

# EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION IN WASHINGTON SCHOOLS



November 2009



101 SW Main Street, Suite 500  
Portland, OR 97204  
[www.nwrel.org](http://www.nwrel.org)



# **Effective Practices for English Language Learners And Their Implementation in Washington State**

Theresa Deussen, Ph.D.  
Elizabeth Autio  
Angela Roccograndi  
Jason Greenberg-Motamedi, Ph.D.

November 2009

Evaluation Program  
Center for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment  
Dr. Robert Rayborn, Director



**101 SW Main Street, Suite 500  
Portland, Oregon 97204  
[www.nwrel.org](http://www.nwrel.org)**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An English language learner (ELL) is an individual who is in the process of acquiring English and has a first language other than English. The education of ELLs is a particularly pressing issue at this time for several reasons:

- The past two decades have seen the second largest wave of immigration into the U.S., resulting in growth of the non-English speaking population and bringing large numbers of ELLs into U.S. schools
- The *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 requires ELLs who have been in the U.S. for a year or longer to take state assessments and holds educators accountable for those results
- There is a consistent and well-documented achievement gap between ELLs and their native English-speaking peers
- There is a shortage of teachers who are fully trained to work with ELLs, a challenge both in Washington state (Deussen & Greenberg-Motamedi, 2008) and more broadly across the U.S.

### Background on this Study

Recognizing the need to strengthen the education of ELLs in Washington, the state legislature approved SB 5481 in 2007. That legislation provided funding for schools with ELLs from multiple language backgrounds to implement ELL Demonstration projects. In addition, it requested two reports from Education Northwest (formerly Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory).

1. The first year report, *What Teachers Should Know About Instruction for English Language Learners* (Deussen, Autio, Miller, Lockwood, & Stewart, 2008), summarized research findings about effective instruction for ELLs.
2. This second year report summarizes the ways in which two groups of Washington schools provided instruction and support to their ELLs, and the degree to which these practices were in line with educational research findings on effective ELL instruction.

#### Terminology used in this report

**An ELL**, or English language learner, is someone who is in the process of acquiring English and has a first language other than English

**A consortium district** is one of ten districts that participate in a consortium in south central Washington *and* participated in this study. **A consortium school** is a school in one of these districts.

**A grantee district** is one of five districts that were awarded a grant under the ELL Demonstration Project, funded by the state legislature in 2007. **A grantee school** is a school in one of these districts that participated in grant-funded activities.

## Districts and schools in this study

**Consortium schools.** Superintendents from a number of districts in south-central Washington (in and around the Yakima Valley) meet together on a regular basis in a consortium to discuss educational issues they have in common. One of these issues has been the educational success of the many ELLs in some of their districts. These ELLs are predominantly Spanish speakers; some are new immigrants, but others are second and third-generation Washington residents who speak Spanish at home with their families. It was the concern and leadership from some of the superintendents in this consortium that contributed to the commissioning of this study.

Fourteen districts in the consortium were invited to participate in a field study documenting practices they used with their ELLs. Ten accepted: Grandview, Granger, Mabton, Prosser, Royal, Sunnyside, Toppenish, Wahluke, Yakama Tribal School, and Zillah.

**Grantee schools.** Under SB 5481 in spring 2007, five districts received two-year grants to focus on improving the education of ELLs. In contrast with the consortium districts, ELLs in grantee districts came from many different linguistic backgrounds; most of those students were relatively recent immigrants to the U.S. Districts received notification of their awards in early December 2007 and began receiving funds in January 2008. This timeline is important to keep in mind because it meant that districts actually had only 18 months, not two full years, to implement their proposed activities. Furthermore, in fall 2008/winter 2009, some of the districts had to give back portions of their grant funding because of state budget shortfalls. Due to the nature of the grants, each district utilized the funds in a slightly different way. However, all districts provided training in sheltered instruction, an approach to retaining ELLs in the regular classroom where their English language development takes place alongside grade-level content learning.

Districts in this study	
<b>Consortium districts</b>	
• Grandview	• Sunnyside
• Granger	• Toppenish
• Mabton	• Wahluke
• Prosser	• Yakama Nation
• Royal	• Zillah
<b>Grantee districts</b>	
• Camas	• Spokane
• Fife	• Tukwila
• Federal Way	

The five districts that were awarded funds (Camas, Federal Way, Fife, Tukwila and Spokane) were expected to participate in the evaluation, and all agreed to do so.

## Methodology

This descriptive study collected information from a range of respondents in 2008 and 2009 using a variety of instruments, including:

- **Surveys** of principals, teachers, ELL specialists, and instructional aides at consortium and grantee schools, with a response rate of 92 percent<sup>1</sup>
- **Interviews** with consortium district superintendents and ELL program coordinators
- **Observations** of 349 lessons at 24 consortium schools
- **Review of documentation** from eight consortium districts
- **Analysis of student assessment results** for consortium and grantee schools on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)

## Key Findings and Recommendations

In the course of developing this report, we met many professional educators who were deeply dedicated to ensuring that ELLs received the excellent education they deserve. Many were frustrated, however, by the insufficient resources, staffing, materials, or training they had available to them; they often believed that the system could work better than it did. The data collected for this report yielded a great deal of information, resulting in many analyses and findings that are included in the full report. In addition, districts will receive short reports that provide them with district-specific information.

Across the variety of districts and schools included in this study, however, a few findings stood out. These are identified below, along with five recommendations for further strengthening the system for education Washington’s ELLs.

**Finding: High-quality bilingual instruction leads to the best outcomes and educators wanted to provide more of these programs. However, their ability to do so was hindered by a shortage of qualified staff.**

There is substantial research demonstrating the effectiveness of well-designed, well-implemented bilingual programs, particularly dual language or late-exit programs (Slavin and Cheung, 2005; August and Shanahan, 2006). Bilingual programs are currently available to only about 9 percent of Washington ELLs. Schools and districts often report they would like to provide more bilingual programs, especially when they serve large numbers of students from one language group. They feel hindered, however, primarily due to the shortage of qualified staffing. Schools and districts also report that they establish early- rather than late-exit programs because the required state assessments are offered only in English, which means that ELLs aren’t getting the best program model possible.

**Recommendation: Make long-term investments in the state’s capacity to offer viable bilingual programs.**

In order to offer viable bilingual programs to ELLs in the future, the state should make long term investments in building staff capacity. Specific steps include:

---

<sup>1</sup> Not every district in the consortium that was invited to participate in the study did so (Bickleton, Mount Adams, Wapato and Yakima declined). Also, not every school in each of the participating consortium and grantee districts took part in data collection, but most of those invited to did so.

- Prepare a larger number of appropriately qualified bilingual teachers
- Where feasible, extend program reach to languages other than Spanish
- Create other necessary supports for the functioning of bilingual programs
  - ◆ The means to ensure that the language skills of bilingual teachers go beyond conversational skills to include academic language
  - ◆ The provision of high-quality professional development and on-going support for bilingual teachers
  - ◆ The alignment of curricular materials in other languages to state content standards
  - ◆ The availability of Spanish-language assessments, including formative assessments and, possibly, the creation of a Spanish-language version of state assessments

**Finding: Many educators were not fully trained to work effectively with ELLs.**

The 91 percent of ELLs who receive instruction in English also need highly qualified teachers who are prepared to help them learn language and content at the same time. At the present, however, most teachers serving ELLs have received only introductory levels of training in effective ELL instruction. Teachers should receive more comprehensive professional development, and this should be ongoing, of sufficient duration, and include active engagement. Some, but not all, professional development in the districts included in this study met these standards.

In addition, ELLs often receive instruction from aides. While aides are a critical part of many schools and bring valuable resources to their positions, they have the least formal preparation and receive the least amount of professional development.

**Recommendation: Ensure that ELLs are taught by appropriately trained staff.**

Providing high-quality, research-based instruction to ELLs requires a significant investment in professional development. Specific steps to ensure that ELLs are taught by appropriately trained staff include the following:

- Fund the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP) program at levels that allow districts to hire sufficient certificated teachers to work with all ELLs
- Endorse and support implementation of the recommendations of the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board that all teacher pre-service and professional development address the five research-based principles and implications outlined in first year report of this project, *What Teachers Should Know About Instruction for English Language Learners* (Deussen, Autio, Miller, Lockwood, & Stewart, 2008)
- Target and require ELL professional development for mainstream teachers. The professional development most needed in the largest number of districts included
  - ◆ Training for teachers in their school’s ELL program model
  - ◆ Training in particular instructional strategies. Across all the schools in this study, these include

- Multiple representations: multiple ways of conveying information, particularly non-linguistic ways
  - Academic language: the more formal, complex English needed to access advanced academic ideas
  - Cultural competence: the ability to relate and instruct across cultural boundaries
  - Primary language supports: the incorporation of students' primary language skills as a support to their learning
  - Use of data: the access to and use of appropriate assessments, particularly to make decisions about modifying instruction for ELLs
- Recognize that training needs are not the same in all places, and differentiate appropriately. While some training needs apply statewide, others are district- and school-specific. Variations exist based on program model, student population and, in particular, by what teachers already know
  - Provide training and ongoing professional development to instructional aides. Support career ladders for effective bilingual aides to become certificated teachers
  - Thread ELL issues throughout professional development. Maximize the limited time for teacher professional development by including attention to ELL issues as a theme through other professional development, such as for mathematics or science

**Finding: There was confusion about what ELL program model schools use, how different models fit together, and the role of the ELL specialist.**

Schools can utilize one of five broad categories of program models to deliver instruction to their ELLs; many make use of more than one model. Within each model, there are multiple ways of assigning instructional staff. This variation is often entirely appropriate, given differences in student demographics, community needs, the design of program models, and teacher preparation.

It requires intensive planning at the district and school levels to coordinate multiple program models, to connect ELL models with general education, and to match the use of ELL specialists to the needs of the district. However, decisions about how to use staff with ELLs are often made for fiscal reasons—for example, to stretch TBIP funding across as many bodies as possible—rather than for programmatic reasons. Perhaps this is why so many teachers often do not understand the role of ELL specialists in their buildings. Even a few principals did not know what ELL program model existed in their building. This confusion does not support the efficient use of resources or the effective collaboration of educators.

**Recommendation: Ensure that districts have clear, coherent program models that work together and are well-communicated with educators throughout the district.**

To build more coherent and collaborative instructional programs, the following steps are recommended:

- TBIP technical assistance from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to districts should focus on coherence and collaboration during OSPI technical assistance
- Ensure that districts communicate their plan to all staff

**Finding: Newcomer programs faced shortages in qualified staffing and appropriate materials.**

Newcomer programs are an important gateway for new immigrants into the U.S. school system. Two primary challenges stand out with current newcomer programs: staffing and materials.

Staffing problems arise because of the complex and multi-faceted expertise needed to teach in a newcomer program. While expert researchers in the field recommend that newcomer programs hire highly experienced teachers with a range of skills in language development and cross-cultural skills (Short & Boyson, 2003), this expertise can be hard to find.

Curricular materials are a challenge because of the diversity of newcomer students. Some newcomer students arrive with interrupted schooling, or little previous schooling, and are not able to jump into materials for the grade their age suggests. The lack of age-appropriate materials at a range of levels means that some newcomer programs pull together materials from many different programs that do not necessarily fit together, and curricular coherence is lost. Other times teachers create their own materials.

**Recommendation: Strengthen newcomer programs for new immigrant students.**

Specific steps to address these issues include:

- Implement this report’s recommendation to increase the pool of qualified teachers, which will help to address this concern
- Allocate funds for the creation of newcomer materials and provide training in creation of non-traditional curricula, so that this process results in materials that align to state standards

**Finding: Districts and schools found building connections to ELLs’ families and communities especially challenging.**

Because the norms and expectations of ELLs’ home lives may differ from those at school, building connections to students’ families and communities can be particularly supportive for them. While district and school staff recognize the importance of reaching out to parents of ELLs and have undertaken a number of initiatives to do so, more than half of principals and teachers said that communication with ELLs’ parents remains difficult.

**Recommendation: Support district and school outreach to ELLs’ parents and communities.**

Steps to enhance outreach to ELLs’ parents and communities include:

- Support and provide resources for innovative and research-based approaches, particularly those that are under-utilized, such as home visits
- Create more opportunities for sharing information about parent outreach (conferences, P-20 webcasts, designated websites)

## Student Achievement in Consortium and Grantee Schools

In addition to documenting the staffing, training, and instructional practices at the consortium and grantee schools, this study also examined trends in student achievement at consortium and grantee schools. Key findings included:

- Consortium schools, as a group, tended to have lower percentages of students who scored proficient on the WASL, compared to the state as a whole. Grantee schools, as a group, tended to have percentages of students who scored proficient on the WASL that were comparable to the state as a whole. This difference in student achievement may be due to the lower percentage of ELLs and/or students living in poverty in grantee districts, compared to the consortium districts.
- After 2006, tenth-grade reading achievement in consortium schools paralleled state averages, even though fourth and seventh grade achievement was consistently lower. This trend is likely attributable to the implementation of statewide graduation requirements for the class of 2008; along with the new requirements, new options for meeting standard were made available. This meant there was more than one way to demonstrate proficiency in reading, which resulted in higher numbers and percentages of students doing so.
- Poverty, as measured by the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch, was a better predictor of school-level WASL performance than was the size of a school's ELL population.
- There was no increase in the percentage of students scoring proficient or higher on the WASL following distribution of the demonstration grants in fall 2007. This is not a surprising result because of the short amount of time allowed for implementation. Grantee schools received funding for about 18 months (January 2008 through June 2009), and some of them saw their grants reduced due to the state budget shortfall. The districts used large portions of their grants to train their teachers in sheltered instruction. Prior research consistently finds that fully implementing substantial changes in instructional programs takes typically five years (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, Wallace, 2005); student achievement gains may not be evident in the early stages of change. In short, the 18-month period that grantee schools had funding was probably too short to expect changes in WASL scores.

## Moving Forward

To move forward and successfully implement the five recommendations arising from this report, the study suggests two steps:

1. **Build long-term initiatives that recognize the amount of time needed to make meaningful change in schools.**

Two-year legislative funding cycles are not easily made compatible with the longer periods (five or more years) required to make meaningful, lasting changes in schools. At the same time, it is clear that for the grantee schools and districts in this study, 18 months of funding was not sufficient to yield measurable results in student outcomes. To support a long-term vision of a stronger educational system for ELLs, the state should make a long-term commitment to building programs and initiatives that last beyond any single two-year funding cycle, even if the decisions about specific funding levels have to be revisited every two years to correspond to state budget cycles.

## **2. Monitor the implementation of the recommendations laid out in this report.**

To ensure that the five recommendations are put in place and that the state, district and schools make progress, the state should create a system to monitor the implementation of the recommendations on a regular basis, at least every two years. A monitoring system could consist of the following components:

- Create a task force or working group charged with monitoring implementation and holding systems accountable for that implementation.
- Establish accountability for teacher training institutions for teaching the five principles and their instructional implications described in first year report of this project, *What Teachers Should Know About Instruction for English Language Learners* (Deussen, Autio, Miller, Lockwood, & Stewart, 2008). Monitor implementation in state-funded teacher preparation programs and state-funded professional development for practicing teachers. In consultation with institutions of higher education, develop a timeline for the implementation of the principles.
- Use these data as a baseline and evaluate progress over time. The descriptions of classroom practices and larger structures to support ELLs presented in this report can serve as a baseline from which future change is measured.

