An investigation of selected factors that may impede academic success for English language learners on the CRCT in third grade in a metro Atlanta public school district as perceived by teachers, parents, and students, implications for educational leaders

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

FITZHUGH, ROSA. B.A. GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY, 2000
M.A. CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, 2004

AN INVESTIGATION OF SELECTED FACTORS THAT MAY IMPEDE ACADEMIC SUCCESS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS ON THE CRCT IN THIRD GRADE IN A METRO ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND STUDENTS:

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

Committee Chair: Dr. Moses C. Norman
Dissertation dated May 2012

This study examines factors that impede academic success for English Language Learners (ELL) students on the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) as perceived by students, parents, and ELL teachers. This study was based on the premise that international students face a big challenge in regards to assimilation inside America’s classrooms. Educators need to understand the plight of these students and find ways to assist them in passing standardized exams which in many cases they are unaware of. A qualitative analysis approach was used to analyze data gathered from surveys; open-ended questionnaires; and observational tools with a consistent rubric for the ELL teachers whom were observed in their classrooms. The researcher found that certain factors do indeed impede ELL students in attaining a passing score on the CRCT and
some of those factors can be eliminated within the school buildings under the control of the building leader. The conclusions drawn from the findings suggest that future leaders incorporate certain academic “best practices” for ELL students and find ways to bridge the gap between the immigrant families which come here in search of higher education at times and the school building itself. In order for educators to understand the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students, we must first understand the areas in which they lack; nonetheless little research has been done with the aforementioned subgroup as it relates to the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) and their lack of meeting or exceeding standards.
AN INVESTIGATION OF SELECTED FACTORS THAT MAY IMPEDE ACADEMIC SUCCESS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS ON THE CRCT IN THIRD GRADE IN A METRO ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND STUDENTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

ROSA FITZHUGH

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 2012
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I would like to acknowledge my sons Alexander and Maximo Fitzhugh; they are my rocks, my heart, and my soul. They are my reason for striving so hard. I love you both very much.
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In order for educators to understand the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students, we must first understand the areas in which they lack; nonetheless little research has been done with the aforementioned subgroup as it relates to the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) and their lack of meeting or exceeding standards. This study explores certain factors that may impede success for the aforementioned students on the CRCT.

Statement of the Problem

The study proposed to examine the extent to which the selected factors possible affected the CRCT scores of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students in fifth grade.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the variables that explain why English Language Learners (ELL) students (a term used to describe students who are in the process of acquiring English language skills and knowledge), are not meeting the standards on standardized exams. Some schools refer to these students using the term Limited-English-proficient (LEP). A vast majority of these students are not meeting standards on the CRCT in promotional grades such as fifth.
According to the state of Georgia Department of Education (2009), international students are given a one year deferment upon arrival in the United States to attain enough English to pass the CRCT. Students’ scores are not held against them for this first year; however, soon after that year the CRCT promotional guidelines must be adhered to. Leaders need to understand the variables that would help explain the reason why most ELL students miss the mark on the exam and are at times “retained.”

In order for educators to understand the needs of ELL students, we must first understand the areas in which they lack. Nonetheless, little research has been done with the aforementioned subgroup as it relates to the CRCT and their lack of meeting or exceeding standards.

**Research Questions**

RQ1: In the view of teachers, how important is it for ESOL students to have knowledge of what the CRCT is about?

RQ2: From the perspective of the teachers, how important is parental involvement in getting ESOL students to pass the CRCT?

RQ3: Do teachers think an after school tutorial program is helpful to ESOL students in achieving success on the CRCT?

RQ4: In the view of teachers, how culturally aware should teachers be who teach ESOL students?

RQ5: Do teachers think that it is more useful to pull out ESOL students rather than mainstream them for instruction?
RQ6: From the perspective of the students, how effective is the after-school tutorial program in preparing them for the CRCT?

RQ7: Do parents think that they know enough about the CRCT to help their children in preparing for it?

RQ8: Are parents satisfied with the tutorial program for their children in preparing for the CRCT?

**Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in many ways. It could lead to (a) a better understanding of how to reach more ELL students, (b) direction for the most effective training for multicultural educators, (c) responsibility for parental involvement, (d) alignment of assessments for ELL students, (e) an appreciation for ethnic cultural diversity, (f) better school-family relationships for immigrants, and (g) an overall deeper understanding of what it takes to teach our ELL students. The problem, which inundates the Latino community, is a lack of resources for parents (Valdez, 2003), resources such as liaisons, strong parent-teacher communication, and a sense of partnership with the school and home (Blair, 2002; Flores, 2002; Miller, 2001; Unger, 2001).

Articles and Alfredo (2003) found that Latino students need several factors in order to achieve academic success: (a) ESOL classes for students for more than, (b) parental involvement, (c) proper study skills, (d) knowledge of the CRCT, and (e) adequate tutorial classes. These factors have been found to be effective when in place for academic success among elementary students, according to Artiles (2003).
Although International families are growing in Georgia there is a great concern in learning styles for these students academically (Valdez, 2003). Warner (2003) found that in order for a Latino student to achieve academic success “schools must build on children’s cultural and ethnic learning styles” (pp. 12-14). A problem exists between Latino communities and the schools when language and a lack of communication impede learning (Valdez, 2003).

Gay (1993) and Waller (1992) maintain that schools should provide an ongoing evaluation of their curriculum in terms of the following: (a) multicultural environment, (b) multicultural learning styles, and (c) multicultural training for educators. A school is a second home to students and should be conducive to both academic and social learning (Boyer, 2002). These facts are reason for the need conduct future research and assist the Latino community with the many obstacle that stand in their way.

Summary

In summary, Thomas and Collier (2009) wrote:

The academic work in the early grades is natural vehicle for proficiency development of the minority language . . . gradually, with each following grade, the program provides more instruction in English until children learn the curriculum equally through both languages by grade four or five. (p. 6)

The quote states it all, and is the drive behind the need for this study. It is imperative that ELL students are taught correctly in the early formative years in order to avoid delays in the future. It would behoove emergent leaders to get on board and help educators become culturally aware and understanding. ELL students need assistance in
shaping their minds and keeping them motivated while under our care. It is for these reasons that this study is of vital importance; and will hopefully help answer unanswered questions. This is the idea which arose from the researcher. There have been studies which indicate that four factors are definitely needed for ESOL students to thrive academically. These factors are described as ESOL classes, parental involvement, cultural awareness, and test knowledge.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

Approximately 4 million U.S. public school students received ELL services in the 2003-2004 school years, accounting for 8% of all public school enrollments that year (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2006). Those students reflect only a portion of years to come for ELL services, and as immigrants move to this great nation, those services must prepare students for the future. Similarly, Slavino (1996) also noted the importance of ESOL classes for international students.

