includes Spanish cognates that her ELLs are usually familiar with and are eager to share with Mrs. Rooney and classmates. She finds that her ELLs are “very proud of their heritage and they’re very proud to know how to read it (examples in reading program) and how to say it.” Otherwise, Mrs. Rooney reports that her ELLs only speak Spanish when she asks them about specific words, but that they don’t act embarrassed about it (though some have acted embarrassed in previous years). When asked if there was anything she would do differently to support ELLs, both academically and socially, Mrs. Rooney says she would liked to have learned to speak Spanish.

Mrs. Rooney indicated that opportunities for peer interaction are important because they are a “part of the growing up process too, making friends and being able to learn from one another.” However, she does not think students should be expected to interact with all their peers since sometimes there can be personality conflicts among certain students. She encourages peer interactions in her classroom by providing opportunities such as structured learning teams, which she implemented after the winter break. She expected a lot more talk than what she received but liked the structures because the students helped each other out so much. Her purpose for providing the peer interaction opportunities was to give them opportunities to learn more from each other rather than just in working with her. She also wanted to help her students “to grow into more responsible 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and to be able to complete testing and individual checks more successfully.”

Once Mrs. Rooney began implementing cooperative learning activities like structured learning teams she provided peer interaction opportunities “pretty much every day,” although mostly during math instruction. During structured learning groups, students were given numbers with in their group and they took turns at enacting different group roles, such as sharing the

collaborative work they had done. She provided these opportunities because, “they (students) learn a lot from their peers and they’re good helpers. They’re heterogeneously grouped so higher students can help lower students.”

**Class Observations.** Mrs. Rooney’s class was observed during six classroom lessons, four taught by Mrs. Rooney and two taught by specialists. Of the 194 minutes observed, 133 observed minutes or 70% of the time was teacher-led instruction, 68 minutes or 35% of the time included audiovisual reference and 58 minutes or 30% of the time students were engaged in of peer interactions. See Tables 2 and 3 for more detailed information about each class observation. Also, during observations, field notes were collected for four students in Mrs. Rooney’s class, two ELLs and two monolingual English students

**Math.** Mrs. Rooney’s math lesson consisted of checking morning work, taking a timed math-fact test, and then introducing the differences between plane shapes and solid shapes. Although Mrs. Rooney’s math lesson kept students engaged and on task it provided no opportunities for students to interact with each other. This is odd given that Mrs. Rooney indicated that she most often implemented cooperative learning activities during math; however, she was only observed during one math session. In short, the lesson was almost entirely teacher-led. That is, 40 of 44 observed minutes or 91% of the time was teacher-led instruction, and Mrs. Rooney and her students referred to the audio-visual math program components during 28 minutes of the observation or 64% of the time. Consequently, no peer interactions were observed.

**Reading.** Mrs. Rooney’s reading lesson consisted of a class discussion of vocabulary terms, reading a passage as a group, individual reading to practice fluency, and working collaboratively to complete a worksheet. Although the lesson was primarily teacher-led, Mrs.



Rooney did provide opportunities for independent practice and peer interaction. In sum, 41 minutes of the 48 minute lesson or 85% of the time was teacher-led instruction, Mrs. Rooney and students made audio-visual references during 32 minutes or 67% of the lesson, and during seven minutes or 15% of the time students engaged in peer interactions.

**Science.** Mrs. Rooney's science lesson as a review of a topic covered previously in the week and it provided plenty of opportunity for students to interact with both her and their teammates. Students answered review questions as teams by referencing their textbooks and with the help of Mrs. Rooney's scaffolding. During the 24 observed minutes, students interacted with their peer interactions for 23 minutes or 96% of the time. All interactions were positive. Most interactions were collaborative group efforts to find answers to questions presented by Mrs. Rooney. Mrs. Rooney walked around the room to support students and gave reminders of what it looked like to work as a team. Nine minutes of this lesson or 38% of the time were teacher-led and 3 minutes or 13% of the time of audio-visual references were made.

**Social Studies.** Mrs. Rooney started her social studies lesson by asking a probing question to get the students thinking about information learned in prior lessons. She gave students an opportunity to discuss answers to her question with their teammates, which allowed for peer interaction during the first few minutes of the activity. Then, Mrs. Rooney gathered the whole group's attention a few times to share examples and afterward she let them discuss amongst teammates again. This pattern was followed throughout the first 12 minutes of the lesson. Once students had discussed responses, in teams and as a whole class, students were given an independent activity. They were allowed to reference the screen, where Mrs. Rooney listed examples shared by class, their textbooks, and their teammates for support. In sum, 15 of the 21 minutes lesson or 24% of the time was teacher-led instruction, nine minutes or 43% of the

time students were engaged in student interactions, and 5 minutes or 24% of the time audio-visual references were made during the lesson.

*Art.* During art, Mrs. J engaged students in teacher-led instruction for 16 of 28 minutes or for 57% of the time and students were observed interacting for only three minutes or 11% of the time during this class session. Mrs. J spent the first five minutes giving step-by-step instructions for making a clay teacup. Once instructions were given, she spent the next 11 minutes passing out materials and giving directions about how students should approach the task. Students then began working independently. After students made their teacups they had time to free draw for the rest of the session. All interactions took place while students were working on teacups and free drawing once Mrs. J was finished giving directions.

*P.E.* Mr. N introduced a new game of mini-baseball to students during this 29-minute observation. Students listened to directions, asked questions, then moved into groups to their areas to play the game. Mr. N gave very clear, concise directions for playing mini baseball, and students were very attentive to his directions and asked questions for clarification. Mr. N also demonstrated the game with the help of three students and he referenced the white board, where directions were written in case students had questions once they began planning the game. In all, it took Mr. N 12 minutes or 41% of the time to go over the directions for playing the game, which was new to the class. The students played the game for 16 minutes and peer interaction took place during the entire time students played the game or 55% of the session. All but one observed interaction was positive. Henry's group member laughed at him for missing the ball twice. This was the only negative peer interaction observed.

*Recess:* Mrs. Rooney's students were observed during 49 minutes of recess. During the second recess observation all students were limited to playing on the blacktop because the

equipment and grass were damp from earlier rainfall. Veronica, an ELL, chose to play on the equipment and blacktop with both monolingual English students and fellow ELLs. She spent three observed minutes in timeout because she had not returned her reading log. Henry, another ELL, chose to play tag on the equipment or kickball on the blacktop. He was almost always observed playing with groups of three or more students, both monolingual English students and ELLs. Bailey was absent during the first recess observation. She spent the second observed recess on the blacktop, either sitting or walking around. Bailey was observed with monolingual English students for three minutes, once with both a monolingual English student and ELLs, and once alone. Luke was observed playing tag and playing with friends on the blacktop. Luke was almost always observed with groups of both ELL and monolingual students. See Table 2 for the amount of times each student was observed during recess and the type of activity in which they engaged.

### **Mrs. Rooney's Students**

**Veronica.** Veronica is an ELL. When asked whom she prefers to work with, play with, or talk to at school, she mentioned two ELL girls, Elizabeth and Abby. She later mentioned two monolingual English female classmates that she also likes to talk to because they are her friends too. In the classroom, she likes to work with her shoulder partner, Nate, because "he can always help."

Veronica reported that she can speak both English and Spanish and that, of her school friends, both Elizabeth and Abby can also speak Spanish. Veronica said she never speaks Spanish with Elizabeth and Abby but knows they can speak Spanish because they told her. Veronica said she only speaks English at school. At home, she speaks both English and Spanish

when communicating with her parents. When communicating with her brother she speaks only English. She also reported that she never plays with her classmates outside of school. At home, she only plays with her older brother.

Veronica was observed in the classroom setting for 56 minutes. During those 56 minutes, she spent 29% of her time engaged in peer interactions, all of which were positive interactions. She was attentive to teachers and peers, and she followed directions and was on-task. Also, on more than one occasion, Veronica was asked to be the “teacher’s helper” and she assisted Mrs. Rooney with lights and the document camera.

**Henry.** Henry is an ELL. He prefers to work, talk and play with Seth, Jonas, Nate and Lee at school. Henry likes to work with these specific students because they are his friends. Lee is also his shoulder partner, so Henry chooses to ask Lee for help on classwork because it’s easier to hear him.

Henry reported that he could speak both English and Spanish. When asked if any of his friends could speak Spanish, he said Seth could speak a little and Henry knew this because Seth told him and Henry asked him to say a Spanish word. Henry said he never speaks Spanish at school because he feels nervous and no one would understand him. Outside of school, Henry does play with one male monolingual English classmate because he lives two doors down from Henry. Interestingly, this is not one of the students he prefers to play with, work with, or talk to at school.

Henry was observed in the classroom setting for 54 minutes. During those 54 minutes, he spent 28% of his time engaged in peer interactions. Only one of those interactions was negative, when a classmate made fun of Henry for swinging and missing the ball in PE. Overall, Henry

was attentive and on-task during class activities and he followed his teachers' directions. Henry was also always eager to participate and was often observed raising his hand to share answers.

**Bailey.** Bailey is a monolingual student. She prefers to work, play, and talk with a several monolingual female classmates. She prefers these students because she gets along well with them and some of them are on her structured learning team. Bailey relies on her teacher and her shoulder partner when she has questions about schoolwork. Bailey plays Ashley, a monolingual classmate, when not at school because her mom is a friend of Ashley's grandma and grandpa. Otherwise, she plays with Riley, a neighbor because she "lives two doors down" but doesn't attend EES.

Bailey was observed in the classroom setting for only 30 minutes due to an absence. During those 30 minutes, she spent 23% of her time engaged in peer interactions, all of which were positive. Bailey was only observed off-task once, daydreaming while the rest of her classmates had moved on to a new task, and she was also redirected once during observations. Overall, Bailey was attentive and followed directions most of the time, however, she rarely raised her hand to be called on to respond to a questions and she most often chose to work independently.