Washington educators and legislators have an opportunity to improve instruction for the many ELLs enrolled in their public school system. The commissioning of this project in 2007 is indicative of a commitment to make those improvements. Continuing immigration trends mean that the size of the ELL population and importance of addressing this issue will not diminish in future years. Implementation of this study's recommendations will make Washington a leader among other states in this area. Even more importantly, ensuring that ELLs receive research-based instruction and support will help thousands of current and future ELLs succeed in school and later as citizens of Washington state.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary: .....	i
Table of Contents .....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
List of Tables .....	xi
Acknowledgements.....	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Chapter 2: Program Models .....	7
Chapter 3: The Role of ELL Specialist.....	17
Chapter 4: Professional Development .....	23
Chapter 5: Instruction .....	29
Chapter 6: Family and Community .....	45
Chapter 7: Student Achievement.....	51
Chapter 8: Recommendations.....	59
References.....	67
Appendix A: Methodology .....	73
Appendix B: Timeline .....	79

## LIST OF FIGURES

4-1	Percentage of Teachers Receiving Training in School’s Program Model – Past Five Years .....	25
4-2	Percentage of Teachers Receiving ELL Training – Past Five Years .....	26
4-3	ELL-Related Professional Development Delivery Mechanisms 2008-2009 .....	28
5-1	Agreement That “Our School Uses Instructional Practice That Are Well-Matched to the Needs of Our ELLs” .....	29
5-2	Agreement That “It is Realistic to Hold ELLs to the Same State Content Standards as Native English-Speakers” .....	30
5-3	Agreement That “The Inclusion of ELLs in the Classroom Creates a Positive Educational Atmosphere” .....	39
6-1	Agreement That “I am Able to Communicate Effectively with the Parents of our ELLs” ..	45
7-1	Proportion of Students Meeting WASL Standard, Reading 4th Grade .....	53
7-2	Proportion of Students Meeting WASL Standard, Reading 7th Grade .....	53
7-3	Proportion of Students Meeting WASL Standard, Reading 10th Grade .....	53
7-4	Proportion of Students Meeting WASL Standard, Math 4th Grade.....	55
7-5	Proportion of Students Meeting WASL Standard, Math 7th Grade.....	55
7-6	Proportion of Students Meeting WASL Standard, Math 10th Grade.....	55

## LIST OF TABLES

2-1	Prevalence of Program Models, as Reported by Principals.....	8
2-2	Staff Perceptions of Curricular Materials for ELLS .....	14
2-3	Staff Perceptions of Spanish-Language Curricular Materials.....	14
2-4	Perceptions of the Coherence of Districts’ Work with ELLs .....	16
2-5	Perceptions of the Coherence of Schools’ Work with ELLS .....	16
3-1	Teacher Understanding of ELL Specialists Role .....	17
3-2	Frequency of Collaboration with ELL Specialists, as Reported by Teachers .....	20
3-3	Frequency of Collaboration with ELL Specialists, as Reported by Aides .....	21
3-4	Frequency of Collaboration with Teachers, as Reported by Aides .....	21
5-1	Teachers’ Self-Reported Comfort with Instructional Strategies to Scaffold Instruction.....	31
5-2	Teachers’ Self-Reported Adaptation of Text for ELLs.....	32
5-3	Teachers’ Self-Reported Simplification or Reduction of Coursework for ELLS.....	32
5-4	Teachers’ Self-Reported Comfort with Instructional Strategies to Provide Students with Multiple Representations of Concepts .....	33
5-5	Teachers’ Self-Reported Comfort with Instructional Strategies to promote Structured and Supportive Student Interaction .....	34
5-6	Teachers’ Self-Reported Comfort with Explicit Instruction in Academic Language .....	35
5-7	Teachers’ Self-Reported Comfort with Multi-Faceted and Intensive Vocabulary Instruction .....	36
5-8	Use of Students’ Primary Language in the Classroom .....	37
5-9	Teachers’ Self-Reported Comfort with Instructional Strategies to Activate Background Knowledge and Prior Learning.....	40
5-10	Teachers’ Self-Reported Comfort with Instructional Strategies to Integrate language and Content Instruction .....	41
6-1	Requirement of Cultural Competence Training for Teachers.....	48
7-1	Regression Analysis Summary for ELL and FRL Enrollment Predicting WASL Achievement .....	57
A-1	Participating District Demographic Data.....	73
A-2	Distribution of Classroom Observations by Grade and Subject Area.....	75
B-1	ELL Demonstration Grant Timeline .....	79

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In addition to the authors, many people contributed to this report.

First and foremost, we wish to thank all of the district and school staff members who work tirelessly to educate Washington’s students and who took time out of their busy days to answer questions and provide us with data. District superintendents and ELL coordinators graciously participated in interviews and facilitated access to additional information as needed. To all the school staff members who completed lengthy surveys, hosted site visits, and opened their classroom doors, we are enormously appreciative.

Site visits were conducted by a team at Education Northwest, including Basha Krasnoff, Francie Lindner, Bruce Miller, Susan Sather, Nanci Schneider, Victoria Stewart, Johnna Timmes, and Judy van Scoter, in addition to the authors. Victoria Stewart analyzed classroom observation data; Johnna Timmes trained all team members in use of the observation protocol.

Dawn Scruggs scheduled site visits, made travel arrangements, mailed and tracked surveys, and formatted and edited this report.

Bob Harmon and Helen Malagon from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Barbara McLain from the Washington state legislature, and Kari Nelsestuen from Education Northwest read and provided helpful feedback on a draft of this report.

Finally, we wish to thank the Washington state legislature for listening to the concerns of educators and caring about instruction for the state’s many ELLs.

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to inform Washington state legislators about the ways in which two groups of Washington schools provided instruction and support to their English language learners (ELLs), and the degree to which these practices were in line with educational research findings on effective ELL instruction.

This report responds to a direct request made in 2007 by the Washington state legislature (SB 5481). One piece of that multifaceted legislation requested that Education Northwest (formerly the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory) summarize what we know from research about instruction for ELLs; the results of that work were published last year in our Year 1 report, *What Teachers Should Know About Instruction for English Language Learners* (Deussen, Autio, Miller, Lockwood, & Stewart, 2008).

### Terminology used in this report

**An ELL**, or English language learner, is someone who is in the process of acquiring English and has a first language other than English

**A consortium district** is one of ten districts that participate in a consortium in south central Washington and participated in this study (Grandview, Granger, Mabton, Prosser, Royal, Sunnyside, Toppenish, Wahluke, Yakama Tribal School, and Zillah). **A consortium school** is a school in one of these districts.

**A grantee district** is one of five districts that was awarded a grant under the ELL Demonstration Project, funded by the state legislature in 2007 (Camas, Fife, Federal Way, Spokane, and Tukwila). **A grantee school** is a school in one of these districts that participated in grant-funded activities.

SB 5481 also requested two additional pieces of work:

1. A field study documenting the instructional programs and practices currently being used to instruct ELLs by ten districts in the consortium of districts in and around the Yakima Valley (south-central Washington). For convenience, this report refers to them as “consortium” districts and schools.
2. An evaluation of the work undertaken by the five multi-language districts which received demonstration grants under the same legislation (“grantee” districts and schools).

Findings from both the field study and evaluation are summarized in this report. They are compared to what we know about successful strategies and approaches from educational research.

## Why the education of ELLs has become a pressing issue

An ELL is an individual who is in the process of acquiring English and has a first language other than English. In Washington, about 8 percent of students are formally considered ELLs—that is, they were eligible for services from the state Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP) by virtue of their scores on the Washington Language Proficiency Test (WLPT-II). This population of ELLs represents a growth of 47 percent between the 1994–1995 and 2004–2005 school years. During that same period, overall student enrollment in the state increased just 1 percent (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2006).

The education of ELLs is particularly important at this time because of the high rates of immigration and growth of the non-English speaking population, the challenges posed by the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act of 2001, and insufficient levels of teacher preparation to work with ELLs.

Over the past two decades, the U.S. has experienced the second largest wave of immigration in its history. This has brought large numbers of ELLs into schools across the country. The rapid growth of ELLs in Washington state is part of this larger national picture. As many Washington schools do not have a long history of teaching ELLs, they find themselves facing a new challenge: How to provide a solid education to students who are linguistically and culturally unlike those they have taught in the past.

At the same time that Washington schools are experiencing a rapid increase in their ELL populations, they also face increased pressures from the federal school accountability system. NCLB requires schools to ensure that 100 percent of students meet state standards in reading and mathematics by 2014. This includes all ELLs, even those who have been in the country for a year or less and are not yet proficient in English. Schools and districts have struggled in their efforts to bring ELLs up to these standards in so short a time. ELLs in Washington consistently achieve at lower levels than their native English-speaking peers, and have higher dropout rates (Ireland, 2008; Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), 2008).

The situation is further complicated by a shortage of teachers who are prepared and trained to work with ELLs, an issue in Washington state (Deussen & Greenberg-Motamedi, 2008) as well as more broadly across the country. Current teacher pre-service programs, for example, seldom prepare future teachers to work with ELLs. Menken & Antunez (2001) collected nationwide survey data on coursework required of teachers in pre-service and concluded that few mainstream teacher education programs required even one course addressing instruction for ELLs.

For all of these reasons—growth in the ELL population, the demands of the federal accountability system, and shortage of fully prepared teachers—the question of how schools can best serve ELLs has become a critical one.

### Districts and schools in this study

**Consortium schools.** Superintendents from a number of districts in south-central Washington (in and around the Yakima Valley) meet together on a regular basis to discuss educational issues

they have in common. One of these issues has been the educational success of the many ELLs in some of their districts. These ELLs are predominantly Spanish speakers; some are new immigrants, but others are third-generation Washington residents who speak Spanish at home with their families. In fact, leadership from superintendents in this group contributed to the commissioning of this study.

Originally, districts in the consortium hoped to receive funding for their ELL work through the ELL Demonstration project funded by the legislature in spring 2007 by SB 5481, which included a competition for two-year grants with plans to improve the education of ELLs. This hope was based on an initial reading of SB 5481 as a source of funding for districts with Spanish-predominant ELL populations as well as for districts with ELL populations from multiple language backgrounds. OSPI released iGrant applications on August 15, 2007 that invited Spanish-predominant districts to apply for funds. Later consultations with legislative liaisons revealed that funding from this grant competition was not available for projects in these districts. Instead, the Spanish-predominant consortium districts were eligible to participate in this study, which would document the practices they currently used with ELLs and how well those practices conform to what research suggests is most effective.

Fourteen districts in the consortium were invited to participate in this study, and ten accepted:

- Grandview
- Granger
- Mabton
- Prosser
- Royal
- Sunnyside
- Toppenish
- Wahluke
- Yakama Tribal School
- Zillah

**Grantee schools.** Under the ELL Demonstration project funded by SB 5481 in spring 2007, five districts received two-year grants to focus on improving the education of ELLs. In contrast with the consortium districts, ELLs in grantee districts came from many different linguistic backgrounds; most of those students were relatively recent immigrants to the U.S. The announcement about the availability of grants was made in June 2007. iGrant applications were released August 15, 2007 and due in September 15, 2007. Ten districts submitted applications for the grants. Transitions in the TBIP program at OSPI meant that the applications were not reviewed until November 2007. The five districts that were awarded funding received notification in early December and began receiving funds in January 2008. This timeline is important to keep in mind because it meant that districts actually had only 18 months, not two full years, to implement their proposed activities. Furthermore, in fall 2008/winter 2009, some of the districts had to give back portions of their grant funding because of state budget shortfalls.

The five districts that were awarded funds were required to participate in the evaluation, and all agreed to do so. Due to the nature of the grants, each district utilized the funds in a slightly different way:

- **Camas** focused on one elementary school with a small but growing ELL population, comprised primarily of Russian speakers. Teachers and district staff were trained in Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design), a sheltered instruction model. The district also contracted with Education Northwest (in a division separate from the evaluation) for an external review of their ELL program that pointed to a need for additional focus on math instruction, especially for ELLs. Staff from Education Northwest therefore also provided training in math lesson study for teachers.
- **Federal Way**, a district with a large and linguistically diverse ELL population, trained teachers at five elementary schools in Project GLAD; in addition, math, science and ELL teachers from three middle schools and two high schools were trained in sheltered instruction. The district also made available a seminar entitled “Teaching ELLs, Just Good Teaching?”
- **Fife**, a district in which Spanish and Ukrainian are the most common primary languages for ELLs, provided training in Project GLAD throughout the district, across grade levels and buildings.
- **Tukwila**, a district with substantial ELL and large refugee populations, provided training in Project GLAD, English language acquisition, and issues associated with immigration and refugee students to all schools in the district. They also set aside time for teachers to work on lesson planning for ELLs.
- **Spokane**, a large district with growing pockets of linguistically diverse ELLs, provided training in Project GLAD to teachers from 15 elementary schools, 1 middle school and 1 high school.

Not every school in each of the consortium and grantee districts participated in the study, but response rates were high. The methodology for this study, response rates, and greater detail about the demographics of participating districts are all discussed in Appendix A. A more detailed timeline of the activities stemming from SB 5481 is provided in Appendix B.

### **Structure of this report**

This report is organized by chapters that focus on individual topics: teacher professional development or instructional practices, for example. Within each chapter there are broad statements about “what research says” are effective practices with ELLs. Whenever possible, these statements rely on findings from research studies with rigorous methodologies and convincing evidence of effectiveness. Sometimes, for example in the area of family and community outreach, there is little such research available. In those cases, the text indicates that the statements are based on the best judgment of experts in the field.

The chapter on instructional practices, the longest chapter in this report, relies heavily on the findings from the Year 1 report for this project, *What Teachers Should Know About Instruction for*

*English Language Learners* (Deussen et al., 2008). That report summarized research findings on classroom instructional practices that were effective for ELLs and included specific citations and discussions of levels the quality of research evidence. That level of detail is not repeated in this Year 2 report.

### **Cautions about the use and interpretation of this report**

Like any study, this report has several limitations and things that it cannot accomplish. We want to make these limitations clear and caution both policymakers and educators to use the report with these limitations in mind.

1. Our summary of current research findings cannot fully answer questions about how teachers, schools or districts should work with ELLs to ensure the highest possible academic outcomes.

The current research base on instruction for ELLs is growing, but remains limited. While there are many articles and books available that propose practices designed to benefit ELLs, there are few experimental or quasi-experimental studies that test how well these practices really work. In this report, as in our earlier report a year ago, we have chosen to err on the side of caution. Rather than simply recommend practices that appear to make sense but have no empirical evidence behind them, we have more narrowly focused on practices that have moderate to strong evidence behind them and/or reflect the consensus of a broad group of experts.

2. In our surveys and observations, we only partially capture the practices that schools use to educate their ELLs.

The observations occurred in multiple classrooms in each school we visited, but we did not visit every school in every consortium district, and due to funding restrictions, we did not visit any of the schools in the grantee districts. Furthermore, the visits occurred only once during the school year. It is possible that teachers used many excellent practices, but not on the days we observed. It is also possible that the excellent practices we did see were the exception rather than the rule.

Survey data could also only give us a partial picture of what happened in schools and districts. Not every school returned surveys, although overall response rates were quite good. Even in those schools that did respond, not every teacher necessarily completed a survey. Those who did may have had the most impassioned feelings in one way or another. Moreover, some survey items ask for school staff members to self-report on their own behavior; these reports are sometimes subject to bias as respondents may wish to respond in a manner they believe reflects well on them.