ESOL Classes/Tutorials and the Affect on Student Performance

Dual-language after school programs promote Hispanic students’ literacy development in English without compromising their Spanish skills (August, Calderon, Carlo, & Nuttall, 2006). ESOL classes are vital to any functioning academic program and researchers have found many important components of such classes. In a study conducted by Camarena (2009), two groups of students both ESOL and non-ESOL were instructed 50/50 of the time in both English and Spanish. The students involved were in grades k-3 and were followed through middle school. The results showed the usefulness of bilingual education, hence noting the importance of ESOL classes for positive academic gains for ESOL students. ESOL students who were immersed in dual language education had higher success rates on academic work. The limitations of this research are merely that a longitudinal study may have yielded a wider comparison, and
families may have been included as well as students. Parents could have taken part in the study regarding their child's English education. A focus group was conducted by Zehler (1993) where a group of teachers was asked different questions about their ESOL students in terms of their educational background; learning styles; and second language acquisitions. The teachers were all ESOL teachers near the George Washington University area and had the same question “what do I do” with these students who are language deficient. The focus group results yielded a guide to aid teachers in the same position with the same question posed. The guide can be utilized by ESOL teachers at the elementary and middle school level. A study conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center led by Fry (2009) utilized information from the five states with the highest numbers of ELL students—Arizona; Florida; New York; California; and Texas—to construct a detailed analysis of ESOL students and achievement. The report yielded some very interesting findings such as: ESOL students are more than likely attending Title I schools, therefore access to materials for effective instruction may be lacking; the schools are central city schools which tend to receive less funding; and most students will qualify for free or reduced lunch.

About 4 million U.S. public school students received ELL services in the 2003-2004 school years accounting for 8% of all public school enrollments that year (NCES, 2006). The aforementioned statistic keeps the need for ESOL research fresh and alive. A study conducted by Carmen (1998) compared two verbal-interactive ESOL classrooms one where ESOL students were involved in interaction and not just mere respondents and the second classroom (control group) was a storytelling method where ESOL students sat
and just listened. The study yielded results which showed several factors such as (a) the need for collaboration among regular education teachers and ESOL teachers, (b) interaction is a must for ESOL students with time for them to respond to open ended questions, (c) face-to-face contact with ESOL students, and (d) the correct usage of storytelling which is to engage ESOL students to discuss topics of interest.

The final study reviewed in the area of ESOL classes was conducted by Houser, Huang, and Fu (2007). The study was a research project on collaboration between an ESOL teacher and a fourth grade regular education teacher. The study was conducted to show the importance of collaboration between two very important teacher roles. The study was conducted for one year with a mixed method approach. The researchers used observations, student work samples, and progress monitoring in order to attain results which were as follows: collaboration among ESOL and regular education teachers increase academic achievement for ESOL students, develops literacy, increased cultural awareness for teachers, and develops overall vocabulary. The limitations of the study are that (a) more teachers could have been a part of the study and (b) parents could have been involved to see if their views and maybe a comparison at different schools.

**Test Knowledge and ESOL Students’ Performance**

According to a study by Stansfield (1998), state assessment programs can be traced back to the late 1970s with many changes for ELL students as far as accommodations. In recent years, as a result of the Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA) schools have begun to understand the need for restructuring their assessments of
ELL students, which explains the need for ESOL students to understand test content and knowledge.

The first research reviewed on the topic of standardized exams was conducted in 1998 by Charles Stansfield showed how Massachusetts is handled the issue of ESOL test accommodations in grade 10. The research showed the history of ESOL testing issues for states and the progress made thus far; yet more needs to follow. The study yielded several results: (a) the need for students to use bilingual dictionaries, (b) extended time for reading, (c) clarified instructions, (d) modifications of ESOL programs, (e) and flexible schedules for teachers. The limitations of the study were the fact that it was isolated and only in Massachusetts. The gaps in the study lead to further research needed in the area of standardized testing in the state of Georgia since the number of immigrant students is steadily increasing.

In a study conducted by Fry (2009), five states with a large ESOL student population were studied by using a mixed method approach with observations and a review of student test scores in Mathematics and Reading/Language Arts. The researchers looked at ESOL test takers for six graders and middle school students. The scores were compared to other races/culturally different students; and the study also looked at differences in schools attended by ESOL students. The results yielded were as follows: (a) ESOL students scored below proficiency standards in both Reading and Math, but not significantly in schools where ESOL students were taught with White students, (b) the schools where ESOL students attend seem to be low income schools which lead to Title I, (c) middle school students had higher enrollments for ESOL
students making funding an issue, and (d) student-teacher ratios are positively associated with school size. Therefore, the higher the number of students, the less effective the instruction attained. Limitations of this study could be that with the new census there could be a change in the ESOL populated states; and the accuracy of the ESOL numbers reported. Further study could be more inclusive of states at the cusp of being inundated with ESOL states in comparison to those already established.

Education Watch (2003) in Georgia compared student test scores based on nationalities. The study compares Georgia's reading and mathematics performance on the most recent administrations of the state assessment with performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). To indicate how Georgia is doing in narrowing the academic achievement gap between African American, Latino, or low-income students and their white, middle class peers, the report presents NAEP data by race, ethnicity, and family income. The study presents other state-level data on Georgia's K-college education, including demographic distribution across each educational level, participation and success in Advanced Placement, percentage of students taking high-level courses, school funding gaps, and high school and college graduation rates. In 2001, 74% of all fourth graders met or exceeded state reading standards, while 24% of fourth graders performed at the proficient level on the 1998 NAEP assessment. The results yielded were as follows: significantly more white than black fourth graders were proficient or above in reading. In 2001, 58% of all eighth graders met or exceeded state standards for mathematics, while 19% of eighth graders performed at the proficient level on the 2000 NAEP assessment. Significantly more white than black eighth graders were
proficient or above in math. The African-American fourth grade reading achievement gap and mathematics gap fell to 21st and 15th, respectively, among the states. African-American students represent 38% of the public K-12 enrollment, but a considerably smaller percentage takes Advanced Placement (AP) exams. Asian American students have an extremely high rate of AP test taking. Just over 30% of Georgia's high school students enroll in college, compared to 54% nationwide. Nearly one third of Georgia's secondary classes are taught by teachers lacking a major or minor in the field. African-American students are disproportionately represented in special education and underrepresented in gifted education. Districts with higher child poverty rates and higher minority enrollments have more state and local dollars to spend per student than districts with lower poverty rates and lower minority enrollments. Further research could include only ESOL elementary students transitioning to middle school to determine readiness for standardized exams. English Language Learning (ELL) students in the United States face special challenges for achieving academic success. In addition to the cross-cultural differences that may limit their understanding of the cultural norms and socialization into the larger U.S. discourse community; these students can be hindered by their lower-level English language skills.