**Luke.** Luke is classified as a monolingual English student; however, he did say that he could also speak a little bit of Spanish, which he learned from his dad. When asked what language he speaks with sister, Naomi, Luke said English and Spanish. He said they, "kind of fake it (Spanish)." Luke described his dad as, "American mixed with another country." He prefers to work with, play with, and talk to a number of ELLs and monolingual students, both male and female. He specifically mentioned Linda, his ELL shoulder partner. Not only does he work with Linda in the classroom, he sometimes spends time with her at lunch and recess,

among other students. He also interacts with Danny, a monolingual student, because Danny also likes to talk about games like Minecraft. When Luke has questions about schoolwork he asks his teammates, including his shoulder partner, Linda. When not at school, Luke plays with his little sister. Luke does not play with any of his school friends when he's at home.

Luke was observed in the classroom setting for 54 minutes. During those 54 minutes, he spent 37% of this time engaged in peer interactions, all of which were positive. Luke was attentive to teachers and peers and he was engaged in tasks so never needed redirection. Luke collaborated often with peers and was also eager to participate during whole-group discussion, raising his hand often to share answers.

**Summary.** Mrs. Rooney believed peer interactions and cooperative learning activities to be important to all students, and she indicated she provided cooperative learning opportunities a few times a month. Her students were seated in structured teams and did interact with teammates and shoulder partners during some lessons. Based on class observations, cooperative learning was most often observed in the form of shoulder partner interaction. She also did not see any significant differences in how monolingual students and ELLs interacted with peers.

Mrs. Rooney's class was observed for a total of 194 minutes over six lessons and two recess periods, and students were engaged in peer interactions during 30% of this time. With respect to the times Mrs. Rooney was teaching (i.e., math, reading, science, social studies), 77% of the time was teacher-led instruction and 29% of the time students were engaged in peer interaction.

**Interview and Survey.** Mr. Lincoln, based on his survey responses, believes that cooperative learning opportunities are extremely important to both the academic and social growth of students and he provides these opportunities daily. He provides the following cooperative learning opportunities for students: partners, structured learning teams, pairs check, and think-pair-share. He provides cooperative learning opportunities when teaching language arts, math, science, social studies, and at recess. More specifically, he provides small group collaboration opportunities when teaching science and social studies and also allows shoulder partner work in reading and math. He encourages collaboration among students because “it gives them a sense of how to problem solve.”

Mr. Lincoln finds it extremely important, based on his survey responses, that all students have peer interaction opportunities. He reports that his ELLs and monolingual English students are willing to work with each other and he gives students these opportunities on a daily basis. Mr. Lincoln reports that his students are very social and he gives them opportunities to interact, “even during working time. Independent practice. I allow them to speak because I know it does no good to tell them to be quiet. So, they are always helping each other and talking about what they’re doing...” He says that he did have to teach them structures for how interaction should look and sound and that they have gotten better at it as the year has gone on. He believes it is important for his students “to be able to use somebody, one of their peers, as a resource, as somebody to get help from, somebody to share ideas with, somebody to talk to about their problems instead of coming and talking to me. It does more for them (peers) to work them out and problem solve than it does for me to just tell them what to do.” He also noticed that some of his students volunteer to be peer helpers for others. If students still do not understand something

after working with a peer then they go to Mr. Lincoln for help. Mr. Lincoln does acknowledge that not all peers work well together, that there are some students who might not get along, which can be counterproductive when doing partner work. Mr. Lincoln's purpose in asking students to interact with each other is to lessen their dependency on him, which was a problem at the beginning of the year, when, "every single person wanted to come to my desk and ask me something."

When grouping ELLs with monolingual English students Mr. Lincoln attempts to place patient, helpful, understanding monolingual students with ELLs. Mr. Lincoln tries to seat ELLs near monolingual English students who they will be comfortable asking for help. Although Mr. Lincoln does not provide specific opportunities for ELLs to interact with only other ELLs, he does provide some modifications to support ELLs, such as reading instructions aloud individually to them if they ask, or providing friendlier explanations of topics to help them better understand. He also allows his ELLs to come to his desk to ask questions one-on-one instead of asking in front of their classmates. Although he does not plan lessons differently for his two ELLs he does rely on resources embedded into the language arts program to help support their needs, such as ELL-specific leveled readers and Spanish vocabulary cognates. He likes using the ELL resources embedded in the reading program because they are not below grade-level resources and sometimes offer more in-depth explanations and more scaffolding than non-ELL resources.

Finally, Mr. Lincoln provides regular opportunities for all his students to interact with him. He thinks teacher-student interactions are important because he assumes that some of his students do not get to talk to an adult when at home due to lack of interaction with their own parents.



One major challenge Mr. Lincoln has faced when working with ELLs is parent communication. Mr. Lincoln finds it to be “a huge problem” when parents are not willing to come to school to talk with him. Based on past experiences, Mr. Lincoln believes that some parents are afraid to come to school to meet him. However, after they have met him, parents tend to become more comfortable with him, particularly when they learn that he really is there to help their children. He also thinks parent involvement can be a challenge for the parents of his ELLs. He is not sure how involved these parents are with their children compared to parents of his monolingual English students because he has not witnessed much involvement from ELL families. Another challenge he has witnessed is student frustration regarding language and communication in social and academic settings. He has noticed that ELLs sometimes get mad when they are having a hard time understanding or expressing their thoughts to peers and teachers. For example, one student, Greg, has a difficult time with his speech pronunciation, which sometimes makes it difficult for him to communicate his thoughts to his teachers and peers.

Mr. Lincoln does see benefits to having ELLs in his classroom. For example, he has found that ELLs sometimes bring another viewpoint to the classroom. Some of his previous ELLs came to Woodside District after living in Spanish-speaking countries, so this allowed these ELLs to share perspectives that were different than their monolingual English classmates. Mr. Lincoln has noticed that ELLs' perspectives are well received by classmates because their perspectives are unfamiliar and interesting, far different than what some of the monolingual English students have heard before.

Although Mr. Lincoln has not obtained an ESL endorsement, he does recall learning about how to work with ELLs in some of his college courses. He also relies on colleagues for

tips. However, Mr. Lincoln indicated that learned the most about working with ELLs during his student teaching experience. Half of the students in Mr. Lincoln's class were ELLs and he had to determine what worked best when teaching them. As for now, he does not think he would do anything differently if he had time to do so. He believes that "the way everything's set up already is...works just fine. "

**Classroom Observation.** Mr. Lincoln's class was observed during six classroom lessons, four taught by Mr. Lincoln and two taught by specialists. Of the total 226 minutes observed, 115 minutes or 51% of the time was teacher-led instruction, 75 minutes or 33% of the times audiovisual references were made, and 70 minutes or 31% of the time students were engage in peer interactions. See Tables 2 and 3 for more detailed information about each class observation. Also, during the observations, field notes were collected for four students in Mr. Lincoln's class, two ELLs and two monolingual English students

**Math.** Mr. Lincoln started this lesson by checking morning work that had been completed earlier in the day. Mr. Lincoln asked for volunteers to work problems on the board and then the whole class discussed each problem. Once morning work was completed, Mr. Lincoln introduced a follow-up lesson on geometry. Students reviewed the differences between two- and three-dimensional shapes and they discussed characteristics of specific shapes. During this 44-minute math lesson, 31 minutes or 70% of the time was teacher-led, 25 minutes or 57% of the time audio-visual references were made, and only two minutes or 5% of the times students were engaged in peer interactions.

**Reading.** During this observation, Mr. Lincoln's students reread a myth from their language arts unit. Mr. Lincoln led the discussion for the first few minutes and then turned on the audiovisual component of the reading program for students to listen and respond. Mr. Lincoln

then followed up by asking questions related to the passage; however, before responding he asked students to discuss their answers with their partners before sharing with the whole class. Students then move on to an activity related to reading fluency or more specifically, reading with expression. Before students practiced reading aloud with partners, Mr. Lincoln asked some students to demonstrate reading aloud with expression. After the reading fluency activity, students were expected to complete a workbook task. Mr. Lincoln led instruction during 34 minutes of the 48-minute observation or for 71% of the time. He also made audiovisual references during 28 minutes or 58% of the time and students were observed interacting with peer during 11 minutes of the lesson or for 23% of the time.

**Science.** Mr. Lincoln presented lesson on food groups. First, Mr. Lincoln led a whole class discussion and allowed ample opportunities for students to share their thoughts and examples. After approximately twenty minutes of class discussion and then directions, students got started on the independent activity. However, students were encouraged to confide in their shoulder partners for support while working on the task. Further, Mr. Lincoln provided consistent positive support and feedback throughout the entire lesson. In sum, 20 minutes of the 36-minute lesson or 56% of the time was teacher-led, audiovisual references were made during ten minutes of the lesson or 28% of the time, and students were observed engaging in of peer interactions for ten minutes or 28% of the time.

**Science.** Mr. Lincoln's second science lesson was centered on ways to live a healthy lifestyle. It was clear that students had previously discussed this topic and worked in groups because they were able to provide good examples, such as exercising. As, as part of the lesson, all small groups were able to come up with routines for who was recording answers during their discussion and who would share answers with the whole class. During the small group activity,

Mr. Lincoln walked around the room and provided support to students as they completed the task.

Finally, to wrap up the lesson, he gave them an opportunity to exercise in a fun way that also tied into their language arts curriculum. In sum, 19 minutes of the 34-minute lesson or 56% of the time was teacher-led instruction, audiovisual references were made during 13 minutes or 38% of the time, and students engaged in 15 minutes of peer interactions, which was 44% of the time

*Art.* Mrs. J began the lesson by giving students directions on how to complete the task of making wrapping paper for teacups made the prior week. The students spent the remaining 27 minutes eagerly making the teacup wrapping paper and then free drawing, of which part of this time included peer interactions. Since each student was making his or her own wrapping paper, this lesson did not lend itself to peer collaboration. However, students were allowed to talk with one another but only if voices were kept at a whispering level. No negative or conflicting interactions were observed. Interactions were either positive or neutral, as students either discussed their drawings or unrelated topics. In sum, 5 minutes of the 32-minute lesson or 16% of time was teacher-led instruction and 14 minutes or 44% of the time students were engaged in peer interactions. Further, after giving directions and passing out materials to students, Mrs. J spent the remaining 23 minutes of the class time sitting at her desk drawing in a small sketchbook, warning students for talking too much, and giving a handful of directions to the class.