For these reasons, when the findings in this report are used to make decisions about policy or practice in a particular school or district, they should be supplemented by the judgment and observations of the people who work in the district every day and understand the local history and context.

3. This report is not a guide to implementation.

Because this report is intended to inform policymakers about effective educational practices and how often they are currently used in certain settings, the descriptions provided are often very general overviews. By themselves, neither this year's nor last year's report can provide the level of detail required to create a professional development program for teachers or an improvement plan for districts. We have, however, provided multiple references to ensure that faculty and professional development or technical assistance providers can locate the sources of the information contained in this report.

Despite these caveats, we hope the two reports that make up this study will help inform policymakers and educators about what teachers, schools and districts should be able to do in order to support the growing population of ELLs in Washington schools.

## CHAPTER 2: PROGRAM MODELS

A program model is simply a way of organizing the delivery of English language development to ELLs. Under the guidance of the TBIP in Washington state, districts and schools may select from several program model options:

**Dual Language Program.** This is also known as two-way immersion or two-way bilingual education. Dual language programs bring native English speakers and native speakers of another language (in practice, this is usually Spanish) together and provide integrated language and academic instruction in both languages (DeLeeuw, Malagon, Barron, Nguyen, & Finnegan, 2008).

**Bilingual Education.** Early exit (transitional) bilingual education is the most common form of bilingual education for English language learners in the United States. It provides instruction in English language learners' primary language as they learn English and generally transitions students into English-only instruction within the first three years of elementary school. Late exit (developmental) bilingual programs also use both English and their first language for the instruction of ELLs and aim to develop full academic language proficiency in both the students' first and second languages. In this model, students usually transition to English-only instruction by the end of elementary school (DeLeeuw, Malagon, Barron, Nguyen, & Finnegan, 2008).

**Sheltered Instruction.** Sheltered instruction (also called content-based English as a second language [ESL]) provides instruction solely in English but incorporating supports to meet students' linguistic needs. Sheltered instruction is often used in classes comprised solely of ELLs, although it may be used in classes with both native English speakers and ELLs. Middle and high schools providing sheltered instruction may have separate science or social studies classes especially for ELLs. At the elementary level, students may remain in mainstream classes but receive push-in support or limited pull-out English-language support (DeLeeuw, Malagon, Barron, Nguyen, & Finnegan, 2008).

**Newcomer Program.** Newcomer programs aim to help new immigrant students acquire beginning English language skills along with core academic skills and knowledge, and to acculturate to the United States school system. Some programs have additional goals, such as developing students' primary language skills and preparing students for their new communities. (DeLeeuw, Malagon, Barron, Nguyen, & Finnegan, 2008).

In both groups of schools included in this study, sheltered instruction was the most commonly reported program model, used in slightly more than 50 percent of schools (Table 2-1). This is consistent with statewide trends. Among all the districts that serve ELLs, 53 percent of them used sheltered instruction for some or all of their ELLs (Malagon & DeLeeuw, 2008).

**Table 2-1  
Prevalence of Program Models, as Reported by Principals**

	Percentage of schools with this model*				
	Dual Language	Early- or Late-Exit Bilingual	Sheltered Instruction	Newcomer Programs	Don't Know/ No Defined Model
Consortium Schools (n=28)	21% (6)	32% (9)	57% (16)	14% (4)	8% (2)
Grantee Schools (n=24)	8% (2)	33% (8)	54% (13)	25% (6)	25% (5)

\* Numbers may sum to greater than 100% across the rows because schools can have more than one program model.

Program models using students' primary language for instruction, either dual language or bilingual programs, were more commonly seen in schools within the consortium in central Washington, but not uncommon among the grantee schools. Newcomer programs were more common in grantee schools, perhaps not surprisingly, given their higher population of new immigrant students.

### **What research says: When feasible and well-implemented, bilingual instruction yields the best language and academic outcomes for students.**

A substantial body of research points to the academic benefits of program models that make use of students' primary language, through dual language, early- or late-exit bilingual programs. For example, in a five-year study of over 200,000 students educated in a wide variety of program models, Thomas & Collier (2002) found that by fifth grade, students who had received bilingual services scored significantly better on standardized English reading assessments than did ELLs served in English-only mainstream program. There are many ways to organize dual language and bilingual programs (for example, one day in Spanish, then one day in English, or certain subjects in one language and other subjects in another), and no research has pointed to the superiority of one way over another. In general, however, students do best when they spend more time in bilingual instruction—that is, late-exit programs are more effective than early-exit programs (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006).

#### **Current Practices**

As indicated by Table 2-1 above, about half of the consortium schools included in this study offered some type of bilingual program, either a dual language or early-exit bilingual program (no consortium school offered a late-exit option). Fewer than a third of grantee schools offered bilingual programs at their schools.

**Dual language programs** were implemented primarily in the elementary grades, but one program had been extended to include a middle school. Some of these programs served both ELLs, at various levels of English proficiency, as well as native English speakers learning Spanish. Others served almost only ELLs.

**Early exit programs** only serve the primary grades and tend to serve ELLs with the lowest levels of English proficiency (levels 1 and 2 on the WLPT-II). There were no **late-exit** bilingual

programs in the consortium schools that participated in this study, but one grantee school did offer a late-exit program that continued into middle school.

Although the positive research findings suggest that bilingual programs should be widely used, in fact only about 9 percent of ELLs in Washington receive instruction in their primary language (Malagon & DeLeeuw, 2008).

### **What research says: In English-language instructional settings, sheltered instruction promises to combine content and language learning.**

While bilingual education is beneficial, it is not feasible in all settings. Some schools have ELLs from so many different language backgrounds that it would be impossible to establish a program that used all the different primary languages. Other schools, even when they have large numbers of students speaking a particular language, are not able to staff a program, or sufficient curricular materials may not be available in some languages.

In settings that can only provide instruction in English, sheltered instruction is a promising alternative approach to ensuring that ELLs can learn grade-level content even while developing their English. There are multiple models of sheltered instruction which are widely used and commonly referred to by their own acronyms. The most common two in Washington are the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, or SIOP (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2007) and Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design, Brechtel, 2001). In any version, sheltered instruction includes the following techniques:

- Explicit, direct teaching of vocabulary
- Explicit modeling by the teacher (including “think alouds” in which teachers demonstrate exactly how they think through a problem or task)
- High levels of student social interaction, with each other and with the teacher
- Explicit instruction in learning strategies (metacognition) and opportunities to practice using those strategies
- Linkages to students’ background and prior experience
- The use of a variety of assessments, both formal and informal, to measure student learning in both content and language

Sheltered instruction involves many pedagogical techniques that teachers already know about and only have to learn to modify for their ELLs. Furthermore, it does not require that districts purchase any particular materials or programs. Instead, the techniques can be used with a wide variety of existing materials or programs. At the same time, teachers *do* need comprehensive training in how to apply these skills in a thoughtful manner consistent with ELLs’ language acquisition needs.

To date, there has been comparatively little rigorous research on the effectiveness of sheltered instruction. There has been one quasi-experimental study of SIOP with positive student outcomes in writing (Echevarria, Short & Powers, 2006), and further study is underway. Despite the interest in Project GLAD and its widespread use since the 1990s, the program has never undergone a rigorous evaluation, but instead only a few small, project-sponsored studies (e.g.,

Bye, 2004; Hargett, 2006; Ben, n.d.) that did not include comparison groups to examine effectiveness. Until further evidence emerges, sheltered instruction must be seen as a promising, but not yet a fully tested approach.

### **Current Practices**

Sheltered instruction was the most widely used program model. In the consortium districts, it was used in all but one of the districts, usually district-wide (that is, across all schools). Sheltered instruction programs, however, were not usually implemented in all *classrooms* within those schools. In addition, not all ELLs in schools that provided sheltered instruction were taught in sheltered classes. Instead, districts made a wide range of decisions about which students to place in sheltered instruction; some served only their students with lower levels of proficiency, some served every level, and some served with higher level students.

In grantee districts, sheltered instruction was used in every district, but here it was never used in every school in the district.

Elementary students in sheltered instruction programs were sometimes pulled out of the regular instruction to receive focused instruction in English language development, generally from a specialist. Overall, however, OSPI encourages schools not to pull students out of regular instruction and instead to build language proficiency in the regular classroom. When pull-outs did take place, they primarily occurred with ELLs at levels 1 and 2 on the WLPT-II.

### **What research says: Newcomer programs are temporary, transitional programs for new immigrants that may be especially valuable for older immigrant students.**

A fairly recent phenomenon in the U.S., is the newcomer program, designed to serve students who are recent immigrants and have little or no proficiency in English. Newcomer programs aim to provide additional support as students transition into other classrooms and programs (Short & Boyson, 2003). This additional support may be in English, in students' primary language, or a combination of the two.

Newcomer programs may be especially important for older immigrant students (ages about 12-22) as they may benefit from a welcoming, nourishing environment, especially if they have had limited prior schooling. Furthermore, older students may need to fill in gaps in their core academic skills and/or background knowledge (Genesee, 1999); an accelerated overview of American history, for example, may help them later in classes with their peers who received all of their education in the U.S.

There are many possible structures for newcomer programs. Sometimes newcomer programs are embedded within existing schools, while other times they may be located at a separate site designated for that specific purpose. Students generally attend newcomer programs for a limited period of time and then either move to the regular program at the school they are in or transfer to their neighborhood school.

Because newcomer programs are a fairly recent approach to serving ELLs, there is little research to date about their effectiveness relative to other programs; schools and districts must instead rely on expert opinion to guide their program design. Experts recommend that newcomer programs include courses that are appropriate to students' ages and educational backgrounds along with specific plans to develop students' English language, literacy, and other academic subjects *and* an orientation to school systems in the U.S. (Genesee, 1999; Short & Boyson, 2003).

### **Current Practices**

Newcomer programs were fairly uncommon, existing in two of the consortium schools and five of the grantee schools (Table 2-1). Depending on the district, newcomer programs were offered at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, but no district offered their program to students at all levels. One district reported having an "unofficial" newcomer program; it was considered unofficial because it was operated only when there was a need as immigrant students entered the district. Another district had researched implementing a newcomer program but did not have the resources to do so. Newcomer programs were made available primarily to students just entering the United States and those scoring Level 1 or 2 on the WLPT-II.

### **What research says: All program models need to be staffed with teachers and aides who are appropriately qualified and prepared to deliver the model.**

**Teacher qualifications in bilingual programs.** Teachers who teach in Spanish (or another language besides English) should have academic language skills, not merely conversational fluency, in that language.

**Teacher qualifications in sheltered instruction programs.** As noted earlier, sheltered instruction is compatible with standard curricular materials and with instructional practices teachers may already know. All mainstream teachers really need in order to be qualified to work in sheltered instruction programs is training in sheltered instruction; certification in bilingual or ELL instruction is probably beneficial but not required.

**Teacher qualifications in newcomer or pull-out programs.** Both newcomer programs and pull-outs from other programs have a strong focus on English language development. In addition, newcomer programs specifically include an orientation to school routines and expectations. For this reason, Short and Boyson (2003) recommend that these programs are staffed with experienced teachers who are knowledgeable about language acquisition, cross-cultural awareness, sheltered instruction and literacy development.

### **Current Practices**

**Bilingual programs.** Among teachers who instructed in Spanish at schools offering a bilingual program model, 71 percent reported that they had full or near full academic proficiency in that language. This left 29 percent of teachers in the bilingual program, however, with less than academic proficiency.

In fact, superintendents and district ELL coordinators described many difficulties in locating and hiring adequately qualified bilingual teachers. While all wanted to hire teachers with bilingual endorsements, few districts required this. Instead, a bilingual endorsement was usually listed as a “preferred” qualification.

One challenge lay in appropriately measuring the Spanish skills of applicants for teaching positions. There was significant variation in how different districts determined whether teachers had the level of Spanish required to teach in a bilingual program. Most often, districts had teachers interview with a bilingual interviewer who asked questions in both English and Spanish. While this approach would certainly identify teachers with conversational Spanish, it might not be able to distinguish skills in academic Spanish. Some districts required applicants to translate a paragraph or provide a writing sample. Districts did not use standardized tests to assess teachers’ linguistic competence, although two districts mentioned a need for such assessments. Even if districts could determine an applicants’ level of Spanish skills, they often had difficulty finding enough fully qualified applicants to staff a program. For this reason, superintendents reported that they hired the most qualified applicants they could find, and sometimes they had to support those applicants to improve their skills. For example one district provided additional Spanish-language training in the summer for those teachers who need more academic Spanish. Another superintendent reported that the district would use grant funds to help interested teachers earn a bilingual endorsement or masters’ degree in bilingual education. This was not necessarily a powerful incentive, however, since it would require a teacher to take on additional work without a stipend or reduction in work responsibilities.

Among ELL specialists who worked in schools with bilingual programs and instructed in Spanish, 89 percent report that they had full or nearly full academic proficiency in the language. Half of them had specialized education (a degree in teaching English as a second language, or an ELL or bilingual endorsement).

**Sheltered instruction programs.** As reported in Chapter 4, about two-thirds of teachers working in schools that provided sheltered instruction had received some training in sheltered instruction. In many cases, that consisted of only an introduction, rather than the full, multi-day training (for more information about teacher professional development, see chapter 4). A third of teachers in the consortium schools had received the full training, and only a quarter of teachers in the grantee schools had. That left about one-third of teachers in both consortium and grantee schools who received no training in sheltered instruction.

**Newcomer or pull-out programs.** In practice, these programs were often staffed or at least coordinated by ELL specialists, often with support from instructional aides. There were not very many of these specialists, but of the few included in the study, it was rare for them to have been trained in second-language acquisition. On the other hand, nearly half of them reported having fluent, academic Spanish skills.

Superintendents and district coordinators cited a long list of challenges they encountered in implementing newcomer programs, but chief among them were staffing difficulties. Some lamented the difficulty in finding applicants with both language and content area knowledge or “the right temperament to work with kids who have not been in school before.” Some district administrators were concerned that the shortage of qualified staff resulted in needy students being turned away from their newcomer programs.

## **What research says: Students need to be taught with materials that address state standards while also fit their English language proficiency and previous educational level.**

The materials used with ELLs may differ from those used with mainstream students depending on the program. The most obvious difference is the language in which the materials are written; materials also might need modification according to students' culture or previous level of education.

**English-language materials.** ELLs in mainstream classrooms offering sheltered instruction will often use core curricular materials, supplemented by instructional strategies, adapted text, hands-on materials or activities that increase comprehension and accessibility. The changes and supplements, however, do not mean that materials should not be “watered down” in any way that compromises the integrity of the content including age-appropriate vocabulary and concepts (Echevarria, Vogt & Short 2007).

**Spanish-language materials.** Students taught in bilingual programs need access to texts written in the primary language of the students as well as in English. While the texts do not have to be mirror images of each other, they should be aligned to the same standards so that instruction is equitable for all students. Materials must not only help students learn to read in two languages, but must also build math, science and social studies knowledge.

**Newcomer materials.** The selection of appropriate materials may be the most complicated for students in newcomer programs. Many immigrant students arrive in the U.S. speaking primary languages other than Spanish, but there are even fewer curricular materials available in other languages than there are in Spanish. Furthermore, some of the older immigrant students arrive in this country with a history of interrupted schooling, meaning that they do not necessarily have an age-appropriate education in any language. Providing primary grade material to older students is not always a solution, as students may be embarrassed to work with “babyish” materials. It is for precisely this reason that Short and Boyson (2003) note that some newcomer programs may have to create some curricular materials to match the specific needs of their students.