Cultural Awareness for Educators and its Relation to ESOL Student Performance

In the area of cultural awareness several studies were reviewed. The first study conducted by Laura Mitchell (2009) took seven teachers on a 6 hour workshop to explore their beliefs. The method used was a mixed method with surveys; and open ended
questions. The teachers were able to label their beliefs and values. The survey used was the Multicultural Teacher Efficacy Scale 3 months preworkshop and then 3 months post workshop in an effort to compare results. The results were as follows: if teachers are exposed to cultural awareness activities, reflecting on themselves for a change, and given strategies for ESOL students, they would feel more confident in teaching our ESOL kids. The aforementioned study leaves room for plenty more research in the area of culture. The limitations of the study are that parents were not included, more teachers could have been added, and a comparison of other schools could have taken place. The next study involving culture was conducted by Grossman and Celeste (2001). The study was comparative of teachers in three cities: Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Singapore. A total of 317 teachers participated in the study. The majority of the participants were new to the field of teaching. Based on the results the study offers room for the development of a suitable culture training program for teachers in those cities; nonetheless the study also leaves room for United States research in an effort to improve cultural awareness training.

Another study reviewed was conducted by Shondel Nero (2009) and 17 ESOL teachers from the New York area who traveled to the Dominican Republic in an effort to see firsthand the culture shock that many ESOL students encounter once they arrive in America. The method used was a mixed method with observations, interviews, surveys, and open-ended questions (quantitative and qualitative data analyses). The teachers lived with host families while engaging in intensive Spanish language classes and culture. The study reported the need for teacher education on culture and diversity for ESOL students;
in an effort to create a positive learning environment for students. The study leaves room for further research in the area of culture training for teachers whether old or new.

**Parental Involvement and its Affect on ESOL**

**Student Performance**

In the area of parental involvement several studies were reviewed. The first study conducted in 2003 by Yalun, Zouh, and Youfu Wei explored the roles that two parents played in their daughter's English education during the initial period after moving to the United States. For English language learners (ELLS) with limited first language schooling in the home country, it usually takes several years to demonstrate cognitive academic language proficiency. For ELL students to achieve educationally, they need to reduce that time barrier. Parents' active involvement is essential to ELL children's success. In this case study, the two researchers were the parents of the child being studied. Through their personal observations, information from their daughter's classroom assignments, their own and their daughter's journals, and cassette tapes of their daughter's conversations with native speakers in different settings, the researchers, as participant observers, approached the topic of parents' involvement in three areas: English listening and speaking development, English reading development, and English writing development. Over 14 months, the researchers applied what they had learned in the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) classroom to their daughter's English skills development at home. Results suggest that parental involvement might be critical to ELL students' English education. The next study reviewed was a meta-analysis, including 52 studies, to determine the influence of parental
involvement on the educational outcomes of urban secondary school children. Statistical analyses are done to determine the overall impact of parental involvement as well as specific components of parental involvement. Four different measures of educational outcomes are used. These measures include an overall measure of all components of academic achievement combined, grades, standardized tests, and other measures that generally included teacher rating scales and indices of academic attitudes and behaviors. The possible differing effects of parental involvement by race and socioeconomic status are also examined. The results indicate that the influence of parental involvement overall is significant for secondary school children. Parental involvement as a whole affects all the academic variables under study by about 0.5 to 0.55 of a standard deviation unit. The positive effects of parental involvement hold for both white and minority children. The study left room for further research in the area of parental involvement using different instruments.

In 2007, Frank, Harry, and Wanda conducted a study to examine if there was a relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and parental/community involvement in elementary schools, and if there is a significantly significant difference between low SES schools and high SES schools with regard to parental/community involvement. Socioeconomic status was measured by the percentage of students on Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) in a school. Five low SES/high FARMS schools and five High SES/low FARMS schools were selected for use in the study. Parental/Community Involvement was measured by Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) attendance and membership. Results indicated that the lower the SES, the lower the parental/community involvement,
and that there is a significant difference between low SES schools and high SES schools in regards to parental/community involvement. If parental/community involvement is a component of student achievement, it is important that schools work on improving involvement particularly in low SES/FARMS schools to close up any possible barrier to academic achievement.

Another study examined the longitudinal association of parental involvement in Head Start and the development of children. The study was conducted by researchers Mido, Boyoung, Singh, Sung, and Youngji (2009). The method was a mixed method with the use of surveys, observations of students, home observations, support groups for parents, video recordings, group socialization, and parenting classes. The researchers used Bayley Mental Development Index (MDI) scores and other scales. The study showed that parents who were actively involved in the academic lives of their children had children who produced academically to a higher level. Parents who were involved in classes and were given support interacted positively with the schools which their kids attended.

**Summary**

In conclusion, the review of literature revealed several gaps in research done on ESOL students, their families, and academia life. Further research will include but not be limited to more parental involvement, native language surveys for accuracy, larger more focused sample (one grade level), one standardized exam chosen for study, study in states with rise in ESOL students, and student surveys for their opinion.
For future studies it is prudent that the researcher include more parents as Youfu (2001) and Wanda (2007) both stated in their studies as being vital components of ESOL students and academic progress. The usage of translators never came up in any study and with parents they may be very useful to aid in extracting information. Larger samples must be taken on a more concentrated level instead of several grade levels at one time; research will be done with one grade level to isolate certain variables. Future research will also isolate one standardized exam such as the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) in the state of Georgia. The study will focus on one exam in an effort of gathering vital information to provide to educators who come in contact with ESOL students across Georgia schools.

Some of the major contributions of research thus far have been tremendous. Past research has given new research a blue print on the “how to” start any further studies. Researchers have certainly paved the way for future research to be conducted since so many variables have been identified as possible factors which could hinder or enhance academic progress for ESOL students in America.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research Design

This study selected the factors that may impede ESOL students' academic success on the CRCT. The study examined teacher perceptions of ESOL students as it relates to those students being successful academically. George Elliot (1997) said, "those who trust us educate us" (p. 77). The student who is the ultimate benefactor of our schooling efforts must have a voice in what is and will affect them because selection is more important than training (Haberman, 1995). It is for that reason that student self-report is vital to the research.

The theoretical framework for this study is based on several theories. According to Gay and Waller (2001), we can learn from students about student performance. Student perceptions have been ignored and ESOL students have been targeted for prejudice tendencies by teachers. To provide an effective learning environment for the urban school students, much research has been devoted to teachers’ attitudes towards teaching EOLS students and their perceptions of such students.

In Listening to Student Voices (Haberman, 1995), students are presented as important stakeholders. Their views are presented distinctly and are used to help move the teaching and learning process along. This research explains why including student input and participation is a learned skill.
Definitions of Terms

The following terms were defined in order to create a frame of reference for this study.