*P.E.* Mr. N started this lesson by giving instructions on how to play a new game. He provided clear directions, answered questions, and demonstrated how the game was to be played. He also displayed all directions on a white board for students to reference. Only the first six minutes of the observation or 21% of the time was teacher-led instruction, and students were attentive as he shared the directions and demonstrated the activity. Once the activity began, Mr.

N walked around the gym and provided support to all teams by answering questions and helping them strategize. He also provided consistent verbal positive support.

The activity was team-based and therefore lent itself to regular collaboration among peers. Once the activity began, there were 18 minutes of peer interaction, which accounted for 64% of the time. All focal students were observed interacting positively with their teammates throughout the activity. Greg and Georgia were observed interacting positively with peers 5 of 5 opportunities, and Vinnie was observed interacting positively with teammates 6 of 6 opportunities. Mary was observed interacting with classmates only 2 of 5 opportunities. Mary showed little interest in participating in the activity and aimlessly roamed the gym floor alone much of the time. Her overall behavior was neither negative nor positive.

**Recess.** Mrs. Lincoln's students were observed during two recess sessions, totaling 43 minutes. Greg, an ELL, spent all of his time on the equipment and blacktop. He played with monolingual English students, both monolingual students and ELLs, or alone. Mary, an ELL, most often played in groups of five or more kids. When not playing alone she almost always played with monolingual English students. Vinnie always chose to play on the equipment or kickball. He almost always played with groups of monolingual English students or ELLs and monolinguals. Georgia spent all of her time playing on the equipment with groups of friends. She was most often observed with monolingual English students. See Table 4 for the amount of times each student was observed during recess and the type of activity in which they engaged.

### **Mr. Lincoln's Students**

**Greg.** Greg is an ELL. When at school, he prefers to work with, play with and talk to three specific boys: Logan, Nico, and Philip. He likes to work, play, and talk with Logan, Nico and Philip because they all like to make up games together and because he wants to be friends

with them. When completing classwork, Greg indicated that he works with Georgia, a monolingual English classmate, who is also his shoulder partner. He likes working with Georgia because she is helpful and works a lot faster than he does. He also made it very clear that he did not play with Georgia, only that they only work together in the classroom.

When asked about his language use at school, Greg said, "I speak Spanish a little, but I don't know how to speak Spanish." When asked if he ever speaks Spanish at school, Greg said he did not because his classmates might not understand him if he spoke Spanish. He did say that his teacher, Mr. Lincoln, sometimes tries to speak Spanish to him and Greg said he usually responds with, "Si." Greg reported that, when at home, he only speaks English with his two siblings, who are both older than him. Greg's parents do speak Spanish to him, though he says, "I can't even talk Spanish because I need to learn more to speak Spanish." Greg reported that he did not play with any of his classmates outside of school except Nico, who lives near him. Instead, he plays with his Wii and his toys when at home.

Greg was observed in the classroom setting for 56 minutes. During those 56 minutes, he spent 32% of his time engaged in peer interactions, all of which were positive. Greg was observed to be off task for three minutes, all of which occurred during one lesson. He was off task because he was upset about something unrelated to the lesson and he struggled to pay attention. Greg was redirected during eight observed minutes, three times when off task, and on five other occasions for talking at inappropriate times. However, he was always eager to answer questions during whole group instruction. Also, Greg and his shoulder partner, Georgia, worked collaboratively and he was not afraid to ask her for help when he was stuck on a problem.

**Mary.** Mary, an ELL, revealed during her interview that she could speak both English and Spanish but speaks mostly English when at school. She reported that she works with and

plays with four specific students: Ellie, Ana, Uma, and Lea. She did reveal that Ana can speak a little bit of Spanish and that they sometimes communicate in Spanish at recess. Otherwise, she does not speak Spanish at school because “some people don’t know Spanish.” Although Mary does not play with Ellie, Uma, or Lea outside of school, she does go to Ana’s house to play because Ana lives within walking distance of Mary’s house.

When Mary wants to answer a question in class, she indicated that she raises her hand. When she needs to ask her teacher a question she sometimes walks to his desk. She also asks the classmates who sit next to her and across from her, Hank and Logan, for help. When asked what she wished her teacher would do differently to help her learn and enjoy school, Mary said he could help her with math and morning work, (though she also stated that he did already help her with both math and morning work).

Mary was observed in the classroom setting for 56 minutes. During those 56 minutes, she spent 27% of her time engaged in peer interactions, all of which were positive. Mary was off task during eight observed minutes and was redirected on one occasion. Mary’s off-task behaviors included doodling, playing with items in her desk, and not following teachers’ directions. These off-task behaviors sometimes caused her to lose track or get behind during whole-class tasks. Mary was most often observed following classmates’ leads and listening to others during peer interactions. She rarely offered answers or feedback during small group or whole class activities.

**Vinnie.** Vinnie is a monolingual English student. He is very social and displays himself as a leader (role model) in the classroom. His teachers and peers often choose Vinnie to offer answers, help with classwork, and provide demonstrations. When asked whom he would choose to play with, work with, and talk to at school, Vinnie mentioned seven male classmates,

including Greg, one of two ELLs in Mr. Lincoln's class. He chose these classmates because "they're all fun and they like to play the same games as us." He also mentioned that he works with Ana on classwork because she is his shoulder partner and "because sometimes she can be a good helper." He also asks Georgia and Greg for help on classwork because they sit right in front of him. When not at school, Vinnie reported that he plays with his brothers and sometimes one classmate, Ethan.

Vinnie was observed in the classroom for 55 minutes. During those 55 minutes, he spent 35% of his time engaged in peer interactions, all of which were positive. Vinnie was only off-task during two observed minutes and was redirected both times for talking. Vinnie displayed confidence and leadership during peer interactions and worked collaboratively with classmates. He often took the lead and organized tasks during interactions. Vinnie was very attentive. He followed directions, and he raised his hand to share information during whole-class instruction.

**Georgia.** Georgia, a monolingual English student, prefers to work, play, and talk with three other monolingual English classmates, Chloe, Ella, and Ana. She likes to interact with Chloe, Ella, and Ana because they are nice friends and fun to be around. She also relies on Vinnie to help her with classwork because "he's really smart and he can do math a lot faster than anybody else." All of the classmates she mentioned are monolingual English students. Georgia's shoulder partner is Greg, one of two ELLs in Mr. Lincoln's class. When asked if she ever relies on her shoulder partner, Greg, for help, Georgia responded with, "No, I help him." Outside of school, Georgia does play with two female monolingual classmates.

Georgia was observed in the classroom for 55 minutes. During those 55 minutes, she spent 33% of her time engaged in peer interactions, all of which were positive. Georgia was observed off-task only once and she was redirected. While Georgia often paid attention, she also



fidgeted with items from her desk, such as pencils or tissues. Georgia worked collaboratively with her shoulder partner, Greg, an ELL, and often provided guidance to him when he was confused or stuck on classroom tasks.

**Summary.** Mr. Lincoln believes peer interaction and cooperative learning opportunities are important and he indicated that he provided cooperative learning opportunities daily, in the forms of partners, structured learning teams, pairs check, and think-pair-share. Based on class observations, cooperative learning took place in the form of shoulder partner or small group interactions.

Mr. Lincoln's class was observed for a total of 226 minutes over six lessons and two recess periods, and students were engaged in peer interactions during 31% of this time. With respect to the times Mr. Lincoln's was teaching (i.e., math, reading, science), 51% of the time was teacher-led instruction and 23% of the time students were engaged in peer interaction.

### **Survey Results**

To better understand teachers' perspective on peer interactions and cooperative learning, an online survey was sent to elementary school teachers in the school district. 18% of 698 elementary teachers, kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, completed the survey and 95% of respondents were female; 23% of respondents had more than 20 years teaching experience, 37% of respondents had 10-20 year teaching experience, and 40% had less than 10 years teaching experience. Thirty-eight percent of respondents had an ESL endorsement through the state, 44% of respondents had a less than 5% of their students classified as ELL, 30% had between 6-25% students classified as ELL, 14% have between 25-50% students classified as ELL, and 12% have

51-75% students classified as ELL. No respondent reported having more than 75% of students classified as ELL.

Most respondents indicated that they provided daily (67%) or weekly (22%) opportunities for monolingual English students and ELLs to interact with each other. Sixty-one percent of the respondents reported that ELLs are willing to work with monolingual English students, and 67% reported that monolingual English students are willing to work with ELLs. Thirty-nine percent of respondents answered 'yes' to observing differences in how monolingual English students and ELLs interact with peers. Teachers' descriptions of ELLs' behaviors during interaction included adjectives such as: reserved, timid, hesitant, quiet, reluctant, shy, and nervous. A few teachers also reported that ELLs' comfort level improves as the year progresses. Several teachers also commented that monolingual English students often take the lead in discussion and are helpful to their ELL classmates during peer interaction. Overall, teachers reported positive observations of monolingual English students' behaviors when working with ELLs. Many teachers commented that monolingual English students show patience, guidance, and willingness to explain when working with ELLs. A few teachers did mention that monolingual English students sometimes become frustrated when interacting with ELLs. For differences in ELLs' interactions with fellow ELLs versus monolingual students, many teachers reported that ELLs often feel more comfortable and speak their first language when interacting with fellow ELLs.

Ninety-seven percent of respondents find it "important" to "extremely important" that monolingual English students and ELLs engage in peer interaction opportunities with each other. Ninety-seven percent of respondents think cooperative learning opportunities are "very or extremely important" to students' social growth, while 92% think cooperative learning

opportunities are “very to extremely important” to students’ academic growth. The most common cooperative learning structures utilized by respondents were partners and think-pair-share opportunities (90%). Sixty-three percent of respondents indicated that they utilize structured learning teams, 76% use pairs check strategy, and 43% use the jigsaw strategy. Ninety-four percent of respondents provide cooperative learning opportunities when teaching language arts, 89% for math, 82% for social studies, 87% for science, and 43% for recess. Seventy-two percent of respondents provide cooperative learning opportunities daily, while 24% provide cooperative learning opportunities a few times a week, followed by 3% who provide cooperative learning opportunities a few times a month and 1% never provide cooperative learning opportunities.