### **Current Practices**

There was little agreement regarding the appropriateness of the materials used with ELLs and, overall, a substantial amount of dissatisfaction. On surveys, ELL specialists in consortium schools were more likely than principals or teachers to approve of the materials used, but this still represented fewer than half of all specialists (Table 2-2). Note that at grantee schools, principals and specialists were less satisfied than were teachers, the reverse of the pattern at consortium schools.

**Table 2-2  
Staff Perceptions of Curricular Materials for ELLs**

Our school uses materials that are well-matched to the needs of our ELLs.	Consortium Schools			Grantee Schools		
	Disagree	Sometimes Disagree/ Sometimes Agree	Agree	Disagree	Sometimes Disagree/ Sometimes Agree	Agree
Principals	19%	44%	37%	21%	63%	17%
Specialists	20%	36%	44%	27%	50%	23%
Teachers	26%	48%	25%	27%	42%	30%

**English-language materials.** In settings that provided sheltered instruction, students generally were instructed with the same core curricular materials used for native English speakers. At times, teachers used these materials in conjunction with supplemental materials such as adapted texts or hands-on materials. Still, some concerns were raised about a lack of materials, dated materials, materials that met the needs of one program but not necessarily the needs of ELLs, or materials that did not support the state standards.

**Spanish-language materials.** In interviews, district coordinators generally considered Spanish-language materials sufficient to meet the needs of dual language and transitional bilingual programs that taught in Spanish, particularly for reading and math. At times this meant that students worked with comparable materials in both languages; other times, students used the school’s English-language curricular materials in English but used primary language support materials. Opinions varied about the appropriateness of the support materials. Some district staff complained about difficulties finding appropriate science and social studies materials in Spanish. They also noted that when programs were taught in two languages, but materials were not available in both languages, teachers ended up spending a great deal of time translating materials themselves.

Principals and teachers were overall fairly negative about Spanish-language materials they actually had in their schools. Most staff members in schools with bilingual programs, especially teachers and principals, thought their schools lacked adequate instructional materials in Spanish for the content areas (Table 2-3). Teachers who actually provided instruction in Spanish were the least likely to be satisfied with the curricular materials.

**Table 2-3  
Staff Perceptions of Spanish-Language Curricular Materials**

We have adequate instructional materials in Spanish for the content areas.	Consortium Schools			Grantee Schools		
	Disagree	Sometimes Disagree/ Sometimes Agree	Agree	Disagree	Sometimes Disagree/ Sometimes Agree	Agree
Principals	45%	45%	10%	66%	22%	11%
Specialists	34%	22%	44%	--	--	--
Teachers	37%	40%	23%	50%	45%	5%
Teachers instructing in Spanish	47%	40%	13%	[n/a]		

**Newcomer materials.** Schools found it very hard to locate appropriate materials for teaching such students.

*We struggle to find appropriate materials because students come in at all different levels. For example, we have fourth-grade students coming in with no prior education whatsoever. It's hard to find things that are developmentally appropriate and aren't too primary or babyish, which might negatively impact the students' learning. (District Coordinator)*

*There is a lack of research based curriculum for students who are that far behind. So we are making it up. And we probably are not using age-appropriate materials, but they are academically appropriate. (Superintendent)*

District coordinators indicated that programs tended to draw on materials from a variety of areas, including Spanish programs, the mainstream program, and supplemental materials, but the result was piecemeal rather than coordinated and well-planned.

One district coordinator, however, was encouraged about the use of online curricular materials. These included a computer assisted academy where students could get a diploma by participating in online coursework, as well as CONEVyT (*Consejo Nacional de Educacion para la Vida y Trabajo*) a rigorous online coursework in Spanish, which prepares older students to earn a Mexican diploma.

## **What research says: Schools and districts need a well-designed, coherent approach to educating their ELLs.**

The importance of a coherent approach to delivering programs has been demonstrated in both research on mainstream schools and dual language and other bilingual programs serving ELLs (Howard, Sugerman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary, & Rogers, 2007).

A coherent approach to serving the needs of ELLs across a district or school does not mean that all schools, teachers, and students experience the program in the same way. It does, however, demand that multiple, inter-related strategies are implemented and, that there are adequate resources allocated to each program. Coherence also requires that administrators, staff members, and families understand the program(s), how it works and what roles people play in it.

### **Current Practices**

In the consortium and grantee schools, staff members tended to agree that a coherent approach to working with ELLs existed within their school more often than across their district.

The extent to which staff members thought their *district* implemented a coordinated approach to working with ELLs was mixed; but overall, staff members in consortium schools were more positive than staff members in grantee schools (Table 2-4). One-third of principals in both consortium and grantee schools always agreed that there was a coherent approach; while 55 percent of consortium district coordinators always agreed, a much smaller proportion of district coordinators in grantee schools did (16%).

**Table 2-4**  
**Perceptions of the Coherence of Districts' Work with ELLs**

There is a coherent approach to working with ELLs within our district.	Consortium Schools			Grantee Schools		
	Disagree	Sometimes Disagree/ Sometimes Agree	Agree	Disagree	Sometimes Disagree/ Sometimes Agree	Agree
Principals	30%	37%	33%	50%	17%	33%
Specialists	9%	36%	55%	44%	40%	16%

Of the consortium districts, two implemented only one model (sheltered instruction). All the other districts implemented more than one program model to address the needs of the ELLs in the district, most often three different models. It is perhaps not surprising that coherence was a challenge in some places.

When people were asked about coherence *within their school*, there were still mixed views, but overall more positive than negative perceptions. Also overall, staff in grantee schools were slightly more positive than staff in consortium schools (Table 2-5).

**Table 2-5**  
**Perceptions of the Coherence of Schools' Work with ELLs**

There is a coherent approach to working with ELLs in our school.	Percentage of Respondents					
	Consortium Schools			Grantee Schools		
	Disagree	Sometimes Disagree/ Sometimes Agree	Agree	Disagree	Sometimes Disagree/ Sometimes Agree	Agree
Principals	26%	33%	41%	49%	9%	52%
Specialists	15%	28%	59%	16%	36%	48%
Teachers	24%	44%	34%	26%	35%	39%
Aides	17%	43%	41%	12%	35%	53%

Examining individual schools, a wide variety of opinions about program coherence was evident. While many schools had about a third of their teachers agreeing that their school's approach to working with ELLs was coherent, three schools stood out with especially positive opinions (where 66-82 percent of teachers agreed that their school's approach was coherent).

At the opposite end of the spectrum, there were six schools that had fewer than 20 percent of their teachers agreeing that their approach was coherent, and at one school, not a single teacher agreed. There were also seven schools (see Table 2-1) at which the principal either did not know what the school's program model was or reported that the school did not have one. At all of these schools, it would be helpful to clarify the approach with teachers, and if necessary, restructure the approach so that it makes sense to everyone in the school.

## CHAPTER 3: THE ROLE OF ELL SPECIALISTS

ELL specialists are teachers with specific responsibilities for assisting ELLs in the development of English language proficiency. Typically, there is one per building, when there are a large number of ELLs. Alternately, schools within a district might share a specialist across buildings. The majority of consortium and grantee schools employed ELL specialists; however, they used them in different ways. In grantee schools, ELL specialists were often shared across district schools, working part-time in more than one building, whereas in consortium schools, they tended to work full-time in one building.

ELL specialists had an average of eight years in their role. About two-thirds (65%) had a masters degree and/or held an ESL or bilingual endorsement. The ESL endorsement was more common than bilingual, and grantee specialists were much more likely to have it than consortium specialists.

Generally, superintendents were pleased with the way in which their ELL specialists were used within their district. They appreciated that their ELL specialists brought their qualifications to a number of their schools, provided coaching support to teachers, and helped to build teams of professionals who could meet the needs of their ELLs. However, at the building level, there was considerable confusion about the role of ELL specialists. As shown in Table 3-1, fewer than half of teachers said they understood the role of the ELL specialist.

**Table 3-1**  
**Teacher Understanding of ELL Specialists' Role**

"I understand the role of the ELL Specialist"	Percentage of Teachers Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing
Consortium Schools	43%
Grantee Schools	45%

Some discussion of roles and staffing was presented in Chapter 2: Program Models. This chapter explores the work of ELL specialists in greater detail, including ways in which they worked in buildings and their collaboration with school staff.

### **What research says: There are many ways that ELL specialists can work with classroom teachers.**

There are many different ways that ELL specialists may work with mainstream classroom teachers; no research to date has empirically compared the effectiveness of these uses of ELL specialists. Instead, most literature in this area describes ways in which ELL specialists and regular classroom teachers can work together (for example, see Genesee, 1999).

## Current Practices

Each of the ways in which ELL specialists worked in consortium and grantee schools is described below, in descending order of prevalence.

**(1) ELL specialists may provide sheltered instruction, combining English language development and content area instruction.** In sheltered instruction models, ELL specialists can instruct a content area class on their own or in partnership with a content area teacher. To ensure that students have both solid content and language development instruction, these ELL specialists should have content area expertise in addition to their English language development expertise, or they should partner with a teacher who has that content area expertise.

This was the most frequently used approach among those schools in the study; however, it was much more commonly used in consortium than grantee schools. Two-thirds of consortium specialists (67%) said this was part of their role, compared to only one-quarter (26%) of grantee specialists.

**(2) ELL specialists may supervise instructional aides, who lead work with students.** In this configuration, instructional aides provide all or most of the English language development instruction to ELLs, while an ELL specialist supervises their work, makes decisions about materials and activities, and may also provide professional development to instructional aides.

This was the second most frequently used approach among the schools in the study: 42 percent of consortium specialists and 56 percent of grantee specialists said this was part of their role.

Accordingly, the use of instructional aides to provide English language development to ELLs was very common: 25 percent of consortium aides and 40 percent of grantee aides said they were the primary providers of English language development to ELLs. Although there are many talented instructional aides, some of whom bring many resources to their positions (such as communication with the community and an understanding of the home languages and cultures of ELLs), this is an area of concern as they are not the most qualified staff, they have the least amount of training and, as reported in Chapter 4, receive very little professional development.

**(3) ELL specialists may provide “push-in” support within mainstream classrooms.** “Push-in” support is so-called to distinguish it from instances in which students are “pulled out” of the regular classroom. In this configuration, the ELL specialist comes into the mainstream classroom, either to provide small-group instruction to ELLs or, less commonly, as a permanent co-instructor in the classroom.

This was the third most frequently used approach among schools in the study, more common in grantee than consortium schools: 21 percent of consortium specialists and 44 percent of grantee specialists said this was part of their role.

**(4) ELL specialists may provide professional development to teachers, coaching and supporting them in meeting the needs of ELLs.** In this approach, teachers receive a basic introduction to the topic of ELL instruction and then receive ongoing help from ELL specialists who act as coaches, helping teachers implement what they learned within their classroom. Coaches can plan or co-teach lessons with teachers or model the instructional approaches

teachers are learning about. Sometimes they observe teachers and later provide constructive feedback. Although the use of coaches has grown exponentially in recent years and holds great promise, at present there are no rigorous studies which demonstrate the effectiveness of coaching compared to other approaches to teacher professional development or other uses of ELL specialists' time.

This was the fourth most frequently used approach among schools in the study, and much more common among grantees than the consortium. Just 17 percent of consortium specialists said this was part of their role, but almost half of the specialists (44%) in grantee schools said coaching was part of their job.

**(5) ELL specialists sometimes provide pull-out instruction for ELLs, but this is the least effective model of supporting English language development.** In schools that use a pull-out model, students are pulled out of their mainstream classrooms for one or more periods a day to work specifically on English language development. Pull-out support is accepted by OSPI for use only in sheltered instruction programs on a limited basis. This is because of all the program models to deliver instruction to ELLs, the pull-out model is the least effective (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Pull-out support is often not coordinated with instruction in the mainstream classroom; and it is sometimes focused on conversational English, rather than the academic English students need to succeed in school. Furthermore, often during the other periods of the day when students are not pulled out, instruction in the mainstream classrooms is not adapted in any way to accommodate ELLs' needs (Garcia & Godina, 2004).

This was not a frequently used approach. It was more common among grantee schools (33 percent of specialists said it was part of their role) than consortium schools (just 10 percent of specialists). Consortium and grantee specialists who primarily provided pull-out support usually did so in conjunction with one or two other roles.

However, pull-out support was provided in settings where it was not encouraged. Four of the fourteen specialists who provided pull-out support to ELLs worked in middle school settings, and three worked at schools that did not utilize the sheltered instruction model.

**(6) ELL specialists may direct or teach English language development in newcomer programs.** In this arrangement, ELL specialists work in newcomer programs to help build ELLs' beginning English language skills and core academic skills. They also might help new ELLs acculturate to the school system in the U.S. (Genessee, 1999). As newcomer programs are a fairly new phenomenon, little is known about their effectiveness, although they seem to address many of the diverse and complex needs of new immigrant students.

It was rare for consortium specialists to work in this role (6%), but more common for grantee specialists (30%). However, not all of the schools at which the specialists worked had newcomer programs, according to principal reports. Therefore these counts are likely an over-estimate, and while specialists might have worked with newcomers, it was not always in a formal newcomer center per se.

**What research says: Across all these roles, ELL specialists are most effective when time is protected for collaboration with classroom teachers and instructional aides.**

One theme that consistently emerged from a review of the literature is that ELLs are best served when time is protected so that ELL specialists and mainstream teachers can collaborate in meaningful ways to deliver coherent, supportive instruction (Davison, 2006; Garcia & Godina, 2004; Genesee, 1999; Thomas & Collier, 1997; York-Barr, Ghere, & Sommerness, 2007). Unfortunately, there is too often a lack of connection between what ELLs are taught in English language development and what they are taught in content or mainstream classrooms (Garcia & Godina, 2004). Collaboration between ELL specialists and mainstream teachers ensures that these two strands of ELLs’ instruction are connected rather than separated.

**Current Practices**

Despite a high value placed on collaboration by school and district staff, it did not occur as frequently as intended.

**Specialist/Teacher.** Districts expected ELL specialists and teachers work together on a regular basis both formally (during professional learning community time, early release time, collaboration time, content and grade-level meetings, and coaching) and informally.

However, as shown in Table 3-2, very few consortium or grantee teachers (16%) collaborated with the ELL specialist regularly, at least once a week. In fact, many said they *never* collaborated with the ELL specialist.

**Table 3-2  
Frequency of Collaboration with ELL Specialists, as Reported by Teachers**

	Percentage of Teachers	
	Never Collaborated with the ELL Specialist	Collaborated with the ELL Specialist at Least Once Per Week
Consortium Schools	36%	16%
Grantee Schools	19%	16%

Accordingly, very few specialists (19 percent of consortium specialists and 24 percent of grantee specialists) felt that their efforts were well-coordinated with classroom teachers. For their part, teachers also wanted more collaboration: 35 and 44 percent, respectively, wanted their specialist to work with them more often.

**Specialist/Aide.** Given the high use of aides in working with ELLs, it is important that specialists and aides have time to come together and coordinate instructional plans. However, time was often not formally reserved for collaboration between specialists and instructional aides. Accordingly, there was limited collaboration between teachers and instructional aides; just 10 percent of consortium aides and 30 percent of grantee aides conferred with the specialist at least once a week. A very large proportion (60 and 46 percent, respectively) *never* conferred with the specialist (Table 3-3).