**Academic achievement** is defined as the ESOL students’ actual Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) which is measured by the actual recorded performance.

**After-school tutorials** is defined as any academic assistance that is done either before school, after school, or on the weekends that help students with certain subject areas related to the CRCT such as math, language arts, and reading.

**Educators’ cultural awareness** is defined as a teacher’s acceptance of cultural differences and customs and the integration of all cultures within the classroom.

**English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes** is defined as the extent to which English classes taken at least part-time influence ESOL students’ performance on the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT).

**Parental Involvement** is defined as the extent to which parents influence ESOL students’ academic performance on the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT).

**Test Knowledge** is defined as the extent to which test preparation and test content knowledge for ESOL students influences their academic performance on the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT).

Figure 1 shows lists variables of the study.
Independent Variables

Parental Involvement

ESOL Classes/Tutorials

Test Knowledge

Educators’ Cultural Awareness

Dependent Variable

Problem of ELL students’ academic success on the CRCT in promotional grade 5 in the areas of reading, math, and language arts

Figure 1: Variables of the Study

It was proposed to examine the extent to which the average third grade ESOL student’s CRCT performance would be related to parental involvement, educators' cultural awareness, test knowledge, after-school tutorials, and ESOL classes at least part-time for ESOL students.

The dependent variable which has been identified in this study is the problem of ELL students’ academic success on the CRCT in promotional grade 5 in the areas of reading, math, and language arts. The variable was identified after observations were made regarding test scores for these students on the CRCT in DeKalb County. In 2007, 18 schools failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) due to their ELL subgroup population (U. S. Department of Education, 2008). Therefore there is a deficit that
plagues our schools on a daily basis. The deficit comes in many forms such as inadequate training, lack of more English classes, lack of parental involvement and other factors which are discussed. Figure 2 shows the relationship among the variables.

Figure 2. Relationship among Variables

ESOL Classes

Approximately 4 million U.S. public school students received ELL services in the 2003-2004 school years accounting for 8% of all public school enrollments that year (NCES, 2006). Those students reflect only a portion of years to come for ELL services, as immigrants move to our great nation those services must prepare our students for the future. Similarly, Slavino (1996) also noted the importance of ESOL classes for international students. ESOL classes must have certain components in place to foster a positive environment for ELL students such as cooperative groups, collaborative talks,
and peer help (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education [NCBE], 1998). In the aforementioned study researchers found ELL students need an environment where they can talk not only with their peers, but also peers about past experiences as well as work. Educators are encouraged to allow ELL’s to communicate as much as possible in their classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to give ELL students opportunities for dialogue about their work and maybe even given them daily journal writing time; although some ELL may write little at first they will soon get the hand of it and write a lot in an effort to share their thoughts with their peers.

Cooperative groups should be incorporated in an ESOL class. The same study suggested that ELL students be heterogeneously grouped according to their tier levels, with lower level students being helped by the higher English proficient students. Teachers should point, use gestures, ask open ended questions, show pictures, and encourage peer help (NCBE, 1998) in an effort to assist ELL students’ learning. ELL students need support within the classroom to assist their English proficiency which takes up to 6 years to attain; however, conversational English can occur sooner. The study was conducted in Texas and therefore lacked a broader perspective. Current research is still needed which will encompass other parts of the United States. Although ESOL classes are for teaching English, a study by Huang (2007) showed that collaboration between ESOL and mainstream teachers in a school that adopts pull-out methods is crucial for language proficiency. Educators should understand the importance of planning together to coordinate lesson plans and activities for ELL students. Teachers must raise the expectations of their ELL students and help them reach their goals. Dual-language after
school programs promote Hispanic students literacy development in English without compromising their Spanish skills (August, Calderon, Carlo, & Nuttall, 2006). Researchers at the Center for Applied Linguistics (2005) have provided a set of principles to help school personnel establish and maintain high-quality dual-language programs in reading and mathematics, and the programs should recruit and retain high quality, dual-language staff.

In summary, although many ESOL studies were found, the studies lacked certain things which leave room for further research. The studies were conducted in certain regions of the United States which leaves room for further research. Families were not asked to participate and share their thoughts about ESOL classes and the number of students is low in comparison to other studies conducted. The gaps make room for future studies which will be inclusive of parents, families, students; and teachers, if possible.

**Cultural Awareness**

Gay (1993) and Waller (1992) maintain that schools should provide an ongoing evaluation of their curriculum in terms of the following: (a) multicultural environment, (b) multicultural learning strategies, (c) multicultural training of teachers and staff, and (d) multicultural school culture. A school is a second home to students and should be conducive to both academic and social learning (Boyer, 2002). There is a new wave of International students coming from refugee camps; nonetheless these students are in need of assimilation into the school systems in order to be taught effectively. In the United States, Latinos face great difficulties in assimilating to such a different culture (Valdez, 2003). Language barriers and cultural differences cause stress and depression among a
large number of Latino immigrant (Rodriquez, 1999). Although Latino families are growing in Georgia, there is a great concern about learning styles for these students (Valdez, 2003). Warner (2003) found that in order for a Latino student to achieve academic success "schools must build on children's cultural and ethnic learning styles" (p. 29). Educators are warned that having cultural awareness and acceptance is a sure way to win the academic hearts of their ELL students. The study was conducted with over 100 students in the California area.

ELL students—who are they? Educators should get to know their students and embrace their cultural differences (Zehler, 1994), win their hearts, and understand that culture is wonderful. In a recent study, ELL students were compared to non ELL students to determine their differences in expressing themselves. ELL students showed interest and appreciation in different ways, but participated. Educators need to understand "culture" and know that some students are taught to not look adults in the eyes; therefore, those students should not be perceived as deceivers. Teachers who took the time to get to know their ELL students noticed that those students performed better overall and felt more comfortable in their classrooms. A supportive environment is built by teachers on several grounds (Zehler, 1994) which are by acceptance, interest, care, and understanding of cultural differences. The study was conducted with the help of over 25 teachers in a local school with the same demographics of students in their classroom. Teachers succeed when they integrate cultural values within their classrooms (Reeves, 2009). Integration takes place on many levels. Students can bring artifacts about their countries, share their customs, speak in their language if possible, and be encouraged to
never be ashamed of being “different.” ELL students can and will succeed if they feel comfortable about sharing their past among peers and their teachers. Educators should take a closer look at ELL students and really try to understand who they are and where they come from.

These studies have shown that a teacher who “cares” will usually get more out of her students; nonetheless, it is especially important for ELL students to feel that their teachers genuinely care about them. These students are already in a foreign land trying to connect with people at all levels. ELL students need to be given time to listen to other ELL students cultural background and see that they all share a common bond or “assimilation” in order to avoid “isolation.”