Survey results revealed that more than 90% of Woodside District elementary teachers find cooperative learning and peer interaction opportunities to be important. Teachers reportedly most often use cooperative learning opportunities when teaching language arts, followed by math, science and social studies. 89% of respondents reported that monolinguals and ELLs are given daily or weekly opportunities to interact with each other. Most respondents also reported that ELLs are willing to work with monolinguals, yet ELLs can be hesitant at first. Teachers also noticed improvements in ELLs’ comfort level as the school year progressed.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I reported the findings for the three focal teachers and their students and I presented the results of the online survey administered to the school district elementary school teachers. In Chapter 5, I address the research questions and their implications, explore limitations of the study, and present implications for future research.

## Chapter Five

In this chapter I summarize the study and overall findings, discuss the major findings and implications based on each research question, suggest future research, delineate limitations and conclude with final thoughts.

### Summary of Study and Overview of Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand how 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers and their students made sense of their school settings and how they interpreted their experiences related to peer interactions. More specifically, the goal was to understand (a) 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers' beliefs about peer interaction and their use of cooperative learning opportunities to engage ELLs and monolingual students in interactions that might influence learning, and (b) students' thoughts and experiences regarding peer interaction in and out of school.

A teacher survey was administered to 698 elementary teachers in Woodside District, with an 18% response rate. Questions centered on teachers' experiences in working with ELLs in the elementary classroom setting and providing opportunities for cooperative learning and peer interaction.

Survey results indicated that most teachers (97%) found it important for all students to engage in peer interactions and cooperative learning opportunities for both social and academic benefits. These results were consistent with focal teachers' actions. Focal teachers utilized cooperative learning structures such as teams and partners and provided opportunities for peer interaction in all but one observed lesson. Parent communication and academic needs were the most reported problems respondents encountered when working with ELLs. Focal teachers also reported parent communication as their biggest problem in working with ELLs. Focal teachers'

struggles included the language barrier between parents and teachers and finding ways to build relationships with parents of ELLs. Survey respondents also mentioned student academic needs as another problem yet focal teachers did not find their ELLs' academic needs to be a major problem. Most survey respondents found student communication to be a benefit. Focal teachers also reported having positive relationships with their ELLs. As some teachers' survey responses indicated, ELLs interacted with monolingual students and ELLs. ELLs did not gravitate toward other ELLs on the playground or in the classroom.

One-on-one interviews were conducted for the three focal 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers. During these interviews, teachers shared their beliefs about peer interaction and cooperative learning, as well as their experiences in working with ELLs. Based on interview results, focal teachers believed peer interaction and cooperative learning opportunities to be important because of various reasons. Mrs. Florence said peer interaction was important, "because they are going to be working with people all their lives of different realms," while Mrs. Rooney believed interaction to be important because "that's part of the growing up process...making friends and being able to learn from one another." Mr. Lincoln stated "they need to be able to use...their peers as a resource, as somebody to get help from, somebody to share ideas with, somebody to talk to about their problems instead of coming and talking to me. It does more for them to work them out and problem solve than it does for me to just tell them what to do." When asked about the purpose for asking peers to interact two teachers specifically mentioned goals for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Mrs. Rooney's purposes included, "they can probably learn more than just working with me," and "to grow them into more responsible 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and to be able to complete testing and individual checks more successfully." Mr. Lincoln's purpose was to lower students' dependency level on him, especially since three sections of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will be paired down to two sections of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

for the 2015-2016 school year. He wants them to be more accountable for themselves. Notably, teacher did not mention the importance of peer interaction on helping students to develop academic skills or for ELLs to develop their language skills. However, teachers' purposes may have been geared toward building responsible students because they were interviewed so late in the year, when most of their classroom norms were already established.

Another interesting finding from teacher interviews was that two of three teachers, Mrs. Rooney and Mr. Lincoln, said they did not plan lessons any differently for ELLs because their students were "really high functioning," and "they're about the same level as everybody else." Kagan's (1992) generalizations of teacher beliefs include: teacher beliefs tend to be relatively stable and resistant to change, and teacher beliefs are associated with a congruent style of teaching. If teachers believed their ELLs' academic skills were similar to those of monolingual classmates, as stated in interviews, they likely found no reason for planning differently to meet ELLs' language needs, even if students' service levels indicated a need. Mrs. Rooney, who stated that her ELLs were socially high functioning but academically, "it's a mixed bag," had four ELLs in her class with various levels of need for services (See Table 1). Yet, at the beginning of the school year, three of her four ELLs' KELPA scores indicated a need for aide/reading support, or 60 minutes of ELL support per week. Could ELLs' academic language needs, or CALP, have been masked by strong social language, or BICS, skills? Similarly, Mr. Lincoln stated that his ELLs were at about the same level as everybody else and he therefore did not plan lessons differently to meet ELLs' needs, yet one of his two ELLs' KELPA scores also indicated a need for aide/reading support 60 minutes per week. Though Mr. Lincoln claimed not to plan lessons differently for ELLs, he did say that he provided friendlier explanations and one-on-one instruction opportunities for ELLs. He was observed providing one-on-one support to his ELLs.

Mrs. Florence, on the other hand, said she plans differently for her ELLs by using many more hands-on activities, manipulatives and checking for understanding on a constant basis. While she was not observed using more hands-on activities and manipulatives, she was observed checking for understanding regularly.

Classroom observations were conducted in each of three 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms. Coded observation results indicated that peer interactions did occur in all but one of 17 lessons, with the majority of interactions taking place in PE, followed by science, social studies, art, reading and math. Teachers led instruction most during reading, followed by math, social studies, science, art and PE. These teacher-led lessons in reading and math also involved the most use of audio-visual references (See Table 3). Woodside District's math and reading programs both include extensive student and teacher digital resources. Teachers are strongly encouraged to use these digital resources on a regular basis and even urged by principals to choose evaluation goals related to digital resource usage. During reading and math observations, teachers accessed digital resources via handheld tablets or laptop computers and displayed resources using an Apple TV projector. Students were observed reading, listening, writing and copying information, and answering questions from the digital resources. Reading and math lessons also involved the least amount of peer interactions, possibly due to the strong reliance (or use of) on digital resources. Digital resources seemed to change the format or structure of lessons, possibly taking away opportunities for peers to interact with each other and teachers. This leads to a question: What are the effects of technology on peer and teacher interaction?

Many teachers reported that ELLs tended to be reserved, timid, hesitant, quiet, reluctant, shy, and nervous during peer interactions. These reports were not consistent with findings from classroom observations. There was no observed difference in the quantity or quality of

interactions from ELLs versus monolingual students. Classroom ELL interactions were with monolingual students, probably because no ELLs were ever seated next to other ELLs. This was probably because no classroom had more than four ELLs. Both ELLs and monolingual students took part in peer interactions during 29% of classroom observations. A number of surveyed teachers did mention that ELLs start the year out more timidly but become more comfortable as the year progresses. Since classroom observations took place in April, this may have contributed to the similarities in interactions observed. Like reported survey results, almost all interactions were positive. Monolinguals were not observed to be frustrated when working with ELLs, though some teacher surveys indicated that monolingual students sometimes become frustrated with ELLs. While some surveyed teachers found that ELLs felt more comfortable speaking their first language with fellow ELLs, this was never observed in focal 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms. All focal 2<sup>nd</sup> grade ELLs were observed speaking only English with fellow ELLs and, of course, monolingual peers.

Recess observations were conducted to explore whether or not any differences occurred in ELLs' and monolingual students' experiences. The only difference noticed was that ELLs served six of seven observed timeouts. Five of those timeouts were due to late or missing homework. Some of these timeouts were served because reading logs weren't returned. Reading logs must be filled out, signed and returned by parents at the end of each week. Seeing that all three teachers stated that their biggest challenge was parent communication, ELLs' missing reading logs may have been a result of lack of communication between home and school. Otherwise, ELLs' and monolingual students' recess experiences were very similar. Focal students played in mostly same-gender groups, with monolingual students, or both monolingual



students and ELLs. Though two ELLs claimed that they sometimes spoke Spanish with classmates, focal ELLs were only observed speaking English during recess.

Student interviews shed light on students' experiences with peer and teacher interaction and language use in the home and school setting. Although teachers reported in survey results that ELLs often felt more comfortable speaking Spanish with and working with fellow ELLs, focal students did not report this. In contrast, most focal ELLs spoke English while at school and both English and Spanish at home. ELLs reported that their parents spoke Spanish to them at home and preferred ELLs spoke back to them in Spanish. No ELLs vocalized wishing their teachers taught differently or knew more about ELLs. Besides being bilingual, ELLs did not seem to view themselves as different than monolingual classmates in any way. Three ELLs made comments indicating that they did not feel comfortable speaking Spanish at school because it made them nervous or because their classmates would not understand them. Monolingual students and ELLs both reported playing with both monolingual and ELL classmates and were observed doing so in the classroom and on the playground.

### **What are second grade teachers' beliefs about peer interaction?**

First, all three focal teachers believe that peer interaction and cooperative learning opportunities are important for students' academic and social growth. Also, teachers specifically mentioned that another important reason for peer interactions is that students will need to interact with others for the rest of their lives, so they need opportunities now to develop social skills. Second, teachers indicated that, for the most part, their ELLs and monolingual English students worked well together. Although Mr. Rooney indicated that she noticed that her ELLs were more engaged with other ELLs and Mrs. Florence's indicated that her ELLs were sometimes reluctant

to work with monolingual students. ELLs were almost never grouped together except when working with the ELL aide. Third, with respect to instruction, Mrs. Rooney did not report providing specific modifications for ELLs, while Mr. Lincoln reported that he read instructions to ELLs individually when necessary, provided friendlier explanations, and allowed ELLs to ask questions of him one-on-one instead of during whole group instruction and Mrs. Florence reported providing more manipulatives and hands-on experiences. Finally, the focal teachers believed there are several benefits of having ELLs in their class and these included increased student communication, increased student effort, and diverse student perspectives.