**Table 3-3**  
**Frequency of Collaboration with ELL Specialists, as Reported by Aides**

	Percentage of Aides	
	Never Conferred with the ELL Specialist	Conferred with the ELL Specialist at Least Once Per Week
Consortium Schools	60%	10%
Grantee Schools	46%	30%

As with teachers, aides also wanted more collaboration with the specialist: 49 and 40 percent, respectively, wanted their specialist to work with them more often.

**Teacher/Aide.** Aides were somewhat more likely to collaborate with the teacher(s) (Table 3-4) of the ELLs with whom they worked than with specialists. Although this still was not the norm: just 33 percent of consortium aides and 28 percent of grantee aides said they conferred with mainstream teacher(s) at least once a week. Again, there was a surprising proportion of aides that *never* conferred with the teachers whose ELLs they worked with. For their part, most teachers (78 and 70 percent) did not feel that their efforts were well-coordinated with the ELL/bilingual aides.

**Table 3-4**  
**Frequency of Collaboration with Teachers, as Reported by Aides**

	Percentage of Aides	
	Never Conferred with Teacher(s)	Conferred with Teacher(s) at Least Once Per Week
Consortium Schools	41%	33%
Grantee Schools	24%	28%



## CHAPTER 4: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers are prepared for their careers during their pre-service education at colleges and universities. The honing of their skills occurs over many years, both on-the-job as they gain experience with students, and in professional development opportunities, where they learn new strategies and reflect on the effectiveness of their practice. Unfortunately, teacher pre-service programs only minimally prepare future teachers to work with ELLs (Menken & Antunez, 2001). It is therefore all the more essential that professional development help practicing teachers learn how to work effectively with ELLs.

### **What research says: Professional development should be focused on content and practices.**

Effective professional development for teachers focuses on *specific* subject-related content or pedagogic practices. It also may include *how* students learn that content. Research finds that teachers are more likely to change their practices when professional development has these characteristics (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoom, & Birman, 2002; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Yoon, 2001; Kennedy, 1998; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007).

The primary ELL-related professional development that teachers need is thorough training in their school's ELL program model (see Chapter 2 for more information about program models). In addition, *regardless of program model*, teachers need training in the content identified in our Year 1 report, *What Teachers Should Know About Instruction for English Language Learners* (Deussen et al., 2008). When distilled to the essentials, this includes:

1. The stages of language acquisition and how to provide comprehensible input
2. What academic language is and how to teach it
3. The importance of standards and how to make grade-level content accessible while students are learning English
4. Cultural awareness and how to build/activate ELLs' background knowledge
5. Assessment issues for ELLs and how to use testing accommodations

In November 2008, the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) recommended to the state legislature that these same five principles and their instructional implications become the basis of all ELL-related teacher pre-service and professional development in the state of Washington. This underscores the importance of training in these issues; while adjustments to pre-service requirements will have an impact on future graduates of these programs, there remain the current in-service professional development needs of legions of practicing teachers who work with ELLs.

## Current practices

Despite the focus of consortium administrators and the provision of funds to grantee districts, training in ELL-related issues is far from widespread:

- Just under half of teachers (50 percent of consortium teachers and 42 percent of grantee teachers) reported receiving no professional development in ELL issues in the past year
- About one-quarter of teachers (26 percent of consortium teachers and 22 percent of grantee teachers) reported having received no professional development in ELL issues over the past five years

Teachers are not the only staff members that work with ELLs. As reported in Chapter 3, a notable proportion of aides were responsible for providing English language development to ELLs. Despite this, aides were much less likely than teachers to receive any ELL-related professional development at all:

- The majority of aides (71 percent of consortium aides and 62 percent of grantee aides) reported receiving no professional development in ELL issues in the past year
- Many aides (52 percent of consortium aides and 41 percent of grantee aides) reported having received no professional development in ELL issues over the past five years

**Training in Program Model.** While many teachers have been trained in their school’s program model, this has not been thorough or comprehensive. Figure 4-1 presents the proportion of teachers who have received training in their school’s program model at any point during the past five school years (2004-2005 through 2008-2009).

At schools that use sheltered instruction:

- Most, but not all, teachers (71 percent of consortium teachers and 67 percent of grantee teachers) have received the abbreviated “introduction” to sheltered instruction<sup>2</sup>
- A much smaller proportion (41 of consortium teachers and 30 percent of grantee teachers) have received the full sheltered instruction training, at the intensity and duration recommended by the developers for implementation

At schools with dual language or bilingual programs:

- Many teachers who themselves provide bilingual instruction (47 percent of consortium teachers and 100 percent of grantee teachers) received training in this model
- Few teachers who do not provide bilingual instruction, but work at schools that have bilingual programs (22 percent of consortium teachers and 13 percent of grantee teachers) received training in this model

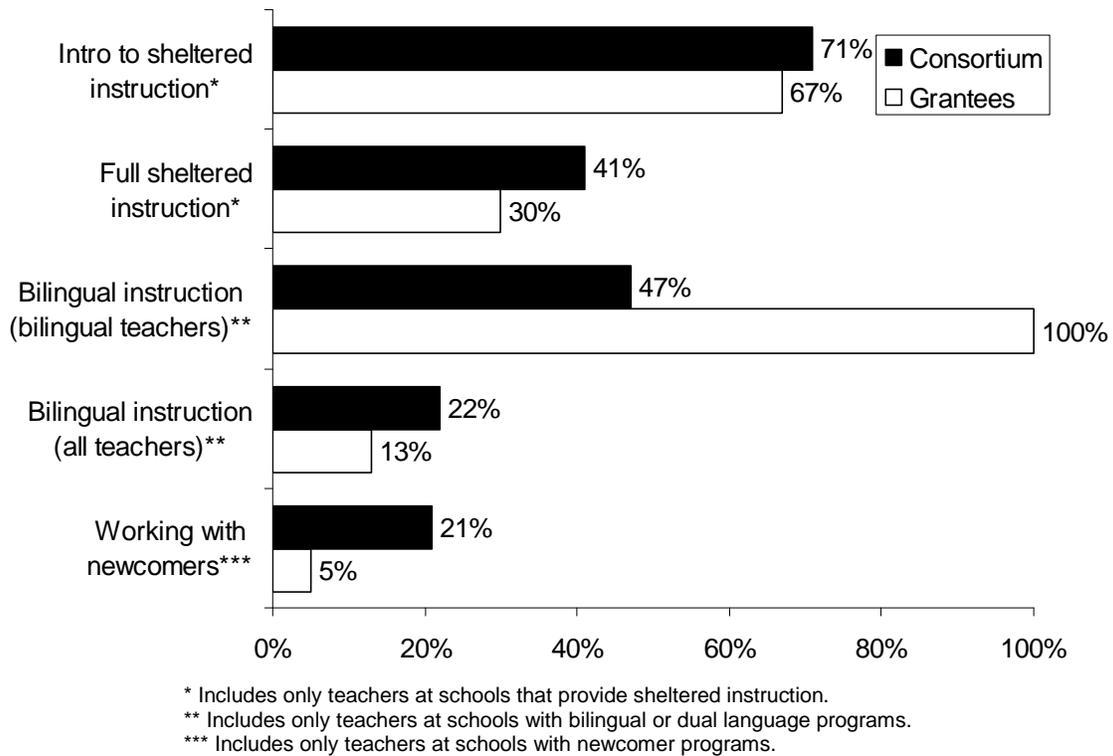
It is much more challenging to calculate the proportion of teachers that should have training in working with newcomers, since there tend to be one or two newcomer classrooms within a

---

<sup>2</sup> Full SIOP or Project GLAD training involves multiple days and sessions led by a certified trainer; this is the approach recommended by the developers and the research base for the best possible classroom-level implementation. In an effort to reduce the time and financial investments necessary to fully implement sheltered instruction models, some districts and schools offer abbreviated versions of SIOP or Project GLAD trainings; these are typically provided by a school or district staff member rather than an externally hired trainer. It is not likely that these abbreviated versions are as effective as the longer, focused training.

school that also contains other program models. This explains why figures for training teachers in newcomer programs were very low. At schools with newcomer programs, over the past five years, 21 percent of consortium teachers and 5 percent of grantee teachers have been trained in working with newcomers. Figure 4-1 summarizes these findings.

**Figure 4-1**



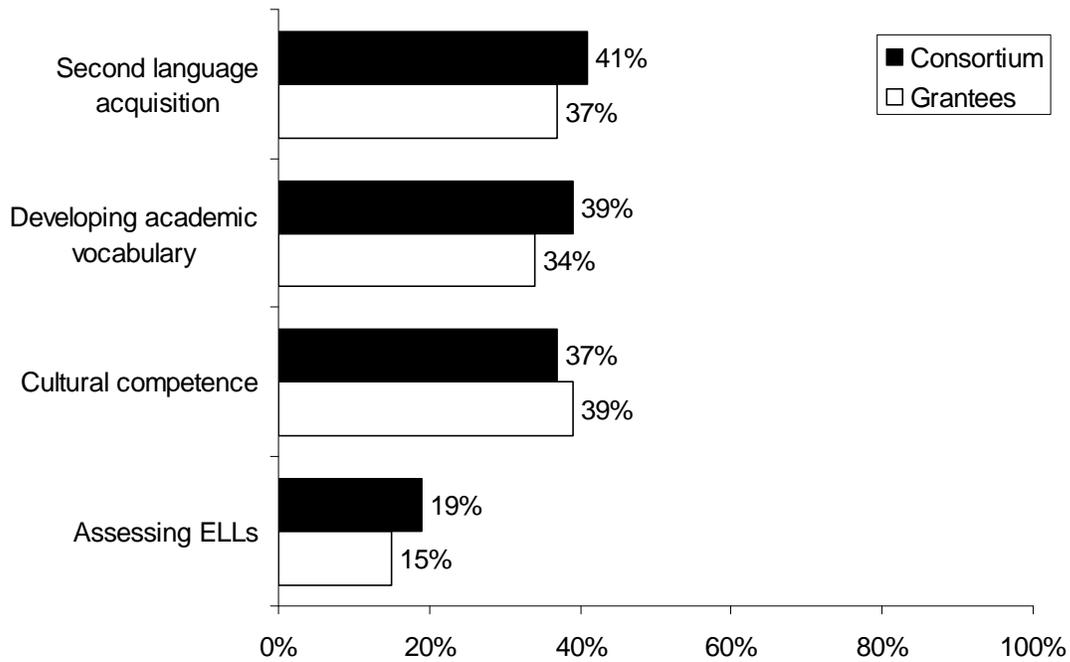
**Percentage of Teachers Receiving Training in School’s Program Model – Past Five Years**

The provision of high-quality and appropriate professional development in ELL-related issues, however, does not occur in a vacuum. In interviews, district representatives discussed their efforts to train all teachers in their chosen program model. However, they encountered very real challenges to doing so, including: staff turnover (investing training dollars in new staff who soon move on to more “desirable” posts), competition with other professional development needs (spending seven days on sheltered instruction training means there are no other days for a teacher to be trained in, for example, the new math curriculum), and budget limitations.

**Training in the five principles and implications.** Beyond training in their school’s ELL instructional model, there are many other things teachers need to know about working with ELLs. The data show that most teachers had not received training over the past five years in the key five areas described above that are recommended by research, the Deussen et al. report, and the Washington PESB. As shown in Figure 4-2, most common were training in second language

acquisition, academic language<sup>3</sup>, and cultural competence; however, still fewer than half of teachers attended such training. Far less common was training in assessment for ELLs; fewer than 20 percent of teachers said they had received such training over the past five years.

**Figure 4-2**



**Percentage of Teachers Receiving ELL Training – Past Five Years**

**What research says: Professional development should be ongoing, of sufficient duration, and include active engagement.**

Researchers agree that it is important for professional development to be of sufficient duration. This refers both to the total number of hours spent on the topic as well as the time over which the professional development is spread (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Fullan, 1993). Professional development that is offered over a longer duration tends to have more of an impact than workshops that are short and have no follow-up. There remains some debate among researchers about how many hours, but 14 contact hours appears to be a minimum, and some research suggests it is better to spread training and follow-up activities over the course of at least a semester (Desimone, 2009, Yoon et al., 2007).

<sup>3</sup> The proportion of teachers who claimed training in academic language is likely inflated, as this item appeared as “academic vocabulary” on the survey, which may have prompted teachers who had *any* vocabulary training to respond yes. Additionally, academic language is a topic in which few teachers have received training, and we know from conversations with teachers that many of them are unclear about its meaning.

There is also a consensus among researchers that professional development should provide many opportunities for teachers to be actively engaged in learning (Banilower & Shimkus, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Yoon, et al., 2007). This might include observing expert teachers, being coached through observations and constructive feedback, or reviewing student work. Workshops and institutes that included these active learning opportunities were found to be particularly effective (Yoon et al, 2007). On the other hand, “sit and get” style professional development, such as listening to lectures and presentations, does not constitute active learning.

### **Current practices**

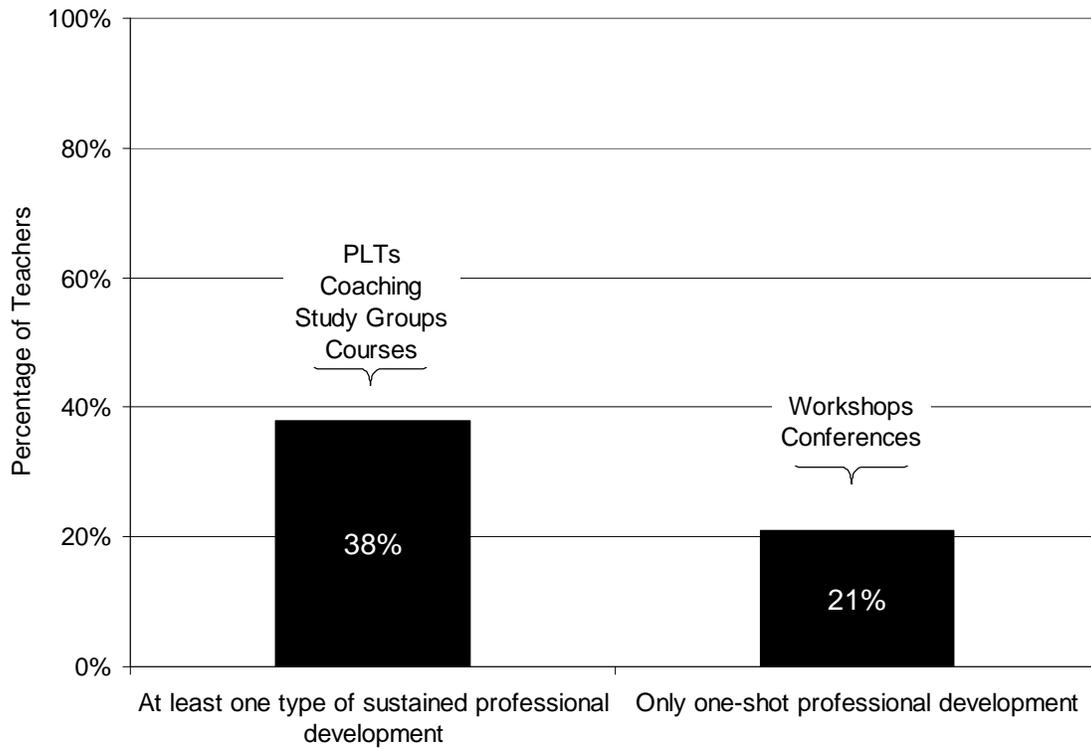
There is evidence that some, but not all, professional development in ELL instruction for teachers met these standards set by research. In the past year (2008-2009), 38 percent of teachers received training in ELL-related issues that can be considered sustained, ongoing and/or interactive (see Figure 4-3). In decreasing order of prevalence, this included participation in professional learning teams (PLTs), coaching, college/university courses, and study groups.