Future studies could be done to include a wider range of teachers from diverse background in an effort of obtaining a more inclusive sampling; also maybe administrators in those schools may have a voice in this topic as well.

**Parental Involvement**

Padron and Waxmon (2004) asserted that a strong relationship between the school and families is essential for academic success among ELL students. Thus a family with limited English needs a liaison who can effectively communicate with the family (Calderon, 1995). A study done outside California also reported the importance of communication between the immigrant family and the school unit (Gay, 2003). Artiles (2003) found that students with Limited English Proficiency need several factors in order to achieve academic success. These factors are (a) enrollment in English as a Second Language (ESOL) classes at least full or half day, (b) **strong parental involvement**,
(c) proper study skills, (d) good study habits, (e) strong connections between teachers and parents, and (f) knowledge of the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). These factors have been found to be effective for academic success among middle school students according to Artiles (2003). A problem exists between Latino communities and the schools when language and a lack of communication impede learning (Valdez, 2003), which is why families need to feel a connection with their schools. Research on successful school reforms has revealed to us the critical role that parents play, and for that purpose programs should have very strong parental components. Educators should try to link the school with the community and families by doing activities that are inclusive. Such activities could be family nights; adult read in; and other programs, it is through linkage that families will view learning as integral to their lives. Educators can learn from families as much as families can learn from educators; it is truly a rewarding experience. Cummins (1986, 2003) found that parents’ involvement in their child’s school has a positive effect on academic success. However, immigrant families do not know how to help their kids home or at school, which is why it is vital to guide them on how to “help” their kids. Immigrant families often believe that they should not interfere in their child’s education out of sheer respect for school officials, so it is up to us educators to “educate” those parents and assist them with their assimilation into “American” culture. Immigrant families need to understand how to assist the school and they will flock to help; they believe in education which is one of the main reasons why people immigrate to America. Increasing knowledge about student culture and families will promote academic success for ELL students (Cummins, 2003).
According to Braswell, Daane, and Grigg, 2003, Hispanic students lag behind their white and Asian American peers at all proficiency levels of reading and mathematics throughout their K-12 schooling. Therefore, parental involvement should be a vital component of any school with ELL students.

**Lack of Test Knowledge/Standardized Exams**

Himlee and Novas (2004) summarized that a lack of knowledge about a single test would impede academic success among middle school students. The study found that ELL students who were exposed to test format performed better especially when sample questions were given in both native tongue and English; yet some states are not taking heed to such studies and ELL students are still losing. According to a study by Stansfield (1998), state assessment programs can be traced back to the late 1970s with many changes for ELL students as far as accommodations. In recent years, as a result of the Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA), schools have begun to understand the need for restructuring their assessments of ELL students. ELL students were once upon a time exempted from national exams which led to a lack of results available for measuring progress, which was detrimental to schools and students alike. During the 1990s educators became more aware that exclusion was not the answer, as a result the educational system has put into place certain accommodations for ELL students. There are currently over eight states which offer standardized exams in Spanish for ELL students. Some states like Georgia give ELL student a one year deferment from the state standardized exam. Therefore a student can wait one year before the exam is counted. Other accommodations have been added such as extra time, usage of bilingual
dictionaries, small groups, clarifying directions, and glossaries offered. Identification is still key. Educators must first identify all ELL students in our buildings. Teachers should assess students frequently using formative assessments, benchmarks, and screenings (Gersten et al., 2007). Assessments are done in order to determine if the instruction delivered is effective, and if not then it is time to restructure lessons etc.

Some states have adopted certain ELL standards such as the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. The WIDA Consortium is a nonprofit cooperative of 20 states (including Georgia) working together to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for English Language Learners (ELLs) with innovative standards and assessments. It is housed at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research in Madison, Wisconsin. WIDA was founded in 2002 when it received a federal enhanced assessment grant. Those funds, along with subsequent earnings and awards, have been used to develop standards, training in ELL studies, a universal screener (WIDA-Access Placement Test [WAPT]), and resources for educators to utilize. Georgia adopted those standards in 2004 and they are still being phased into schools (WIDA, 2009).

The WIDA ELP Standards are designed for the many audiences in the field of education who are impacted by ELLs. These audiences include (a) ELLs and their family members, (b) teachers, principals, program, district and regional administrators, (c) test developers, (d) teacher educators, and (e) other stakeholders in the educational lives of ELLs. By developing the ELP standards, the WIDA Consortium has responded to demands to link language learning with state academic content standards and to address educators’ needs in three different areas: Pedagogy, Assessment, and Educational Policy.
The WIDA strands pull prior knowledge out of students when used to prepare lesson plans.

**Current After-School Tutorial Programs**

The state of Georgia has adopted the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards which are designed as a curriculum and instruction planning tool. They help educators determine children's ELP levels and how to appropriately challenge them to reach higher levels.

The WIDA Consortium is a non-profit cooperative of 20 (including Georgia) working together to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for English Language Learners (ELLs) with innovative standards and assessments. It is housed at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research in Madison, Wisconsin. WIDA was founded in 2002 when it received a federal enhanced assessment grant. Those funds, along with subsequent earnings and awards, have been used to develop: standards; training in ELL studies; a universal screener (WAPT); and resources for educators to utilize. Georgia adopted those standards in 2004 and they are still being phased into schools. (WIDA, 2009) The problem is that training for educators on these standards is up to the school due to the fact that many schools do not have high ELL numbers; nonetheless students are being left behind. The fact that Georgia adopted these standards due to the increase in ELL students is admirable; however, more work needs to be done to ensure adequate implementation is done at the local school level to include cultural awareness. Teachers must understand the plight of our International students and their past instead they are ostracized and isolated which in turn makes them resent school. International students
have a zeal for learning (Artiles, 2003) it is when they are made to feel alone that the fire burns out. It is our jobs as educators to light the internal fire residing in each student and help them be successful. There are some counties in Georgia at the forefront of ELL studies such as Gwinnett which has an International center like DeKalb which caters to all immigrant families. At the centers, students are screened, placed in local schools, and given Basic English classes.

Although Georgia has some great resources for immigrant families; it behooves us educators to conduct research in this topic in an effort to provide some extra support. Studies in the area of ELL is vital as our nation continues to open its doors to all people, which is what America’s fabric is made of.

Scope and Limitations

For the purpose of this study one urban school was selected. The elementary school was selected due to its rich diversity which was gathered by the school demographics. It was the only elementary school in DeKalb that had such extreme diversity of both ESOL students and refugee students. The selection of the elementary school was based primarily on how the school handles the diversity of their students and the programs offered to the immigrant student. The research for this study was conducted via focus groups, surveys, and interviews. Since this study required student and teacher participation as well as parents, one limitation was the possibility of honesty of the respondents. Another limitation was the fact that a translator was used for the translation of the parent surveys and in translating there is never word for word translation just the best interpretation which could lead to slight word omissions of the
English language. This study included a teacher focus group which could also lead to false statements about student perception by a teacher.