Kagan (1992) described teacher beliefs as “tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic materials to be taught” (p. 65). Kagan derived two generalizations from prior research: teacher beliefs tend to be relatively stable and resistant to change, and teacher beliefs are associated with a congruent style of teaching. All focal teachers had strong beliefs about the importance of peer interaction and cooperative learning opportunities in the classroom, which they shared in both interviews and surveys. Peer interactions involve social exchanges between peers that allow students to give and receive verbal instruction and clarification, respond to questions, share strategies, and to elaborate, modify and improve understanding (Neitzel, 2009). Furthermore, all focal teachers believed cooperative learning opportunities, which promote peer interaction, were very important to students' social and academic growth. The most popular cooperative learning structures observed in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms were partner and structured learning teams. Two focal teachers reported using cooperative learning structures daily and for all subjects, although cooperative learning structures were not observed in daily use with all subjects.

Mrs. Rooney reported that cooperative learning and peer interaction opportunities are very important to students' social and academic growth and reported offering cooperative learning opportunities a few times a month in the forms of partners and structured learning pairs. Mrs. Rooney's reported use of cooperative learning was consistent with observation findings. Her students were seated in structured teams during all classroom observations and students utilized shoulder partners for academic support. Mrs. Rooney was observed cuing her students to work with shoulder partners and structured teams during some lessons. Mrs. Florence, who reported offering daily cooperative learning opportunities and believed these opportunities to be very important, offered fewer occasions for her students to interact through cooperative learning structures with peers than Mr. Lincoln and Mrs. Rooney. Her students were seated in cooperative learning teams and did rely on shoulder partners for support, though Mrs. Florence rarely cued them to talk with their shoulder partner. However, students did initiate shoulder partner communications on their own. Mrs. Florence may have established shoulder partner behavioral norms earlier in the year and therefore did not have to remind students to utilize their shoulder partners for support. Mr. Lincoln believed cooperative learning and peer interaction opportunities to be very important and reported offering these opportunities daily. His reports were consistent with observations. He also mentioned that he does not expect seven and eight year olds to be quiet all the time and that he allows them to talk a lot, even during work time. He did have to teach them structures early in the year to establish communication norms and noted that it had improved as the year had gone on.

Overall, students initiated most of the observed peer interactions. While teachers believed interactions to be important and reported teaching structures, few observed interactions were initiated by teachers. This may have been due to the timing of observations, late in the year when

structures were in place, or because teachers were inundated with other responsibilities, like incorporating technology.

Classroom teachers did make a point of seating ELLs next to helpful monolingual students for support. These observations might have been different if focal ELLs did not have a strong grasp on interpersonal language skills and needed to sit by other ELLs who could support both language and academic learning. According to Cummins (1984), ELLs are usually able to develop basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), or conversational fluency, in about two years. Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), on the other hand, can take between five and eight years to acquire, depending on the ELL's language proficiency in his or her native language and learning strategies implemented by teachers. All focal ELLs attended EES for all of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and were able to hold social, context-embedded conversations with peers and teachers.

Two of the three focal teachers reported that they did not apply any ELL-specific strategies when planning lessons. Focal teachers may not have recognized ELLs' academic language needs because they were misled by the ELLs' strong social language skills and unaware of complexities tied to academic language and learning. As Lake and Pappamihel (2003) note, appearances can be deceiving because ELLs may seem academically fluent due to their social fluency skills. To help develop CALP in English, "teachers must use contextual clues, which include, but are not limited to, visuals, hands-on learning, gestures, labels, a print-rich environment, finger plays, songs, role-playing, show-and-tell, and other nonverbal accompaniments to instruction" (p. 202). These contextual clues can enhance the learning experience of both native English speakers and ELLs.

Further, according to district protocol based on KELPA scores, all five focal ELLs were in need of some ELL support (See Table 1). Since focal teachers were not ESL endorsed and all had received only minimal training in working with ELLs, they may have believed students were receiving all the support they needed from specialists. Support throughout the school day is needed support because, as Grant and Wong (2003) report, 30-40% of elementary students fail to reach an acceptable level of English proficiency before moving on to middle school. Yet teachers may not know how to provide ELL with support. This is a concern given the growing given the fact that only 12.5% of all teachers have received eight or more hours of ESL training, though more than 40% of teachers reported teaching ELLs (Echevarria, Powers, & Short, 2006) and the number of ELL students in the U.S. continues to grow.

### **How frequently do ELLs interact with monolingual English students? In the classroom?**

#### **On the playground?**

English language learners interact daily with monolingual students, likely because the focal ELLs had strong social language skills and could interact well in context-embedded circumstances and because the majority of EES 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students were monolingual so ELLs had little choice. While ELLs could have played with other ELLs at recess or sat with them during lunch, they tended to play and eat with classmates. ELLs only worked together when the ELL aide gathered them all for small group instruction. Otherwise, ELLs were never intentionally grouped together in the classroom, in part due to the small numbers of ELLs per class, and therefore may have never felt different from classmates based on language.

All focal teachers did make a conscious effort to seat ELLs next to monolingual students whom they thought might be helpful to ELLs. Focal teachers also provided ELLs an

environment conducive to learning and acceptance. By positioning ELLs near helpful monolingual students and providing peer interaction opportunities, exchanges between peers allowed students to clarify and elaborate on each other's ideas and collaboratively solve problems. This allowed ELLs to work within what Vygotsky called the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1986), which is when a learner can advance cognitively by being challenged, but supported, by a more knowledgeable other. By seating an ELL with a monolingual peer who could provide support as needed may have helped foster positive peer relationships and enhanced social and academic experiences for all students. These opportunities provided access to friendship, problem solving, and overall support to all students. Students with positive peer interaction experiences, whether in a group or one-on-one, have higher levels of emotional wellbeing, stronger beliefs about self, and better social interactions compared to those who have poor peer interactions. If teachers had intentionally grouped ELLs together would their experiences have been different? Would they have been more aware of their language and cultural differences from classmates? Would this have distanced ELLs from their monolingual peers? Or, on the other hand, would it help them to develop language and literacy skills in Spanish?

Each class was observed during classroom lessons and specials. Mrs. Florence's students engaged in peer interactions during 25% of the total minutes observed. Mrs. Rooney's students engaged in peer interactions 30% of minutes observed and Mr. Lincoln's students engaged in peer interactions 31% of observed minutes. Further, there were no differences in the amount of peer interacting between ELLs and monolingual students. Mrs. Florence's ELLs interacted during 27% of observed minutes while her monolingual students interacted during 24% observed minutes. Mrs. Rooney's ELLs interacted during 29% of observed minutes and her monolingual

students interacted during 30% of observed minutes. Mr. Lincoln's ELLs interacted during 30% of observed minutes and monolingual students interacted during 34% of observed minutes. With respect to subjects, most peer interactions were observed during PE, when students were engaged in team games and interacted during 60% of observed minutes. Students also interacted frequently during science and social studies lessons, approximately 41% of observed minutes. These interactions included team and partner interactions related to the content. Likewise, students interacted frequently during art, approximately 37% of observed minutes, and most of these interactions were students socializing while drawing or molding clay. The least amount of interaction occurred during math and reading lessons. Students interacted during 16% of observed reading lesson minutes and 10% of observed math lesson minutes. Math and reading lessons were more teacher-led than other lessons.

Playground equipment, which includes two jungle gym areas and swings, was the most utilized area during recess observations. Of total recess minutes observed, focal students occupied the equipment for 61% of the time. The most popular activities in this area were playing tag or swinging. Focal students were observed playing on the blacktop for 33% of the time. The most popular blacktop activity was playing kickball, followed by basketball. Focal students were observed in timeout for seven minutes. Five of seven timeout minutes observed were ELLs serving timeout because of late or missing work. A monolingual English student served one of seven timeout minutes. And one ELL served one minute in timeout after a playground conflict. Although students had a choice of whom to play with, they often played in groups with monolingual English students or both monolingual and ELL students.

All focal students tended to play with same gender classmates during recess activities. Most students played in groups on the equipment or blacktop. Girls and boys were only witnessed

playing together when girls were chasing boys on the playground equipment; otherwise, girls played together in small groups and boys did the same. Although ELL students were sometimes witnessed playing together, along with monolingual students, no Spanish speaking was ever observed. Observation results indicate that ELLs were treated as relevant, capable members of their classroom community and participated in peer interactions as often as monolingual classmates.

**What are second grade students' thoughts and experiences about interacting with their peers in and out of a school setting? Do children consider the issue of language differences? If so, what do they do?**

Focal ELLs did consider the issue of language differences and chose not to use their first language when interacting with classmates. Only two of the 11 focal students, Ben and Mary, reported using Spanish at school, and only with siblings or close friends who were from similar cultural backgrounds as them. Focal ELLs chose not to use Spanish at school because it made them feel nervous and their peers and teachers would not understand them. ELLs did report using both Spanish and English at home. Some ELLs reported that their parents preferred they speak Spanish at home. Some students also said they chose to speak Spanish to parents and English to siblings.

Focal students preferred to interact with classmates of the same gender or classmates who sat within close proximity to them. There were no differences between ELLs' and monolingual students' play member preferences. Some focal students specifically mentioned liking to work with "smart" classmates during classwork. Only one monolingual student, Georgia, saw her partnership role as a helper to Greg, an ELL. Most other focal students viewed their team and



partner roles as mutually supportive roles. Focal students never mentioned or seemed to notice the distinction between interacting with monolingual students or ELLs and were observed in friendly interactions with everyone in the classroom and on the playground. Those ELLs who did play with classmates outside of school played with monolingual students rather than ELLs. Outside of school, focal students played with siblings or classmates who lived near them. Ben played with his monolingual classmates via online video games.