- PLTs are small groups of teachers that meet for 60-90 minutes on a weekly or biweekly basis to read and discuss research and best practices. Together, they try out new instructional strategies and share their successes and challenges.
- Coaching included observations, feedback, modeling, or co-planning. Some schools used their reading or instructional coaches specifically for ELL purposes; others had trained SIOP coaches. In addition, some ELL specialists (18 percent of consortium specialists and 44 percent of grantee specialists) provided coaching to mainstream teachers in instruction for ELLs to teachers; however, this was not their primary role.

Twenty-one percent of all teachers attended training that consisted solely of in-service workshops and/or conference attendance. While these may have been sustained and built upon each other, they are equally if not more likely to be one-shot occurrences.

Another factor that points to room for improvement in this area is the popularity of the abbreviated “introduction” to sheltered instruction, compared to the full training, described earlier. It was far more common for teachers to attend an abbreviated version of this training than the more intensive and ongoing course recommended by the developers. Moreover, some teachers (15 percent of those in buildings with sheltered instruction programs) attended an introductory session more than once.

**Figure 4-3**



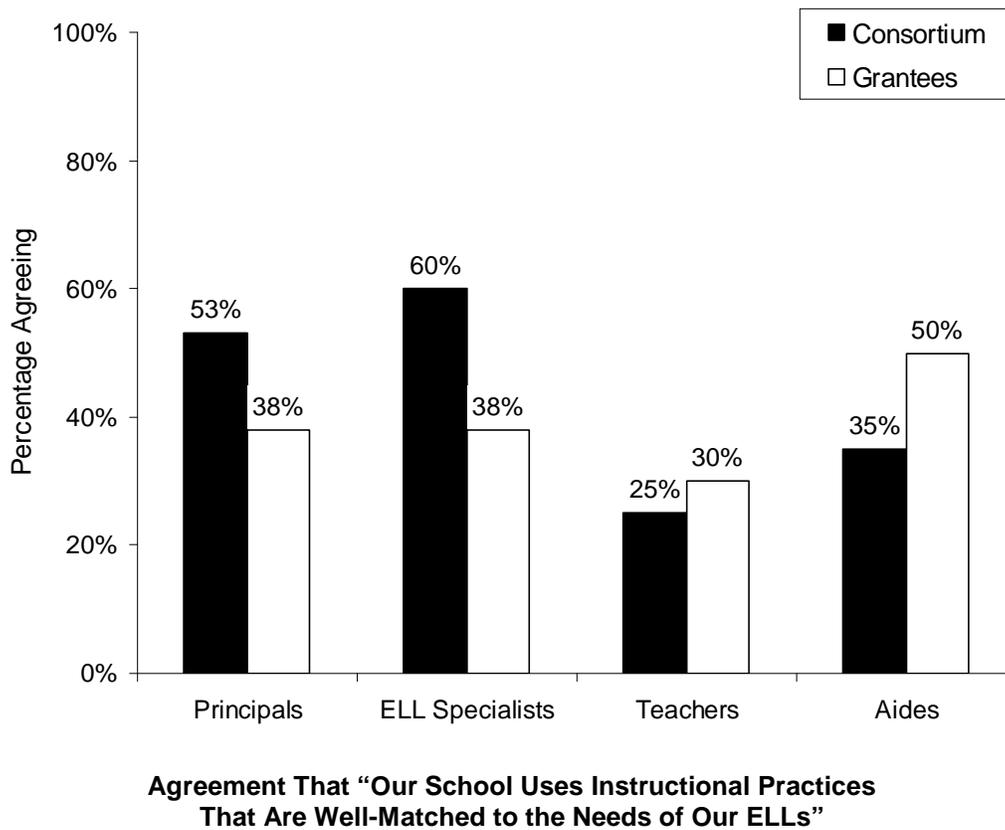
**ELL-Related Professional Development Delivery Mechanisms 2008-2009**

## CHAPTER 5: INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

All students need good instruction to help them meet state performance standards; ELLs are no exception. The difference for ELLs is that they need both “regular” good instruction *and* additional modifications and supplements; these modifications help ensure that they develop English language proficiency and have access to academic content even before that proficiency is fully developed.

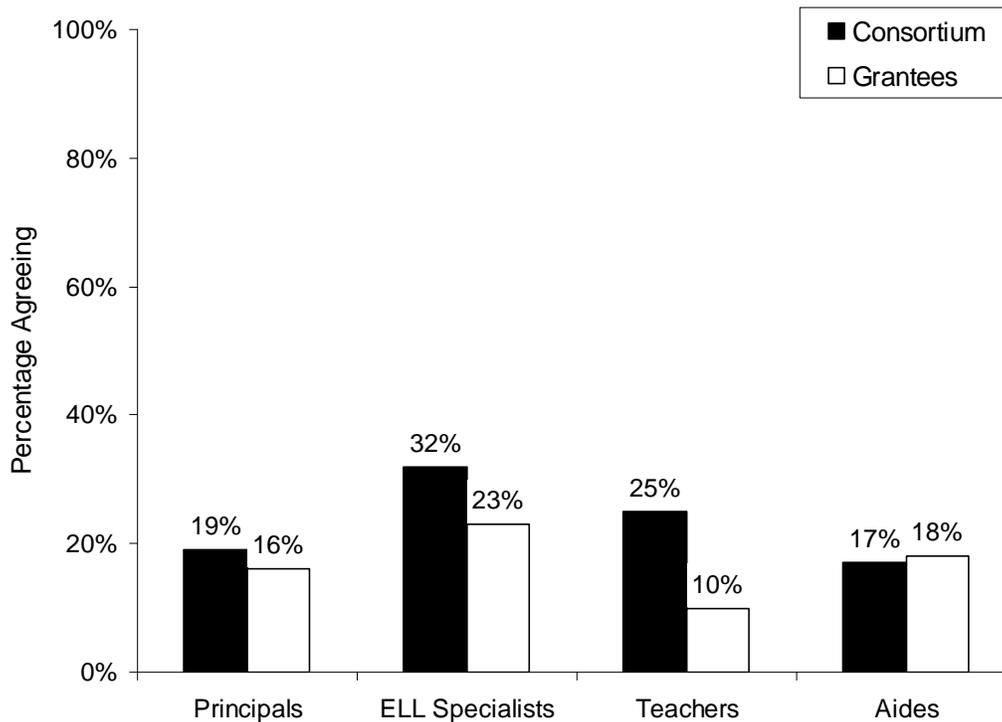
Many educators surveyed in this study believed that their schools used instructional practices that were well-matched to the needs of ELLs (Figure 5-1)—although mainstream classroom teachers were the least convinced that this was the case.

**Figure 5-1**



At the same time, few believed that this was enough to expect ELLs to meet state standards (Figure 5-2). Only between 10 and 32 percent of educators in this study felt it was realistic to hold ELLs to the same content area standards as native English-speakers. This is consistent with other research that has found that teachers do not always believe that ELLs can meet high standards (Callahan, 2005).

**Figure 5-2**



**Agreement That “It is Realistic to Hold ELLs to the Same State Content Standards as Native English-Speakers”**

The perception that it is unrealistic to expect ELLs to meet state standards does not necessarily indicate that educators believe ELLs cannot learn, but rather that they recognize that meeting state standards can be hard for many native English-speakers, and that is it much more challenging to do so while learning English, particularly in a short period of time. Educators also do not feel that they currently have all of the necessary tools to make it happen.

The good news is that there *are* tools—instructional strategies—that have been shown to make a difference for ELLs. The specifics of what research says about what instruction should look like were laid out in the first year report of this project, *What Teachers Should Know About Instruction for English Language Learners* (Deussen et al., 2008). This chapter takes those overall findings and examines the degree to which the schools in this study provided the kind of instruction for ELLs described in that report and supported by research.

Professional development recommendations stemming from these findings are provided in Chapter 8: Recommendations. It is important to note the topics and strategies outlined in this chapter are not a series of separate topics each requiring a separate training. Rather, the strategies are intertwined and the use of one often supports the use of another. Since in some schools or at some grade levels, teachers are more comfortable and experienced with certain strategies than with others, professional development should always be differentiated to match the experience of teachers and needs of students at particular schools.

## What research says: Teachers should scaffold their instruction and assignments.

In construction, a scaffold is a temporary frame to support people and materials as a building goes up. In education, scaffolding refers to temporary supports to students so that they can still participate in class even while they are developing skills, or in the case of ELLs, developing English language proficiency. As students gain confidence in their new skills, teachers reduce the scaffolding and allow students to do more on their own; this is known as the gradual release of responsibility from the teacher to the student.

There are multiple ways that teachers can scaffold learning for ELLs, including:

- Explaining ideas in vocabulary that ELLs already recognize
- Providing pictures or objects to convey ideas
- Modeling (demonstrating) how to do something
- Completing part of the task with the students but allowing them to take the final steps on their own
- Adapting text to take out extraneous material so ELLs can focus on what is most important

In fact, scaffolding is a common tool in education that teachers use at one time or another with *all* students who are developing a new skill. The difference with ELLs is that the scaffolds are primarily linguistic and may be needed more often.

One concern that arises with the use of scaffolded instruction or adapted materials is that teachers, in their concern for the challenges ELLs face, will reduce their expectations. Previous research has found that teachers often ask ELLs less demanding questions, reduce their assignments and/or provide overly simplified lessons (Verplaetse, 1998). In the long run, this offers ELLs a less rigorous education that does not provide sufficient preparation for work or post-secondary education.

### Current Practices

Asked how comfortable they felt scaffolding instruction, more than half of teachers said they were comfortable (Table 5-1), and even more said they were comfortable modeling. In observations of instructional practices in consortium schools, 38 percent of observed lessons included clear scaffolding, most commonly at the elementary level. Although secondary teachers reported that they were comfortable scaffolding instruction, observers did not see this very often at the secondary level.

**Table 5-1**  
**Teachers' Self-Reported Comfort with Instructional Strategies to Scaffold Instruction**

"I am comfortable using..."	Percentage of Teachers	
	Consortium Schools	Grantee Schools
Scaffolding	57%	66%
Modeling	73%	84%

Adapted text appeared to be a less common way to scaffold instruction, as fewer than a third of teachers said they “usually” or “always” did this (Table 5-2). In addition, there were other teachers who “sometimes” did this (33% in consortium schools and 44% in grantee schools). Middle school teachers were the most likely to say they adapted text for their ELLs.

**Table 5-2  
Teachers’ Self-Reported Adaptation of Text for ELLs**

“How often do you modify text for ELLs in content area classes?”	Percentage of Teachers	
	“Never”	“Usually” or “Always”
Consortium teachers	18%	23%
Grantee teachers	8%	31%

The simplification or reduction of coursework for ELLs occurred in most classrooms, although in general, not “usually” or “always” (Table 5-3). This might be appropriate for some newcomer ELLs, but, in general, these are methods of scaffolding that too easily translate into watered-down curriculum and lowered expectations for ELLs.

**Table 5-3  
Teachers’ Self-Reported Simplification or Reduction of Coursework for ELLs**

“How often do you... simplify coursework for ELLs?”	Percentage of Teachers	
	“Never”	“Usually” or “Always”
Consortium teachers	9%	26%
Grantee teachers	4%	36%
<b>lessen the quantity of coursework for ELLs?”</b>		
Consortium teachers	15%	18%
Grantee teachers	6%	24%

### **What research says: Teachers should provide multiple representations of concepts.**

“Multiple representations of concepts” simply means that it helps ELLs’ comprehension when the ideas they are learning about are not only explained in spoken or written words, but also demonstrated or displayed in nonverbal ways. These might include diagrams; timelines; real-life objects or photographs of them; blocks, tiles, and beans; or models that students can manipulate to help their learning.

#### **Current Practices**

About three-quarters of teachers reported on surveys that they felt comfortable using techniques such as graphic organizers, realia (real-life objects) and manipulatives; this was less true, however, of secondary teachers from consortium schools than of other teachers. (Table 5-4)

**Table 5-4**  
**Teachers’ Self-Reported Comfort with Instructional Strategies to**  
**Provide Students with Multiple Representations of Concepts**

“I am comfortable using...”	Percentage of Teachers	
	Consortium Schools	Grantee Schools
Graphic organizers	70%	72%
Realia	68%	81%
Manipulatives	75%	84%

Observations of a subset of classrooms in consortium schools found that hands-on materials or manipulatives were used in almost half the lessons (45%), but much more often in elementary than in secondary schools.

**What research says: Teachers should promote structured and supportive student interaction.**

All students learn from interacting with their peers and their teachers; interaction helps them develop social skills and abilities, organize their thoughts, and develop rational arguments. For ELLs, interactive approaches are an especially valuable addition to other types of instruction. Interactive strategies provide ELLs with important opportunities to practice speaking and listening about academic topics. To be educationally beneficial, however, interaction should not consist of random conversation, but rather should be structured and organized around academic tasks.

There are a variety of forms that structured interaction can take. For example, a teacher might partner a stronger reader with a weaker reader and have the two read a story together, alternating pages. Alternatively, students might work in small groups with specific assigned roles (time keeper, facilitator, vocabulary expert, etc.)—this is known as cooperative learning. Conversations around open-ended questions (what are the most fundamental rights in a democracy, and why?) are valuable, as are inquiry-based approaches to learning, in which students pose questions, and then plan and conduct investigations. All of these forms have been shown to be beneficial to ELLs.

**Current Practices**

Most teachers at both consortium and grantee schools said they felt comfortable using several strategies to promote structured and supportive student interaction (Table 5-5). In particular, they were comfortable with small group work and cooperative learning.

**Table 5-5  
Teachers' Self-Reported Comfort with Instructional Strategies to  
Promote Structured and Supportive Student Interaction**

"I am comfortable using..."	Percentage of Teachers	
	Consortium Schools	Grantee Schools
Small group work	83%	88%
Cooperative learning	81%	87%
Inquiry-based methods	55%	64%

While teachers' comfort level with important strategies such as cooperative learning was generally high, a few schools had many teachers who were not fully comfortable with cooperative learning.

Observations of classrooms at a subset of the consortium schools, observers saw student interaction and discussion occurring in about half (53%) of observed lessons at consortium schools, at all grade levels. Given that these are strategies most teachers are already familiar with and that they are very helpful to *all* students, not only ELLs, it might be helpful (and comparatively easy) to encourage even more use of these methods.

### **What research says: Teachers should provide explicit instruction in the use of academic language.**

Professionals in the field of second language acquisition make a distinction between conversational and academic language. Conversational language is used in face-to-face interactions where meaning can often be inferred, in part, from contextual cues. This is the type of language children use to communicate with each other on the playground and, informally, within the classroom.

Academic language, in contrast, is the language students must use to participate in content-rich discourse. It demands a more complex and specific vocabulary, as well as different sentence structures (Cummins, 1984; Scarcella 2003). Academic language tends to depend less on context and rely instead on very precise references.

Students need academic language in order to read abstracts, to pull out the main ideas from lectures, to write critiques and summaries, to read or create annotated bibliographies, and to speak and write using the appropriate vocabulary and constructions typical of each discipline. Acquiring this necessary academic language may take about five to seven years (Cummins, 1984), though this estimate varies a great deal depending on the context in which students live and study (Scarcella, 2003).