**Summary**

While there may be other variables relative to ESOL students’ performance which may have some influence on their academic performance on the CRCT, there have not been studied conducted that have had as their primary focus the five variables: academic achievement, parental involvement, ESOL classes, test knowledge, educator’s cultural awareness, and after-school programs used in this research. Therefore, the scope of this study included all variables as they related to ESOL student’s performance on the CRCT. The research study presented five terms which were (a) academic achievement, (b) parental involvement, (c) ESOL classes, (d) test knowledge, (e) educator’s cultural awareness, and (f) after-school programs. The review of previous research and this researcher’s personal experiences, while working in urban school settings for ten years, lead to the selection of the five terms. Each term was defined relative to their usage in this research study. Caporrimo (2002) proclaimed that the student’s perspective relative to the challenges of teaching and learning still remains in the background of educators trying to find answers to these challenges. This study, therefore, assumed that we as educators must learn from our students and try to relate to them as best as we can in an effort of creating a conducive learning environment. Thomas and Collier (2009) wrote:

> The academic work in the early grades is natural vehicle for proficiency development of the minority language, gradually, with each following grade,
the program provides more instruction in English until children learn the curriculum equally through both languages by grade four or five. (p. 6)

The quote states it all, and is the drive behind the need for this study. It is imperative that ELL students are taught correctly in the early formative years in order to avoid delays in the future. It would behoove emergent leaders to get on board and help educators become culturally aware and understanding. Our ELL students need assistance in shaping their minds and keeping them motivated while under our care. It is for those reasons that this study is of vital importance and will hopefully help answer unanswered questions thus far. There have been studies which indicate that four factors are definitely needed for ESOL students to thrive academically those factors are described as; ESOL classes; parental involvement; cultural awareness; and test knowledge.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

The nature of this study led to a qualitative method. A qualitative approach was used to investigate large amounts of data and subjects using descriptive, correlation, survey, and other techniques. A qualitative approach also provided the opportunity for interviews and self-reporting as well as the focus group. Interviews are conversations at the basic level (Kvale, 1996). Kvale sees qualitative research interviews as endeavors to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to disclose the meaning of peoples’ unique and personal experiences. Since it was the intent of this study to provide a better understanding of teacher and student perception of the learning environment interviews was the best sources to attain such information.

Research shows that the best way to gather information in a focus group format is by creating a permissive and nurturing environment that encourages different perceptions and points of view, without pressuring participants to vote, plan, or reach consensus (Kruger, 1988). According to Marczak and Sewell (2002), there are eight advantages of using focus groups:

1. Focus groups take advantage of the fact that people naturally interact and are influenced by others (high face validity).
2. Focus groups may be one of the few research tools available for obtaining data from children.

3. Focus groups provide data more quickly and at a lower cost than if individuals interviewed separately; groups can be assembled on shorter notice than for a more systematic survey.

4. Focus groups generally require less preparation and are comparatively easy to conduct.

5. Focus groups allow Researchers to interact directly with respondents (allows clarification, follow-up questions, probing); researchers can gain information from non-verbal responses to supplement (or even contradict) verbal responses.

6. Focus group data uses respondents’ own words can obtain deeper levels of meaning, make important connections, and identify subtle nuances.

7. Focus groups are very flexible and can be used with a wide range of topics, individuals, and settings.

8. Focus group results are easy to understand and more accessible to lay audiences or decision-makers than complex statistical analyses of survey data.

Description of the Settings

The student survey was conducted with the assistance of the leasing manager at the K Apartment in Georgia where a non-profit agency (company X) has been granted permission to conduct student surveys. Parent surveys were also held at the same location with the assistance of a Burmese interpreter. The parents were given the survey
in their language and the translator stayed to answer any questions about the surveys and to interpret results for researcher.

Teacher surveys were conducted at a public library which allows nonprofit agencies to secure rooms for the day on a first-come first-serve basis. Permission was granted by the agency to supply teacher surveys to all teacher participants. The focus group was held at the public library as well. The focus group was held for two hours on a specific Saturday and participants were given ample amount of time to secure high participation.

**Sampling Procedures**

The sampling method chosen for this study was a purposeful sampling for quantitative purposes well. The sampling was chosen due to that fact that 42 students are already a part of the tutorial program of the nonprofit agency. The chosen agency was at the apartment complex. The students all participate in the state funded after school ESOL tutorial program sponsored by the agency which granted permission for the research along with Department of Education for the state of Georgia. Of the 42 students, 32 were identified as ESOL students at their elementary school. In the state of Georgia, ESOL students are defined as:

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 identifies language minority students as Limited English Proficiency students or LEPs. However, the Georgia Department of Education, ESOL program follows the suggestion of the National Research Council with the identification of these students as English Language Learners or (ELLs) since this term highlights the positive aspect of the English language
acquisition process. The terms may be used interchangeably. (Georgia Department of Education [GA DOE], 2009)

The students who are a part of the aforementioned tutorial program were chosen in part due to their ESOL participation and the need for this population to gain attention for better academic enhancement. The teachers were purposefully selected as well. The purpose of this type of selection was to purposely select a heterogeneous group of educators who would ranged in age, gender, years of teaching, race, religion, SES, position, grades taught, and their demographics.

**Human Subjects Review**

Participants were asked to volunteer as members of the focus group and individual interviews. Before the interview participants were given the interview questions a consent form to read and sign; for parents this form was in their native language. The consent form consisted of the purpose of the study, what the participants needed to do in the study, if there are any risks and benefits for being a part of the study, time required for the interview, whom to contact for information, and a statement assuring confidentiality and a participant no harm clause. Parents signed a form allowing their child to fill out a brief survey that was piloted first. There are no risks to the participants of this study at all.

**Instrumentation**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define trustworthiness as that aspect of naturalistic inquiry that assures the audience of the worth of the findings. There are certain areas that must be secured in order to attain trustworthiness findings such as credibility,
transferability, dependability, and confirmation. In this study, data sources include surveys, standardized test scores, documents, interview protocols, observations and parental questionnaires which yielded “triangulation.” Patton (1990) defines triangulation as “a process by which the researcher can guard against the accusation that a study’s findings are simply an artifact of a single method, a single source or a single interview” (p. 22). An analysis of all aforementioned sources validated the information gathered.