Some 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students take part in extracurricular activities such as teams sports and scouts. In past years, based on personal experience, I know that monolingual students take part in these activities while ELLs typically do not. Although it is not clear why, it is possibly because of the lack communication with parents of ELLs based on language differences. That said, no focal students, ELL or monolingual, mentioned participating with classmates in extracurricular activities.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Researchers assert that students can learn through interpersonal exchanges and that these interactions can affect cognitive and social-cognitive growth and development (Rubin, et al., 2006; Vygotsky, 1986), but there is little indication of just how much peer interaction should take place. Overall, focal students in this study took part in peer interactions during 29% of observed lessons. Is this typical for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students? Is there a certain amount of time that peers should interact to optimize learning? Is time the appropriate issue to consider or should we consider other issues? For example, are there certain types of peer interaction that might support learners? Should peer interactions be considered with learning certain types of content? Teacher-led instruction, or direct instruction, accounted for 59% of the total observed minutes.

There is no doubt that direct instruction is needed but how much direct instruction is necessary for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders? Likewise, is time the appropriate issue to consider? Ultimately, when considering peer interaction and Vygotsky's zone of proximal development to support learning, what issues should teacher consider or guidelines might they follow?

Technology, in the form of digital resources available to teachers and students, also played a major role in observed lessons. Teachers and students made references to audio-visual resources during 31% of observed minutes. For art and PE, where teachers had fewer digital tools at their disposal, peer interactions were more frequent. For math and reading, where teachers had more access to many digital tools, peer interactions were least prevalent. Students were still engaged during reading and math lessons, but less so with peers and more so with digital tools. Students were observed looking at, listening to, dancing to, and copying from digital tools.

As digital tools become more common in elementary classrooms, will peer and teacher interaction opportunities decrease? Would more peer interactions have taken place if teachers had less access to digital tools? Would peer interactions be more or less supportive compared to the use of technology? Woodside School District's expectation that teachers integrate more technology into their teaching is still fairly new. Teachers are learning how to best incorporate the many digital tools available to them. Perhaps experience and professional development will change how teacher are using digital tools so that opportunities for peer interaction are not lost. In short, what role does technology use have on students' social and academic growth, specifically for ELLs, who rely on interaction opportunities as they learn English?

How can teachers determine the language needs of their ELLs and the types of instruction they should provide? In Woodside School District, ELLs take the IPT and KELPA, which report

language proficiency and are used to determine service levels. Classroom teachers and school personnel have access to these results but rarely seek them out for reference. Instead, teachers rely on ELL aides and reading specialists to determine and implement specific strategies for ELLs. Classroom teachers clearly need support on how to use data from these assessments to inform their instructional practices.

In sum, more research is needed to understand how to maximize the potential of peer interactions, determine how technology might enhance or hinder peer interactions, and help teacher to use language assessment data to make informed decisions about their instructional practices for ELLs.

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations to this study. First, data was collected during one month and towards the end of the school year, long after teachers and students had established behavior norms. A longer period of time, as well as more comprehensive observations, may have shown different patterns of peer interaction and may have provided a richer description of teachers' instructional practices and students' experiences.

A second limitation of this study is the number of teachers and focal students. Also, all participants were observed in one school with relatively few ELLs per class and all 2<sup>nd</sup> grade ELLs were Spanish speakers who displayed strong social communication skills. Consequently, findings from this study can only be generalized to situations with similar demographics.

Finally, my personal history with students and teachers at EES may have altered my interpretations of events, as well as the experiences teachers and students shared with me during interviews. Although, because I do have an insider perspective, I might have been better able to

make sense of observed experience. Furthermore, social desirability bias may have played a role in teachers' responses.

### **Final Thoughts**

Peer interactions and cooperative learning strategies support student learning and may provide ELLs with added opportunities to develop the language skills. Teachers in this study did value peer interactions and cooperative learning strategies, and while they did provide students with opportunities to interact with peers they seemed to use a limited number of cooperative learning strategies. That said, there is limited research to guide teachers as to how frequently students should be interacting with peers or to determine what cooperative strategies might be best used under a given circumstances. Teachers in the study also viewed ELLs as capable learners and as having good social skills, and while this was observed in how the teachers and monolingual peers interacted with ELLs, English language learners still had some language limitations based on assessments. Consequently, teachers do need support to understand and recognized the difference between social and academic learning and how to modify instruction to support ELLs throughout the day. Finally, more school districts are expecting teachers to integrate technology into their classroom. While students do need to learn how to use technology and technology does support learning, it is unclear if or how technology might be used to encourage collaborative learning among peers. That is, it is my hope that this study provides a more nuanced understanding of issues surrounding peer interactions and English language learners.

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Table 1: *English Language Learners' Service Level Placement Criteria*

Service Level	IPT Composite	KELPA
Center	0-5	1 <i>or</i> 2 or 3 (with subcategory score of 1 in reading or listening)
Aide Reading	6-7	2
Reading	8	3 <i>or</i> 4 (with subcategory score of 1, 2, or 3 in reading or writing)
Proficient	9	Student does not qualify

Table 2: *English Language Learners' Service Level, and Placement*

<b>English Language Learner</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>ELL Service Level</b>	<b>ELL Service Placement</b>
<b>Ben</b>	PreK	Center	N/A
	Kindergarten	Center	Forrest
	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	Aide/Reading	Eagle
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Reading	Eagle
<b>Greg</b>	PreK	Center	Center PreK
	Kindergarten	Center	Forrest
	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	Reading	Eagle
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Aide/Reading	Eagle
<b>Mary</b>	PreK	Center	Center PreK
	Kindergarten	Center	Forrest
	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	Reading	Eagle
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Reading	Eagle
<b>Henry</b>	PreK	Center	Center PreK
	Kindergarten	Aide/Reading	Eagle
	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	Pre-Proficient	Eagle
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Reading	Eagle
<b>Veronica</b>	PreK	Center	Center PreK
	Kindergarten	Center	Forrest
	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	Reading	Eagle
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Aide/Reading	Eagle

Table 2: *Focal Students: Total Observed Minutes*

Teacher	Subject	Minutes	Minutes of Observed Peer Interactions	Individuals' Observed Peer Interactions (Minutes)			
				Veronica (ELL)	Henry (ELL)	Bailey	Luke
Mrs. Rooney	Art	28	3	1	1	0	1
	PE	29	16	4	4	4	4
	Math	44	0	0	0	0	0
	Reading	48	7	2	1	Absent	4
	Science	24	23	8	7	Absent	8
	Social Studies	21	9	1	2	3	3
Totals		194	58	16	15	7	20
Mr. Lincoln	Subject	Minutes	Minutes of Peer Interactions Observed	Greg (ELL)	Mary (ELL)	Vinnie	Georgia
Mr. Lincoln	Art	32	14	4	3	4	3
	PE	28	18	5	2	6	5
	Math	44	2	0	1	1	0
	Reading	48	11	3	3	3	2
	Science	34	10	2	3	2	3
	Science	40	15	4	3	3	5
Totals		226	70	18	15	19	18
Mrs. Florence	Subject	Lesson Minutes	Minutes of Peer Interactions Observed	Ben (ELL)	Peter	Wendy	
Mrs. Florence	Art	33	17	6	4	7	
	PE						
	Math	42	11	4	5	2	
	Reading	48	5	3	2	0	
	Science	22	5	1	1	3	
	Science	30	6	2	1	3	
Totals		175	44	16	13	15	



Table 3: *Total Minutes: Audio-visual References, Observed Peer Interactions, Teacher-led*

*Instruction*

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Total Lesson Minutes</b>	<b>Teacher-Led Instruction (In Minutes/%)</b>	<b>Observed Peer Interactions (In Minutes)</b>	<b>Audio-visual References (Minutes)</b>
<b>Mrs. Florence</b>	Art	33	9	17	0
	PE				
	Math	42	26	11	13
	Reading	48	41	5	14
	Science	22	13	5	8
	Science	30	8	6	10
<b>Totals</b>		175	97	44	45
<b>Mrs. Rooney</b>	Art	28	16	3	0
	PE	29	12	16	0
	Math	44	40	0	28
	Reading	48	41	7	32
	Science	24	9	23	3
	Social Studies	21	15	9	5
<b>Totals</b>		194	133	58	68
<b>Mr. Lincoln</b>	Art	32	5	14	0
	PE	28	6	18	0
	Math	44	31	2	25
	Reading	48	34	11	28
	Science	36	20	10	10
	Science	34	19	15	13
<b>Totals</b>		226	115	70	75

Table 4: *Recess: Student Play Members and Activity*

Teacher	Student	Play Member(s)				Activity		
		Mono	ELL	Both	None	Black-top	Equip-ment	Time-out
<b>Mrs. Florence</b> 42 minutes observed								
	*Ben	5	0	8	1	0	13	1
	Peter	2	0	12	0	3	11	0
	Wendy	12	0	1	1	0	14	0
Totals		19	0	21	2	3	38	1
<b>Mrs. Rooney</b> 49 minutes observed		<b>Mono</b>	<b>ELL</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Blacktop</b>	<b>Equip-ment</b>	<b>Time-out</b>
	*Veronica	9	0	4	2	5	7	3
	*Henry	8	0	5	2	5	8	2
	Bailey	3	0	1	1	5	0	0
	Luke	1	0	13	0	5	9	0
Totals		21	0	23	5	20	24	5
<b>Mrs. Lincoln</b> 43 minutes observed		<b>Mono</b>	<b>ELL</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Black-top</b>	<b>Equip-ment</b>	<b>Time-out</b>
	*Greg	6	0	2	2	5	6	0
	*Mary	7	0	1	3	0	10	0
	Vinnie	5	0	5	1	6	4	1
	Georgia	7	0	3	0	0	10	0
Totals		25	0	11	6	21	20	1

## APPENDIX A

**TEACHER CONSENT**

## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Curriculum and Teaching Program at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit, the services it may provide to you, the University of Kansas, and your school or school district.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of (a) peer interactions among students during the school day, and (2) how teachers support peer interactions. Peer interactions are important for friendship, problem solving, and academic support.