Students can be taught common features of academic language (Scarcella, 2003). Some features, such as the passive voice and how to use verb tense in conditional clauses may be best taught by language arts or ELL specialists. But there are many other features of academic language that should be taught by all teachers, regardless of their subject area:

- How to structure arguments in term papers
- How to use quotations
- How to switch verb tenses effectively
- How to condense arguments
- What exactly is expected in a paper
- Discipline-specific conventions for writing
- How to present alternative perspectives

### Current Practices

Overall, about half of consortium teachers (54%) and two-thirds of grantee teachers (62%) said they were comfortable providing explicit instruction in academic language for their ELLs (Table 5-6). High school teachers from consortium schools were less likely to be comfortable using this strategy than other teachers in the study.

**Table 5-6**  
**Teachers’ Self-Reported Comfort with Explicit Instruction in Academic Language**

“I am comfortable using...”	Percentage of Teachers	
	Consortium Schools	Grantee Schools
Explicit instruction in academic language	54%	62%

In this area as in so many others, there was substantial variation by school. At a few schools, more than 80 percent of teachers reported feeling comfortable teaching academic language, while at 10 other schools, fewer than 40 percent were (and at one school with twelve teachers, only one teacher was comfortable with academic language). Where teachers are not comfortable with or knowledgeable about academic language, this is an important topic for professional development. This is especially true because proficiency with academic language is important not only for the success of ELLs, but also contributes to effective adolescent literacy instruction for *all* students, carrying over to success across content areas (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Nationwide, low adolescent literacy is considered the single largest impediment to high school graduation (Frost, 2003), so a focus on academic language can contribute to overall efforts to reduce the number of high school dropouts.

### What research says: Teachers should provide multi-faceted and intensive vocabulary instruction with a focus on academically useful words.

Students learning English face a vast vocabulary challenge. Not only do they enter the classroom knowing fewer words than native English speakers, but they also know less about their meanings and the contexts in which it may be appropriate to use a word.

Multi-faceted, intensive vocabulary development can help ELLs overcome this gap. This involves explicit instruction of vocabulary beyond what is provided in the regular classroom, greatly accelerating the number of words students learn.

Of course, teachers can not directly teach the thousands of words that students need to know. For that reason, leading researchers propose other strategies that teachers should also use to ensure their ELLs are in a good position to learn vocabulary indirectly from their environment:

- Teaching word analysis
- Providing rich language experiences through discussions, read-alouds (in the primary grades) and wide and frequent reading for students in the upper grades
- Providing multiple exposures to the same words
- Teaching word learning strategies (knowledge of word parts, dictionary use, etc.)
- Fostering an awareness of, and interest in, words and their meanings
- Teaching students about multiple meanings of the same words
- Working with cognates, or words across two languages that descend from the same, recognizable root

Since there are so many words to teach, teachers sometimes struggle selecting which ones to focus on. There is a growing awareness among ELL researchers that a focus on high-frequency, general academic words benefits students (Hiebert, 2008; Snow, 2008). These are words that are useful to students across content areas and are not often part of more informal conversations (words such as locate, maintain, quantify).

### Current Practices

On surveys, about half of consortium (44%) and grantee teachers (51%) said they were comfortable providing multi-faceted and intensive vocabulary instruction for ELLs. In both consortium and grantee schools, elementary teachers expressed a higher level of comfort providing this instruction (Table 5-7).

**Table 5-7  
Teachers’ Self-Reported Comfort with Multi-Faceted and Intensive Vocabulary Instruction**

“I am comfortable providing multi-faceted and intensive vocabulary instruction.”	Percentage of Teachers	
	Consortium Schools	Grantee Schools
Elementary Teachers	46%	57%
Middle & High School Teachers	28%	44%

Of all the various strategies reviewed in this chapter, the explicit teaching of academic language had probably the highest level of variation across schools. At some schools, 80 percent of teachers were comfortable with the idea, while at seven, not even a quarter of teachers were.

Furthermore, during observed lessons, key vocabulary was emphasized – i.e. introduced, written, repeated, highlighted and called attention to – in just 38 percent of lessons at consortium schools. This was somewhat more prevalent in elementary (41%) and middle school (45%) than high school (30%) settings. Comprehensive review of key vocabulary was even less common: about one-third (31%) of observed lessons at consortium schools included this work.

## What research says: In English-language instructional settings, teachers should permit and promote primary language supports.

When schools provide their instructional program in English, students can still benefit from the use of their primary language. Sometimes teachers believe that students will learn faster if forced to speak English only, but existing evidence shows that this is not true (Goldenberg, 2008). In fact, teachers can help students understand better when they permit and promote the use of their primary language as a support, in a number of ways:

- Repetition of directions or clarification in students' primary language during or after class
- Providing a "preview" of a lesson (for example, the main story line of a play they will later read) in their primary language
- Offering translations of individual words
- Permitting students to use their primary language to write about or discuss concepts

Even when teachers do not know students' primary language, they can still promote this support by:

- Having an aide or volunteer repeat or clarify directions
- Allowing students to read texts in translation
- Providing dictionaries
- Encouraging collaboration with other students who speak the same language

### Current Practices

For the most part, teachers recognized the potential benefit of students' primary language. Only a few teachers (17%) thought that ELLs should avoid using their primary language in the classroom; however, an additional 29 percent were unsure.

Use of students' primary language in the classroom was far more common in consortium schools, where Spanish was the primary language of nearly all ELLs. In grantee schools, where ELLs came from a range of language backgrounds, the use of students' primary language for instruction or support was much rarer (Table 5-8).

**Table 5-8**  
**Use of Students' Primary Language in the Classroom**

	Percentage of Respondents Using Students' Primary Language (Usually Combined with English)	
	Consortium Schools	Grantee Schools
Classroom teachers	33%	4%
Instructional aides	53%	3%
ELL specialists	65%	11%

## **What research says: Teachers should help ELLs bridge cultural differences between school and home.**

Many ELLs come from cultural backgrounds that are quite different from those of their teachers and those assumed by developers of curricular materials. Sometimes cultural differences mean that students behave in ways that are appropriate in their home culture (such as automatically deferring to authority and not asking questions), but not appropriate in some classroom situations. Other times students do not understand the background references that are presumed in textbooks.

Cultural incompatibility between school and their life at home can lead ELLs to disengage, which in turn can adversely affect their performance (Lee & Luykx, 2006).

Teachers can help students bridge cultural differences in a number of ways:

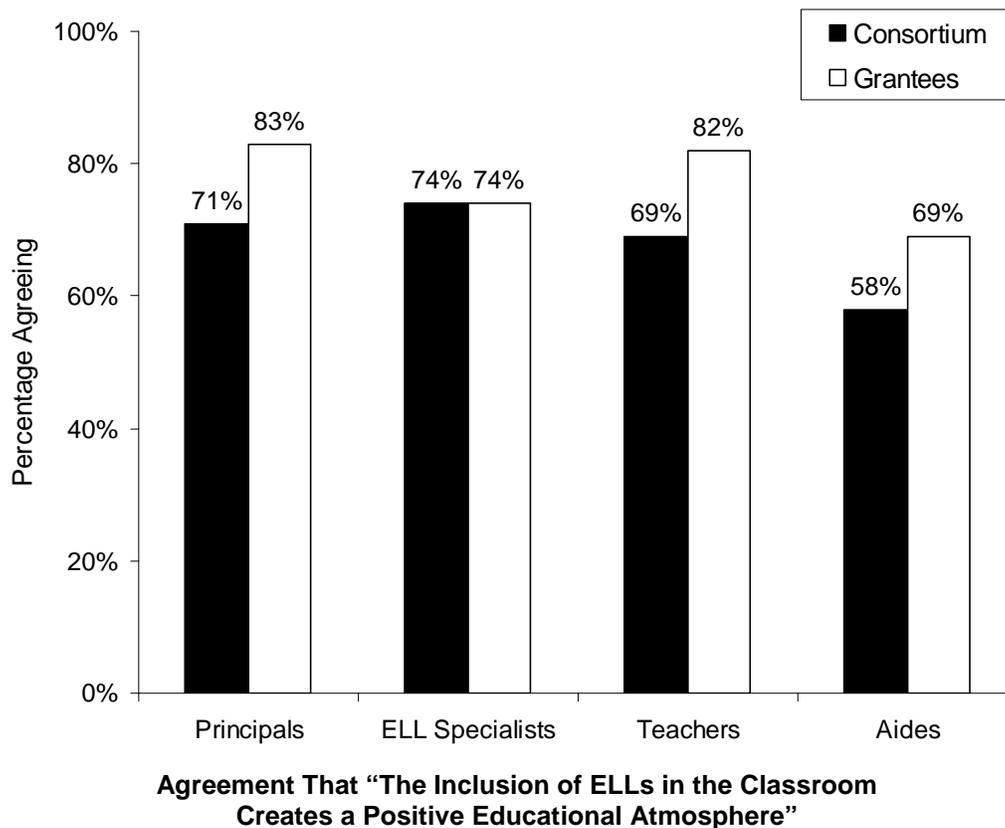
- Recognize the resources their ELLs bring to the classroom, instead of only seeing what they are lacking
- Build ELLs' abilities to work collaboratively, use their observation skills and tap into their desire to learn from those with expert knowledge
- Make the norms and expectations of the classroom clear and explicit
- Use culturally-relevant and culturally familiar texts
- Draw on examples and analogies from ELLs' lives, and incorporate perspectives from multiple cultures

### **Current Status**

**Recognition of the contribution of ELLs to the classroom.** The degree to which school staff members believe that the inclusion of ELLs in the classroom creates a positive educational atmosphere is one way of measuring teachers' recognition of what ELLs bring to the classroom.

As can be seen in Figure 5-3, a majority of all staff members in consortium and grantee schools believe that the inclusion of ELLs creates a positive atmosphere. Teachers and principals in the grantee schools were the most likely to believe this, while aides in the consortium schools were the least likely.

Figure 5-3



**Building collaboration.** As noted earlier in this chapter, most teachers express confidence in their ability to use teaching strategies that require students to collaborate in structured and supportive ways. Observers also saw student collaboration in about half of classrooms. Given that collaborative learning is beneficial to all students (Kagen, 1993), it might be helpful to have these approaches occur even more often.

**Making the norms and expectations of the classroom clear and explicit.** On surveys, most teachers (85%) reported that they had explained their classroom’s behavior and participation expectations to their ELLs; it is not possible to know from the surveys, however, whether these explanations were sufficient or effective.

During the observations at consortium schools, observers viewed clear explanations of specific academic tasks in two-thirds (68%) of all classrooms, more often in elementary (75%) and middle school (71%), than in high school settings (57%). This still left a substantial number of classrooms in which the academic tasks at hand were not necessarily clearly explained.

**Using culturally-relevant and culturally familiar texts.** Incorporation of culturally-relevant materials and the recognition of different cultural perspectives are themes threaded throughout Washington state’s standards (Grade Level Expectations, or GLEs, and Essential Academic

Learning Requirements, or EALRs). This holds true across content areas and grade levels. We do not know, however, to what extent this is implemented in the classroom.

**Linking concepts to students’ background knowledge.** Activating existing background knowledge can be done using strategies such as leading students to make connections between texts and their own experience and asking students to draw from earlier readings or past learning in order to link to new material. In addition, teachers can identify vocabulary that helps students recognize what they do know about the topic, though perhaps in another language.

During observations at consortium schools, teachers explicitly linked concepts to students’ background experiences in about one-third of lessons (32%), and this did not vary across grade levels. More common was the linking of past learning with new concepts, seen in half of observed lessons (49%) at consortium schools. This was slightly more prevalent in middle school (57%) than elementary (47%) or high school (45%) settings.

Despite the relatively low frequency of observation of these strategies during lessons, teachers reported high levels of comfort with their use (Table 5-9). The majority said they were comfortable activating background knowledge (63 percent of consortium teachers and 70 percent of grantee teachers) and activating prior learning (64 percent and 70 percent, respectively).

**Table 5-9  
Teachers’ Self-Reported Comfort with Instructional Strategies to  
Activate Background Knowledge and Prior Learning**

“I am comfortable with...”	Percentage of Teachers	
	Consortium Schools	Grantee Schools
Activation of background knowledge	63%	70%
Activation of prior learning	64%	70%

Once again, there was substantial variation by school on these measures. Since teachers are already aware of strategies to activate background knowledge and many are comfortable with them, it might be comparatively easy to increase usage of these strategies.

### **What research says: When ELLs are instructed in English, teachers should integrate instruction in language and content.**

Because it can take students five to seven years to become fully proficient in English, ELLs clearly cannot wait until they are fully proficient in English to develop their content knowledge. As noted in Chapter 2 - Program Models, sheltered instruction or content-based English as a second language (ESL) is a promising approach to combining instruction in content with the development of English.

#### **Current Status**

A little less than half of teachers reported on surveys that they were comfortable integrating language and content instruction (Table 5-10): 46 percent of consortium teachers and 49 percent of grantee teachers. This did not vary by content area. However, high school teachers (41%) had lower levels of comfort than elementary or middle school teachers.

Again, teacher comfort varied a great deal across schools. At six schools, including schools with a substantial population of ELLs, fewer than 25 percent of teachers said they were comfortable with this.

**Table 5-10**  
**Teachers’ Self-Reported Comfort with Instructional Strategies to Integrate Language and Content Instruction**

“I am comfortable with the integration of language and content instruction.”	Percentage of Teachers	
	Consortium Schools	Grantee Schools
All teachers who teach in English	46%	49%

### **What research says: Use data to identify, place, and monitor the progress of ELLs.**

The creation of comprehensive assessment systems and thoughtful use of data to improve instruction is important for all students. In addition, there are particular implications for ELLs in this area. These include:

- **Using valid and reliable identification assessments.** Tests that identify students as eligible for TBIP services should be valid and reliable, meaning they should provide accurate and consistent results.
- **Using testing accommodations when appropriate.** Testing accommodations are changes to the test administration procedures, such as the amount of time allocated for responses, the use of special equipment or materials, or the place where the test is taken. They are particularly useful for ELLs because ELLs may know more than they are able to demonstrate on conventional written tests; these tests inevitably measure language as well as content (Abedi, Lord & Hofstetter, 1998; Abedi, Lord, Hofstetter & Baker, 2000; Abedi, Lord & Plummer, 1997; Pennock-Roman, 2007).

### **Current Practices**

**Using valid and reliable identification assessments.** In Washington, ELLs are identified through a multi-step process. When students first register for school, their parents are asked if the family speaks a language other than English at home. If so, the students are assessed for their proficiency in English, using the WLPT-II.<sup>4</sup> The test yields scores between 1 and 4; students who score below a 4 on the assessment are eligible for services from TBIP to support their English language development.

<sup>4</sup> Note that there are two versions of the WLPT-II: one for the initial identification of ELLs, and another to monitor their English language development once each year.

Like other assessments that have important consequences for students, assessments for identifications purposes should be of high quality (WestEd Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center, 2009); that is, they should have:

- Validity and reliability (providing accurate and consistent results)
- Freedom from bias and sensitivity issues (respecting cultural differences)
- Good utility (making them easy to interpret and use)

The WLPT-II was built upon a previously established exam<sup>5</sup>, with additional items added by OSPI. Although a psychometric study found that the addition of these items did not affect the test's validity (Lee, 2007), there have remained concerns in the field about some of its characteristics. Judgments about the validity or reliability of the WLPT-II were beyond the scope of this study. However, OSPI is currently leading a five-state effort (Idaho, Indiana, Montana, Oregon, and Washington) to create a framework for systematically evaluating the validity of ELL assessments; this work was scheduled to begin in September 2009 (Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2009).