Dependability was guaranteed throughout the study while the researcher worked to assure the preservation of all documents that were used in this study. Confirmation is the criterion that was used to assure the study is supported by data. The student survey (Appendix A) that was piloted consisted of five questions with a possibility of three answers to choose from such as NO, YES, or UNSURE. The student survey was made simple to ensure that students would not have a difficult time answering the questions. Teacher volunteers were allowed to read any question to a child who may not understand due to language barriers. The parent questionnaire (Appendix B) consists of 10 questions which include aspects about their involvement, ESOL classes, teacher perception, CRCT test knowledge, and after school programs. The answer choices are simple and once again resemble the student survey with three choices: NO, YES, or UNSURE due to the fact that many of the parents have a first language other than English. Teacher surveys consisted of five questions with a Likert scale response including: Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, and Disagree. The questions were constructed by the researcher in conjunction with University personnel.
Participants/Location of Research

The participants consisted of all current educators in a local county. These educators varied in age, race, SES, years’ experience teaching, and gender. The diverse groups were selected by their easy access by the researcher. The educators were purposefully selected by the researcher in order to meet the aforementioned diversity criteria’s.

Data Collection Procedures

1. Researcher distributed individual interview surveys; and conducted the interview protocol of all educators using a small tape recorder for the open-ended questions (Appendices A and B).
2. Researcher mailed out parent questionnaires (Appendix C) to a purposefully selected group of parents from the after school program and waited for those to be returned.
3. Researcher surveyed all students as a whole in one group (Appendix D); this aided in better results and afforded the students to ask questions if necessary.
4. Researcher coded all answers and look for common threads in responses.
5. Researcher created an item analysis for each question from the survey.
CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The research questions from Chapter I allowed for a plethora of rich results. The ESOL teachers who were interviewed all taught the same students involved in the after school program which was also used in the study. The results led to serious findings especially after the students and parents were interviewed. The students who were asked to participate were all ESOL students in the same grade and at the same school.

Quantitative Data

Research Questions

  RQ1:  In the view of teachers, how important is it for ESOL students to have knowledge of what the CRCT is about?

  According to the results uncovered from this study the answer is YES. ESOL Teachers stated rated [?] the answer to this question a 1.5 which is strongly agree and agree (see Table 1).

  RQ2:  From the perspective of the teachers, how important is parental involvement in getting ESOL students to pass the CRCT?

  According to the results uncovered from this study, the answer is YES. Teachers rated this question 1.25 which is strongly agree to agree (see Table 2).
Table 1

*Teachers' Responses to RQ1*

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M = 1.5 (strongly agree to agree)

Table 2

*Teachers' Responses to RQ2*

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M = 1.25 (strongly agree to agree)

RQ3: Do teachers think an after-school tutorial program is helpful to ESOL students in achieving success on the CRCT?

According to the results uncovered from this study, the answer is YES. ESOL Teachers rated this question 1.25 which is strongly agree to agree (see Table 3).

Table 3

Teachers’ Responses to RQ3

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M = 1.25 (strongly agree to agree)

RQ4: In the view of teachers, how culturally aware should teachers be who teach ESOL students?

Teachers rated this question 1.4 which is strongly agree and agree. According to the results uncovered from this study, the answer is YES (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Teachers' Responses to RQ4*

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<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M = 1.4
Observation Protocol Results

Each teacher was observed for 20 minutes in her classroom. The researcher was looking for the following: (a) Teacher explained standards to students? (b) Teacher gives ESOL students extra attention as needed on assignments? (c) Teacher has a classroom that is open to diversity (posters’ conversations, etc) (see Table 5).

1 = behavior observed  2 = behavior occasionally observed
3 = behavior often observed  4 = behavior frequently observed
5 = behavior consistently observed  N/A = not applicable or not observed at all

Table 5

Observation Protocol Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educators</th>
<th>Observation 1</th>
<th>Observation 2</th>
<th>Observation 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M = 3.5     M = 4.5     M = 4.5
The observations allowed the researcher to see first-hand how the teachers interacted with the classroom and their students. The students seemed to enjoy the teachers' style and how they were being taught. It should be noted that seven out of the nine teachers were ESOL endorsed and were qualified to teach ESOL students in either isolation or in a group. The ESOL endorsed teachers had what they called a “toolbox” of things they could refer to from their previous ESOL classes that other teachers may not have access to. The ESOL endorsed teachers were happy to have such credentials and felt that they classes better prepared them for teaching ESOL students. The non-ESOL endorsed teachers were great but the felt that having the endorsement could only be an asset to them in the future.

Teachers were also interviewed where they were asked the following open-ended questions.

1. If you could change one thing about the ESOL program, what would it be?
   Why?

   Teachers stated that they would change the fact that students only get 2-4 hours per week of ESOL outside of the classroom; they would try to not mainstream the students so quickly, to allow time for language immersion on its own.

2. Do you think that ESOL students should be tested in their native language whenever possible?

   Seven out of nine teachers stated “NO” they did not think that ESOL students should be tested in their native language as it was found to not be helpful in their opinion since the students ultimately have to learn English.
3. How do you cultivate the differences of nationalities in your classroom?

Teachers cultivated their classrooms in several ways: allowing students to share, preparing cultural events, using translators whenever possible to communicate to families, and being open in the classrooms with their students.

4. How important is your personal cultural awareness to you?

All teachers stated that it was "very" important to be culturally aware of the many customs; traditions; and communication styles of their students.

5. What classes or professional development courses have you taken that involve culture and teaching?

Teachers stated that only if you are seeking an ESOL endorsement do you get exposed to any culturally different professional development classes.

Themes kept emerging as the researcher analyzed the open-ended questions and prepared to discuss. Teachers felt the same about certain topics which are labeled in order of importance:

1. ESOL students need more time for learning English like pull-out sessions.
2. SOL students need teachers who care about their learning process and are genuine.
3. Professional Development is important to teachers; especially classes that discuss culture and customs.
4. A teacher should find ways to cultivate his/her own cultural awareness to be more effective in the classroom.
**Student Survey Results**

Forty surveys were distributed, 37 were completed, 1 was blank, and 2 were not returned (see Table 6 and Figure 3).

**Parent Survey Results**

Parents were also surveyed and asked a series of questions to gain their perspective on the same items. The researcher was able to survey all 37 parents from the same pool of the completed student surveys. See Table 7 for the results.

Table 6

*Students’ Survey Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have enjoyed coming to tutoring with my Tutor.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have learned more about the subject area (math, reading) by coming to tutoring</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The lessons in tutoring have helped me to Feel better about passing the CRCT.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel confident about passing the CRCT after Coming to tutoring.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My tutor has helped me to better understand The subject (math, reading).</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3. Survey Results: Students

Table 7

Parents' Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have learned more about the subject areas (math, reading, etc.) to help my child.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The lessons in tutoring have helped me feel better about my child passing the CRCT.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My child’s tutor has helped me to better understand the subject (math, reading, etc.).</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I know what the CRCT is.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I help my child with school work.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents stated that they were pleased with the tutoring sessions and that the parental workshop regarding the CRCT question and responded that it was extremely helpful to their being able to help their children on the CRCT test.