## PROCEDURES

If I agree to participate in this study, I allow the researchers to:

1. Collect demographic information (e.g., age range, teaching experience, educational degree) about me.
2. An online survey about peer interactions.
3. Observe my class approximately 3 times for 60 minutes per observation and to observe my class during recess approximately 3 times for 20 minutes per observation
4. Conduct 2 informal interviews to learn about my beliefs and instructional practices related to peer interaction; interview will take approximately 30 minutes. The interview will be audio recorded and I may request that the recording be stopped at anytime. A member of the research team will transcribe the audiotape. Only individuals on the research team will have access to this data.

I also agree to help identify times that are convenient to conduct interview with students who have returned consent forms.

## RISKS and BENEFITS

I understand that this method of data collection is not expected to interfere with my teaching. No risks are anticipated for participating in this study. Participating in this study may help me to think about my beliefs and teaching practices. I may contact the researcher to request information about the findings of this study.

I will not receive any monetary compensation for my participation in this study.

## PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

My name, my students' names, my school and school district will not be associated in any publication or presentation based on this study, instead, the researcher will use a pseudonym. Any identifiable information about me will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or

university policy, or (b) I give written permission. Permission granted on this date remains in effect for five years after the conclusion of the study, and all data collected from this study will be destroyed 5 years after the conclusion of this study. By signing this form I give permission for the use and disclosure of my information for purposes of this study at any time in the future. Audiotaped interviews will be kept on one researcher's password protected laptop. Audiofiles will be destroyed after five years. Participants will be given the option of not having interviews audiotaped or having taping stopped at anytime. Audiotapes will be transcribed only by Micah Schloegel.

#### REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

I am not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form and I may refuse to do so without affecting my right to any services I am receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas.

#### CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

I may withdraw my consent to participate in this study at any time. I have the right to cancel permission to use and disclose further information collected about me, in writing, at any time, by sending my written request to: Micah Schloegel, East Antioch Elementary, 7342 Lowell Avenue, Overland Park, KS 64112.

#### QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher listed at the end of this consent form.

#### PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429, write to the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email [irb@ku.edu](mailto:irb@ku.edu).

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### **Researcher Contact Information:**

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## APPENDIX B

**PARENT CONSENT****INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Curriculum and Teaching Program at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish your child to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and your child will not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree for your child to participate, you are free to withdraw consent at any time. If you do withdraw your child from this study, it will not affect your child's relationship with the school or the school district.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of (a) peer interactions among students during the school day, and (2) how teachers support peer interactions. Peer interactions are important for friendship, problem solving, and academic support.

**PROCEDURES**

If I agree to allow my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in this study, I allow the researchers to: (First and Last name)

1. Collect demographic information about my child (e.g., age, language skills), as well as his/her score on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) s and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) scores, which are administered by the school.
2. Observe my child in class for approximately 60 minutes and during recess for approximately 20 minutes on at least three separate occasions.
3. Conduct 2 audiotaped interviews with my child that will take approximately 10-20 minutes. The interviews will be conducted in a quiet location (e.g., library) and at a time convenient for my child. A member of the research team will transcribe the audiotape. Audiotaped interviews will be kept on one researcher's password protected laptop. Audiofiles will be destroyed after five years. Participants will be given the option of not having interviews audiotaped or having taping stopped at anytime. Only Micah Schloegel will transcribe audiotapes.

**RISKS and BENEFITS**

I understand that this method of data collection is not expected to interfere with my child's learning. No risks are anticipated for participating in this study. Participating in this study may help my child to think about his/her relationship with his/her friends and teacher. I may contact the researcher to request information about the findings of this study.

**PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY**

My child's name will not be associated in any publication or presentation from this study. Instead, the researcher will use a pseudonym rather than my child's name. Student records will be obtained for the purpose of academic record analysis. Only Micah Schloegel will have access to student records throughout the study. Student records will be obtained through district online databases and locked student files within the building. Records disclosed to the researcher will

include: DIBELS data, NWEA MAP data, home language surveys, and student record files. Any identifiable information about my child will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission. Permission granted on this date remains in effect for five years after the conclusion of the study and then all data collected from this study will be destroyed 5 years after the conclusion of this study. By signing this form I give permission for the use and disclosure of my child's information for purposes of this study at any time in the future. It is possible, however, with Internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may see your response. If the parent or student requests, the school will provide him/her with a copy of the records disclosed.

#### REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

I am not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form and I may refuse to do so without affecting my child's right to any services he/she is receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas. If I refuse to sign this consent, my child cannot participate in this study but will engage in all regularly scheduled class activities.

#### CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

I may withdraw my consent for my child to participate in this study at any time. I have the right to cancel permission to use and disclose further information collected about my child, in writing, at any time, by sending my written request to: Micah Schloegel, East Antioch Elementary, 7342 Lowell Avenue, Overland Park, KS 66204.

#### QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher listed at the end of this consent form.

#### PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my child's rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429, write to the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email [irb@ku.edu](mailto:irb@ku.edu).

Please return consent forms to Micah Schloegel, Room 126, East Antioch Elementary.

I agree to allow my child to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I give Micah Schloegel consent to audiotape my child's interview. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Researcher Contact Information:**

Micah Schloegel  
Principal Investigator  
East Antioch Elementary  
7342 Lowell Avenue  
Overland Park, KS 66204  
913-993-3200  
[micahschloegel@smsd.org](mailto:micahschloegel@smsd.org)

Dr. Barbara Bradley  
University of Kansas  
785-864-4435  
[barbarab@ku.edu](mailto:barbarab@ku.edu)



## APPENDIX C

**CONSENTIMIENTO DEL PADRE****INTRODUCCION**

El Departamento de Currículo y Programa de Enseñanza de la Universidad de Kansas apoya la práctica de protección de seres humanos que participan en estudios. La siguiente información es proveída para que usted decida si su estudiante puede participar en el presente estudio. Usted puede reusarse a firmar este formulario y su hijo no tendrá que participar en este estudio. Tiene que tener en cuenta que aunque usted de permiso para que su hijo participe, en cualquier momento puede retirar el permiso. Si usted retira a su hijo de este estudio, esto no afectará la relación de su hijo con la escuela o el distrito escolar.

**PROPOSITO DEL ESTUDIO**

El propósito de este estudio es adquirir un mejor entendimiento de (a) interacción entre los compañeros durante el día escolar, y (b) cómo los maestros apoyan interacción entre los compañeros. La interacción entre los compañeros es importante para amistades, resolver problemas, y apoyo académico

**PROCEDIMIENTO**

Yo estoy de acuerdo en permitir que mi hijo \_\_\_\_\_,  
participe en este  
estudio, doy permiso para que los investigadores: (Primer Nombre y Apellido)

4. Reúnan información demográfica acerca de mi hijo (por ejemplo, edad, habilidad de lenguaje), también su resultado del examen MAP (Medidas de Progreso Académico) y DIBELS (Evaluación de Lectura), los cuales son administrados en la escuela.
5. Observen a mi hijo en clase por aproximadamente 60 minutos y durante recreo aproximadamente 20 minutos por lo menos en tres diferentes ocasiones.
6. Lleven a cabo dos entrevistas grabadas con mi hijo que tomarán aproximadamente 10-20 minutos. Las entrevistas serán conducidas en un lugar tranquilo (por ejemplo, la biblioteca) y a una hora conveniente para el estudiante. Un miembro del equipo del estudio transcribirá la grabación.

**RIESGOS Y BENEFICIOS**

Yo entiendo que este método de reunir datos no interferirá con el aprendizaje de mi hijo. No se anticipa ningún riesgo en este estudio. La participación en este estudio podría ayudar a mi hijo a tomar en cuenta su relación con sus amigos y maestro. Yo podría comunicarme con el investigador para pedir información acerca de los resultados del estudio.

**CONFIDENCIALIDAD DEL PARTICIPANTE**

El nombre de mi hijo no estará asociado en ninguna publicación o presentación de este estudio. En su lugar, el investigador usará un seudónimo en vez del nombre de mi hijo. Cualquier información identificable acerca de mi hijo no será compartida a no ser que sea requerida (a) por ley o política de la universidad o (b) si yo doy un permiso en escrito. El permiso otorgado en esta fecha continuará efectivo por cinco años después de terminar el estudio, y toda la información

coleccionada para este estudio será destruida cinco años después de terminar el estudio. Firmando este formulario doy permiso para divulgar y usar la información acerca de mi hijo con los propósitos de este estudio en cualquier momento en el futuro.

#### NEGARSE A FIRMAR CONSENTIMIENTO Y AUTORIZACION

Yo no estoy obligado a firmar este Consentimiento y Autorización y puedo reusarme sin afectar los derechos a cualquier servicio que mi hijo este recibiendo o que pueda recibir de la Universidad de Kansas, o participar en cualquier programa o eventos de la Universidad de Kansas. Si me niego a firmar este consentimiento, mi hijo no participará en este estudio, pero participará en todas sus actividades regulares de su clase.

#### CANCELANDO ESTE CONSENTIMIENTO Y AUTORIZACION

Yo podría retirar mi consentimiento en cualquier momento para que mi hijo participe en este estudio. Tengo el derecho a cancelar el permiso para que la siguiente información reunida acerca de mi hijo sea usada o divulgada en cualquier momento enviando una solicitud por escrito a: Micah Schloegel, East Antioch Elementary, 7342 Lowell Avenue, Overland Park, KS 66204.

#### PREGUNTAS ACERCA DE PARTICIPACION

Las preguntas acerca del proceso tienen que ser dirigidas al investigador cuyo nombre se encuentra a final de del formulario de consentimiento.

#### CERTIFICACION DEL PARTICIPANTE

He leído este formulario de Consentimiento y Autorización. He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas acerca del estudio y me las han contestado. Entiendo que si tengo más preguntas acerca de los derechos de mi hijo como participante del estudio, puedo llamar al 785-864-7429 o escribir a Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Road, Lawrence, KS 66045-7568, o correo electrónico [irb@ku.edu](mailto:irb@ku.edu).

Yo estoy de acuerdo en dar permiso a mi hijo para que participe en este estudio. Con mi firma doy constancia que he recibido una copia de la forma de Consentimiento y Autorización.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Escriba el Nombre del Niño con letra de molde

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha de Nacimiento

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Padre/Tutor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

#### **Información del Investigador:**

Micah Schloegel  
Principal Investigator  
East Antioch Elementary  
7342 Lowell Avenue  
Overland Park, KS 66204  
913-993-3200

[micahschloegel@smsd.org](mailto:micahschloegel@smsd.org)

## APPENDIX D

**Student Assent Procedures**

My name is Mrs. Schloegel. I talked with your teacher and parents and they said that you might be willing to help me with a project. I am learning about 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students and their friends and what they like to do at school and home. If you would like to help me, I would like meet with you twice for about 20 minutes to talk about activities you do at home and school with your friends. I will be recording our conversation to help me remember what you said. However, I can stop recording if you want me to and you don't have to answer questions that you uncomfortable. Also, we can stop at any time and that will be all right. Do you want to help me with this project?

**Procedimiento de Permiso:**

Mi nombre es Mrs. Schloegel. Yo hable con tu profesora y padres y me indicaron que estarías interesado en ayudarme en un proyecto. Estoy aprendiendo acerca de estudiantes y de sus amigos de 2o grado, acerca de lo que les gusta hacer en la escuela y en la casa. Si deseas ayudarme, me gustaría juntarme contigo dos veces por aproximadamente 20 minutos para hablar acerca de actividades que haces en la escuela y en la casa con tus amigos. Yo estaré grabando las conversaciones para poder recordarme lo que dijiste. Sin embargo, yo puedo dejar de grabar si tu deseas que lo haga y no tienes que contestar preguntas que te hagan sentir incómodo. También, podemos parar en cualquier momento. ¿Deseas ayudarme en este proyecto?

APPENDIX E

**Classroom Peer Observation Tool**

Observe a focal student for 1 minute and then observe another student. Determine frequency of behaviors. You will need to observe several sessions.

Teacher Name:

Focal Students:

Content (e.g., ELA, math):

Start Time:

End Time:

<b>Focal Student</b>					
<b>Group Size</b>					
<b>Task</b> (describe; does it lend itself to interaction/ collaboration)					
<b>Focal Student Behavior</b>					
- Leading/directing activity/peer(s)					
- Collaborating with peer(s) - exchange					
- Following/listening to peer(s)					
- Independently working					
- Conflict with peer(s)					
-					
- Off-task					
-					
- NOTES					
<b>Tone of Peer Interaction</b>					
- Positive					
- Neutral					

- Negative/Conflict					
- NOTES					
<b>Teacher Behavior</b>					
- Teaching (e.g. focus on learning content, providing feed to enhance learning)					
- Supporting (e.g., giving directions about task, listening, positive support)					
- Managing Behaviors (e.g., redirecting)					
- Not present					
-					
- NOTES					

**Recess Observation Tool**

Observe a focal student for 1 minute and then observe another student. Determine frequency of behaviors. You will need to observe several sessions.

Teacher Name:

Focal Students:

<b>Focal Student</b>					
Group Size					
- Activity					
1. Kickball					
2. Soccer					
3. Equipment					
4. Blacktop					
5. Hopscotch					
6. Four Square					
7. Grass					
8. Timeout					
9. Homework					
10. Other					
<b>Focal Student Behavior</b>					

- Play Member(s) 1. Monolingual 2. ELL 3. Both 4. No Companion					
- NOTES					
- Language Use 1. English 2. Spanish 3. Both					
- NOTES					

## APPENDIX F

**Teacher Interview Questions**

\*Questions may be modified or added based on survey answers and classroom observations. Surveys will be anonymous except for the three teachers participating in classroom observations.

**Peer Interaction**

1. Tell me about how your students interact with each other in the classroom? On the playground?
2. Do you provide opportunities for your students to interact with you? If so, how? Why do you provide these opportunities?
3. Do you believe it is important to provide peer interaction opportunities for your students? Explain
4. Do you encourage students to interact with each other in your classroom?
  - a. If so, how?
    - i. Should students be expected to interact with all their peers?
  - b. If not, why?
5. What is your purpose for asking students to interact in class?
6. What opportunities, if any, do you provide for students to interact with their peers and why?
7. Do you provide cooperative learning opportunities for your students? If so, in what way? How often? Why do you provide these opportunities?

**English Language Learners**

8. When grouping ELLs and monolingual students together, what issues do you consider?
9. What opportunities, if any, do you provide for ELLs to interact with only other ELLs?
10. How many ELLs are in your current classroom?
11. Do you provide any specific modifications for ELLs?
12. When teaching ELLs do you plan lessons differently or use any particular strategies?

**Personal**

13. What challenges have you encountered when working with ELLs?
14. What benefits have you encountered when working with ELLs?
15. What kind of training have you received for working with ELLs, if any?
16. What do you wish you knew about ELLs?
17. If you had time, is there anything you would do differently to support your students' social and academic school experience?



## APPENDIX G

**Student Interview Questions**

\*Questions may be modified based on observations made prior to student interviews.

**School**

1. Who do you talk to, work with or play with at school (recess, lunch, classroom)?
2. Why do you choose \_\_\_\_\_ to talk to, work with, or play with at school?
3. Who do you sit with and talk to during lunch?
4. Does \_\_\_\_\_ speak the same language(s) as you?
5. How do you let your teacher know you have an answer to a question? Or a question to ask
6. When you have questions about class work, whom do you ask? Teacher? Peers? Why do you choose to ask \_\_\_\_\_?
7. Which language do you speak most often at school? English or Spanish?
8. Is there ever a time during the school day when you decide to speak Spanish instead of English?
9. Do you speak Spanish at school? Why? Why not? (Provide schedule)
10. What do you wish your teachers knew about being a Spanish speaker?
11. Is there anything you wish your teacher would do differently to help you learn and enjoy school?

**Home**

12. Who do you play with when you're not at school? Does \_\_\_\_\_ speak the same language(s) as you? What language?
13. Do you play with (answers from question 1) when you're not at school? Why? Why not?

## APPENDIX H

**Second Grade Teacher Survey Questions**

**\*Survey answers are anonymous. It is possible, however, with Internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may see your response.**

- a. 20-30
  - b. 30-40
  - c. 40-50
  - d. 50-60
  - e. 60-70
  - f. 70 and up
2. What is your gender?
    - a. Male
    - b. Female
  3. What grade level(s) do you teach?
    - a. Kindergarten
    - b. 1<sup>st</sup> Grade
    - c. 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade
    - d. 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade
    - e. 4<sup>th</sup> Grade
    - f. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade
    - g. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade
    - h. K-6 Specialist (Reading, Math, P.E., Music, Art, Library)
  4. How long have you been teaching?
    - a. Less than 5 years
    - b. 5-10 years
    - c. 10-20 years
    - d. 20-30 years
    - e. 30+ years
  5. Have you obtained English as a Second Language endorsement through the state? (Obtained through Praxis Assessment)
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
  6. According to \_\_\_\_\_ District database, what percentage of your students is identified as English language learners (ELL)?
  7. To what extent is each of the following a problem when you are working with ELL students?

1. Never    2. Occasionally    3. Sometimes    4. Frequently    5. Almost always

a. Student communication	1	2	3	4	5
b. Parent/guardian communication	1	2	3	4	5
c. Academic needs	1	2	3	4	5
d. Social needs	1	2	3	4	5

e. Resources for helping ELLs	1	2	3	4	5
f. Language diversity	1	2	3	4	5
g. Cultural diversity	1	2	3	4	5
h. Social diversity	1	2	3	4	5
i. Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

8. To what extent is each of the following a benefit when you are working with ELL students?

1. Never   2. Occasionally   3. Sometimes   4. Frequently   5. Almost always

a. Student communication	1	2	3	4	5
b. Parent/guardian communication	1	2	3	4	5
c. Academic needs	1	2	3	4	5
d. Social needs	1	2	3	4	5
e. Resources for helping ELLs	1	2	3	4	5
f. Language diversity	1	2	3	4	5
g. Cultural diversity	1	2	3	4	5
h. Social diversity	1	2	3	4	5
i. Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

9. How much training have you been provided in working with ELLs in the past 5 years?

- District-provided staff development (\_\_\_\_ hours)
- Building-provided staff development (\_\_\_\_ hours)
- ELL coursework (no endorsement) through university (\_\_\_\_ credit hours)
- Other (Text box)

10. Have you observed differences in how monolingual students and ELLs interact with peers? If so, describe

11. When monolingual students interact with ELL students, are their interactions different than when interacting with other monolingual students? If so, describe

12. When ELL students interact with monolingual students, are their interactions different than when interacting with other ELL students? If so, describe

13. How important do you think it is for monolingual students and ELL students to engage in peer interaction opportunities with each other?

- Not at all important
- A little important
- Somewhat important
- Very important
- Extremely important

14. How important are cooperative learning opportunities to students' social growth?

- Not at all important
- A little important
- Somewhat important

4. Very important
  5. Extremely important
15. How important are cooperative learning opportunities to students' academic growth?
  1. Not at all important
  2. A little important
  3. Somewhat important
  4. Very important
  5. Extremely important
16. Identify, if any, the cooperative learning opportunities you provide for your students?
  - a. Partners
  - b. Structured learning teams
  - c. Pairs check
  - d. Three-step interviewing
  - e. Think-Pair-Share
  - f. Jigsaw
  - g. Other \_\_\_\_\_
17. For which activities do you provide cooperative learning opportunities?
  - a. Language Arts
  - b. Math
  - c. Science
  - d. Social Studies
  - e. Recess
  - f. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
18. How often do you provide cooperative learning opportunities for your students? Choose one.
  - a. Daily
  - b. A few times a week
  - c. A few times a month
  - d. Rarely or never
19. How often do you group monolingual students and ELLs together when providing cooperative learning opportunities? Choose one.
  - a. Daily
  - b. A few times a week
  - c. A few times a month
  - d. Rarely or never
20. How do ELL students feel about working with monolingual students?
  1. Very reluctant
  2. Somewhat reluctant
  3. Indifferent
  4. Somewhat willing
  5. Very willing
21. How do monolingual students feel about working with ELL students?
  1. Very reluctant
  2. Somewhat reluctant
  3. Indifferent
  4. Somewhat willing

5. Very willing