**Summary**

The results from the teacher surveys were as follows. Most teachers strongly agreed with the fact that (a) ESOL students should get extra attention on an as needed basis, (b) ESOL students should be given prior test knowledge about a standardized test before the actual test, and (c) teachers also strongly agreed that the relationship between the students and school is optimum for true academic success.

Teachers strongly agreed that after-school programs for ESOL students should communicate on a regular basis with the regular school day teacher in an effort of a seamless academic year. Teachers strongly agreed that cultural awareness among teachers is extremely important with ESOL students and as a profession they should always strive to understand culture.
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

The research uncovered that certain factors can and often do impede academic success for ESOL students in grade 3 on the standardized test known as the CRCT in the state of Georgia. The factors that can impede academic success are (a) lack of test knowledge about the CRCT prior to taking the actual test; (b) the relationship between the school and the ESOL family is also vital and if it is absent can impede academic success, (c) after-school programs if implemented for ESOL students should communicate with the regular school teacher to maintain accurate and updated information, (d) teachers should be aware of their own racial biases and preconceived notions about any subgroups, and (e) teachers should find ways to incorporate culture in their classroom (student sharing, food exchange, or any other way of expression).

The open-ended questions asked of the same group of teachers led to certain themes that were apparent among the group: (a) they all said that showing care was important, (b) being open was important, (c) ESOL students being pulled out of class works better then mainstream and spending quality time with an ESOL endorsed teacher, and (d) being culturally aware is of vital importance in any classroom setting.

The student surveys about the after-school program which was one of the factors which the researcher predicted would impede academic success also proved to be very
effective. The surveys uncovered that students felt good about staying after-school in a tutorial program tailored to meet their needs as International students. The students stated that if the program really was designed to meet their language deficiency need then they would be happy attending.

**Conclusions**

Based on the research conducted, the researcher was able to arrive at the following conclusions.

Certain factors WILL impede academic success for ESOL students on the CRCT. The conclusions were that certain factors do impede academic success for ESOL students which were described in the previous section. The study allowed the researcher to see that ESOL students are a subgroup which requires much more that we as educators have given them thus far. The answers to the study really tell educators how to better handle the influx of immigrant children in an effort of providing optimum academic years for all students. The study also tells us educators about how to better infuse parental involvement to aide students in academic success on the CRCT or any standardized test.

**Implications**

The researcher can infer several things from this study. As it stands now, our schools can utilize this study to try to implement the elements that will enhance academic success for EOLS students and eliminate those that have not been proven successful. In the future the study can allow us educators to truly see what we can do to help students who come to America and are language deficient but are told to assimilate quickly and are held to the same standard as our American children. The study uncovered ways that
ESOL students want to learn and what are best practices inside the classrooms. The study also led to the unveiling of the fact that teachers felt that an ESOL endorsement should be something to acquire, but not a title that would impede their teaching methods with ESOL students. The parent survey which all led to 100% of parents being pleased could have been due to fact that the Burmese parents have high respect for the school and teachers and would not want to disappoint the schools.

Limitations of the Study

The study had some noticeable limitations. The fact that all the educators came from the same school could be seen as a limitation since no other school was chosen for comparison purposes. The students were from the same school as well; teachers were all seen on the same day which could have led to fatigue right before the open-ended questions. Another limitation was the fact that there was no comparison between ESOL endorsed teachers and non-ESOL endorsed teachers which could have provided richer study results.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends:

1. Building leaders to incorporate cultural professional development at least twice a year.

2. As best as possible, have an ESOL endorsed teacher inside any classroom with mainly ESOL students.

3. Maintain and keep the pull-out method for ESOL students as opposed to mainstream at least 4-6 hours per week.
4. Implement ESOL nights in any school highly populated with ESOL students and hire translators for the parents.

5. Implement ESOL specific after-school tutorials which would be separate from every day tutorials.

6. Teachers that teach ESOL students should take the time and become ESOL endorsed to feel better equipped to teach students with a different native tongue.

**Summary**

The researcher found the study to uncover a plethora of ways to save the ESOL students that reside here in Georgia. Teachers enjoy ESOL students and want to learn how to better serve them in their classrooms. Teachers want more classes involving culture, parents want to be involved despite their language differences, and ESOL students enjoy coming to school and are appreciative about their newfound land. The study uncovered factors which can impede academic success for ESOL students if they are not taken care of inside the schools. Leaders need to provide an environment conducive to learning for all students which could be done by providing more ESOL infused professional learning classes. Schools should offer in-house culture awareness classes to allow more sharing from students about their culture.

Future research should include other schools, races, and additional schools with ESOL student populations.
## APPENDIX A

### Interview Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of CRCT Knowledge</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It is important to have test awareness about the CRCT for students to pass the CRCT.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is important for students to understand what they are being tested on.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It is important for ESOL students to get extra attention dedicated to the actual CRCT components prior to being tested.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Involvement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. It is important for parents to be given resources that would support their children in passing the CRCT.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The relationship between the school and parents is vital for student academic success.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52
### Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
#### After-School Tutorial Classes

6. ESOL students would benefit from targeted after-school programs

7. After-school programs should be in alignment with the daily instruction that the ESOL student receives at their home-school.

8. After-school programs should communicate with the ESOL student's regular school teacher.

#### Teacher' Cultural Awareness

9. Racial misconceptions and/or preconceived notions can affect the learning of ESOL students.

10. It is important for a teacher to be empathic and genuine with ESOL students who are of a different race than the teacher.

11. Teachers should be required to attend cultural awareness classes if they are teaching ESOL kids.
### ESOL Hours Per Student Per Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12. ESOL students should be pulled out for classes as opposed to being taught in mainstream.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

1. If you could change one thing about the ESOL program what would it be? Why

2. Do you think that ESOL students should be tested in their native language whenever possible?

3. How do you cultivate the differences of nationalities in your classroom?

4. How important is your personal cultural awareness to you?

5. What classes or professional development courses have you taken that involve culture and teaching?
# APPENDIX C

Student Survey

## NAME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT QUESTION</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>UNSURE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have learned more about the subject areas (Math, Reading, etc.) by coming to tutoring.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The lessons in tutoring have helped me feel better about passing the CRCT.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My tutor has helped me to better understand the subject (Math, Reading, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My parents know what the CRCT is?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My parents help me with school work?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
APPENDIX D

Parent Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARENT QUESTION</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>UNSURE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have learned more about the subject areas (Math; Reading; etc.) to help my child?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The lessons in tutoring have helped me feel better about my child passing the CRCT?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My child’s tutor has helped me to better understand the subject (Math; Reading; etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I know what the CRCT is?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I help my child with school work?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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REFERENCES