All districts and schools included in this study reported using the WLPT-II to determine eligibility for TBIP services, as intended. The one concern that emerged was the use, in some schools and districts, of WLPT-II data to inform instructional decisions. While the WLPT-II can provide information about students' *overall* proficiency, it does not provide specific information about students' relative strengths and weaknesses (that is, it is not a diagnostic assessment). It is not meant to guide teachers' decisions about what should be covered in instruction. Nevertheless, many educators – particularly ELL specialists – attempted to use the WLPT-II results to shape instruction. The tendency of specialists to reach beyond the purpose of the test may be indicative of the urgent need for assessments that provide data that *can* inform instruction for ELLs.

**Using testing accommodations when appropriate.** The study found that accommodations were widely used with ELLs in consortium and grantee schools. However, sometimes ELLs did not have enough time to practice using them, particularly those that they were to use on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL).

Three accommodations stood out as most widely used:

- Directions read in English (92 percent of teachers used at least sometimes)
- Extended time to complete an assessment (89%)
- Use of simplified English (85%)

In addition, there was common use of:

- Breaks offered between testing sessions (68%)
- Using gestures to supplement oral instructions (66%)
- Use of English-language dictionaries or glossaries (64%)
- Use of graphical representations (64%)

---

<sup>5</sup> The Stanford English Language Proficiency test (SELP).

Other accommodations were more rarely used; in particular, the use of primary language for testing was uncommon, especially in grantee schools where students come from multiple language backgrounds.

If accommodations are available to ELLs during state tests such as the WASL, they should have opportunities to practice using them before the actual test day so they are accustomed to using them (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006). However, the study found that many specialists (38%) and teachers (58%) did not allocate time for ELLs to practice using the accommodations they were permitted to use on the WASL. Grantee staff were more likely to provide practice time than consortium staff.



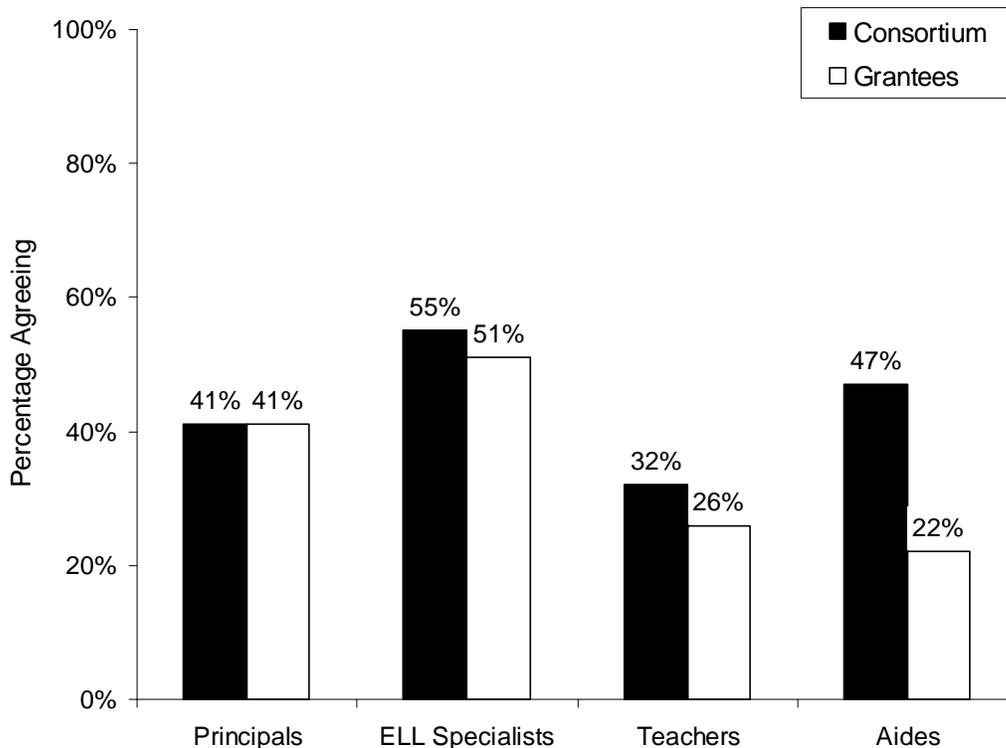
## CHAPTER 6: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

The importance of family involvement in students' schooling is well documented. Research has found that active family participation in education helps students earn higher grades, perform more successfully on tests, maintain better attendance and behavior, demonstrate higher self-esteem and self-efficacy, as well as graduate and go on to postsecondary education (Henderson & Map, 2002; Ferguson, Ramos, Rudo, & Wood, 2008).

As important as family involvement is, it can also be very challenging to involve families. Schools and districts often struggle to connect deeply with students' parents and families, most often because of the following challenges:

- Parents' work schedule
- Language barriers
- Parents' discomfort with the school setting
- Different cultural expectations about the relationship between teachers and parents

**Figure 6-1**



**Agreement That “I am Able to Communicate Effectively with the Parents of our ELLs”**

Consortium districts reported encountering all of these barriers as they attempted to reach out to parents of their ELLs. The most commonly mentioned barrier was parent's work schedules, but the language barrier was also a frequently cited challenge; most teachers and many district staff did not speak Spanish and felt that made it harder for them to communicate effectively. In fact, the problems were serious enough that at consortium schools, where most ELLs are Spanish speakers, only a third of teachers agreed that they could effectively communicate with the parents of ELLs; the percentages were somewhat higher for principals (41%), instructional aides (47%), and ELL specialists (55%). At grantee schools, where ELLs come from many different language backgrounds, few teachers and aides agreed they were able to communicate effectively with parents (Figure 6-1).

### **What research says: Communicate with parents in a language they can understand.**

The Washington Administrative Code (WAC 392-160-010) requires, whenever feasible, that school district boards communicate with parents in a language that they understand. This is in line with the recommendations of researchers, who assert that schools and districts should communicate regularly with parents in their primary language, whenever possible. This includes providing translators at conferences or school events as well as translating newsletters or key school documents (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Tinkler, 2002).

#### **Current Practices**

Some of the consortium districts went to great lengths to address parents in their primary language. For example, one district ELL coordinator reported that

*Our district is in the process of giving the power back to parents in terms of language: We have installed a new telephone system that can send messages home; improved our interpreting services so most everything that goes out is bilingual. (District ELL Coordinator)*

Another district made sure there was at least one Spanish-speaking parent on every district committee to help ensure that there was a direct link to the Spanish-speaking community. In addition, a few districts made sure that every school had at least one Spanish speaker working in the front office. Some districts turned to community radio to facilitate communication between schools and parents, who often listen to Spanish-language radio while at work. These are all very promising practices.

### **What research says: Use home visits to reach out to parents.**

Home visits, either by outreach coordinators or teachers, are a way for schools to stretch out a welcoming hand to parents, especially those who may not be comfortable going to schools. Experts note that an ideal outreach coordinator will speak parents' primary language and be comfortable with both the parents' culture and that of the school (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Tinkler, 2002).

## Current Practices

Although interviewed staff at consortium districts agreed that organized school outreach to parents was important, fewer than half of the districts employed a designated outreach coordinator. When such a position did exist, it was generally held by a former student or instructional aide who conducted home visits, and translated for parents at school events.

Many experts mention that specifically having *teachers* conduct home visits or attend community functions was a potentially powerful form of school outreach (Saifer, Edwards, Ellis, Ko, Stucynski, Dorfman, & Kirkham, 2005; Adult Learner Resource Center, 2003; Colorín Colorado & the American Federation of Teachers, 2005; Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Tinkler, 2002). None of the district staff interviewed mentioned this as an approach their districts used to reach parents, however.

## What research says: Make families feel welcome in school buildings and include them in a variety of groups and activities.

Parents, particularly those who have limited education or are not familiar with the education system in the United States, should feel welcomed when they first come to schools to enroll their children. Recommended practices for welcoming new families include:

- Offering orientation sessions and welcome videos
- Mentoring new families
- Creating and disseminating bilingual parent handbooks (Adult Learner Resource Center, 2003; Colorín Colorado & the American Federation of Teachers, 2005; Tinkler, 2002)

Furthermore, experts recommend that beyond the initial encounter, schools make on-going efforts to ensure that the school is a welcoming place for parents and families. Activities and events for families should:

- Have educational, governance and social purposes
- Accommodate parents' work schedules
- Provide childcare and transportation, if possible (Adult Learner Resource Center, 2003; Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008)
- Include extended family members (Tinkler, 2002)

## Current Practices

District superintendents and ELL coordinators in the consortium schools were passionate about making ELLs feel welcome and successful at their schools. Many could cite long lists of initiatives in their schools to reach out to parents and families. A few of these included efforts to mentor new families, but in general the emphasis was on ensuring the on-going involvement of parents and families in the school.

The most commonly mentioned forum for parent involvement was Parent Action Committees (PACs), which in many schools were very active and routinely took place in Spanish or included translation for Spanish speakers. PACs, and other similar organizations, allowed parents to

provide their opinions and ideas to schools on a regular basis. Some districts were proud to point to parents of ELLs who were in leadership positions in parent organizations at the school, a result of their deliberate efforts to reach out to such parents.

In some, but not all, cases, schools mentioned specific efforts to work around parents' schedules and to provide childcare. Also in some cases, the school or district had helped establish parent phone trees that deliberately included bilingual parents, so that messages would make their way to families that did not speak English.

Translation at parent-teacher conferences was available at some schools, but in other schools, where there were not enough translators available, students often translated for their teachers and parents at these conferences.

### **What research says: Help teachers develop an awareness of students' home cultures.**

The purpose of cultural awareness or cultural competence training for teachers is to help teachers interact effectively with students whose families come from a different cultural background. Many experts argue that building the cultural competence of teachers can help ELLs, their parents, and teachers all feel more comfortable working together (Adult Learner Resource Center, 2003; Colorín Colorado & the American Federation of Teachers, 2005; Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Tinkler, 2002).

#### **Current Practices**

As reported in Chapter 4: Professional Development, almost two-thirds of teachers (63 percent of consortium teachers and 61 percent of grantee teachers) have not had training in cultural competence in the previous five years. According to principal surveys, cultural competence or cultural awareness training was required for teachers in some but not all schools (Table 6-1). However, *all* principals said they would like to see more teachers receive training in this area.

**Table 6-1**  
**Requirement of Cultural Competence Training for Teachers**

	<b>Not required for teachers</b>	<b>Required for some teachers</b>	<b>Required for all teachers</b>	<b>Principal would like more training for teachers in this area</b>
Consortium Schools	48%	35%	17%	100%
Grantee Schools	19%	38%	43%	100%

### **What research says: Provide or promote adult education opportunities.**

Experts recommend that schools and districts offer adult education opportunities, including ESL classes and/or workshops to help parents assist their children with their homework or develop effective parenting skills (Adult Learner Resource Center, 2003; Tinkler, 2002). If it is not possible to provide adult education, schools can compile a list of adult learning opportunities including

ELL classes, or make space available to community-based organizations who can offer such classes (Colorín Colorado & the American Federation of Teachers, 2005).

### **Current Practices**

Most of the consortium districts included in the study mentioned adult education opportunities as important, not only to promote the education of parents for themselves, but also as a way to make parents feel more comfortable in schools or help them learn about the culture of school in the United States. It was common for districts reach out to parents by offering adult education classes, most often English language classes, but parenting classes, gang prevention workshops and assistance in helping their students apply for college. One district reported offering a workshop on the immigration and citizenship process. Many of the ESL, adult education and/or parenting offerings for family members, often in collaboration with 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Parent Information Resource Centers, or other grants.



## CHAPTER 7: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs is well-documented across subjects and geographic regions (Genesee et al., 2006; Kindler, 2002; Lee, Grigg & Donahue, 2007; Moss & Puma, 1995; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Using data from the WASL<sup>6</sup> and considering research on the achievement gap, this study examined trends in student achievement at consortium and grantee schools. It also looked at the degree to which the percentage of students who were ELLs in a district was a good predictor of student achievement in that district.

Key findings included

- Consortium schools, as a group, tended to have lower percentages of students who scored proficient on the WASL, compared to the state as a whole
- Grantee schools, as a group, tended to have percentages of students who scored proficient on the WASL that were comparable to the state as a whole
- Poverty (as measured by the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch, or FRL) was a better predictor of school-level WASL performance than was the size of a school's ELL population

These findings are presented in greater detail below.

### Trends in Reading and Mathematics

This section presents trends over the past six years (2004 through 2009) in the percentage of students scoring at or above “proficient” on the WASL reading and mathematics assessments in fourth, seventh, and tenth grades. It examined four different groups:

- (1) **Consortium** schools
- (2) **Grantee** schools
- (3) **ELL Comparison** schools, a group of other schools with relatively high ELL populations (defined as having 2009 TBIP eligibility of greater than 8 percent)
- (4) **Statewide**, a comparison with all Washington schools, regardless of ELL population

### Reading

Figures 7-1 through 7-3 present trends in student achievement on the reading component of the WASL over the past six years, for fourth, seventh, and tenth grades, respectively. They show the average percentage of students who were proficient in reading on the WASL. The performance of consortium and grantee schools (bars) was compared to two standards (lines): the statewide average and the average of the ELL comparison group.

---

<sup>6</sup> The WASL is administered annually every spring in Washington and used to determine whether schools have made adequate yearly progress under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

### **What did the data show about consortium schools?**

- On average, over the past six years, the bumps and dips of consortium WASL reading performance mirrored statewide improvements and declines
- In fourth and seventh grades, the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency at consortium schools was consistently lower than the percentage of students doing so statewide average or at ELL comparison schools.
- This difference was not evident at the tenth grade

### **What did the data show about grantee schools?**

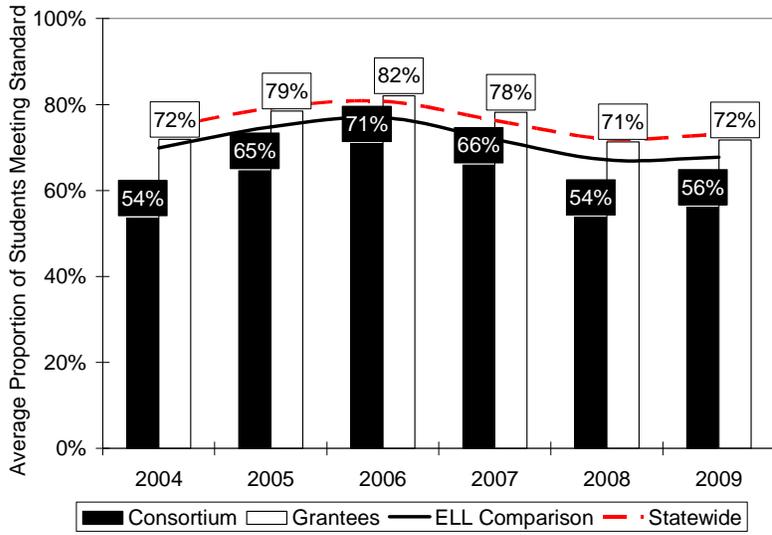
- On average, over the past six years, the improvements and declines in the performance of grantee schools on the reading portion of the WASL also mirrored statewide patterns
- Grantee schools generally performed at roughly the same level as the statewide average on the WASL reading measure, which is higher than the ELL comparison group
- This was true at all three grade levels

### **Why did tenth-grade reading achievement in consortium schools parallel state averages, even though fourth and seventh grade achievement was consistently lower?**

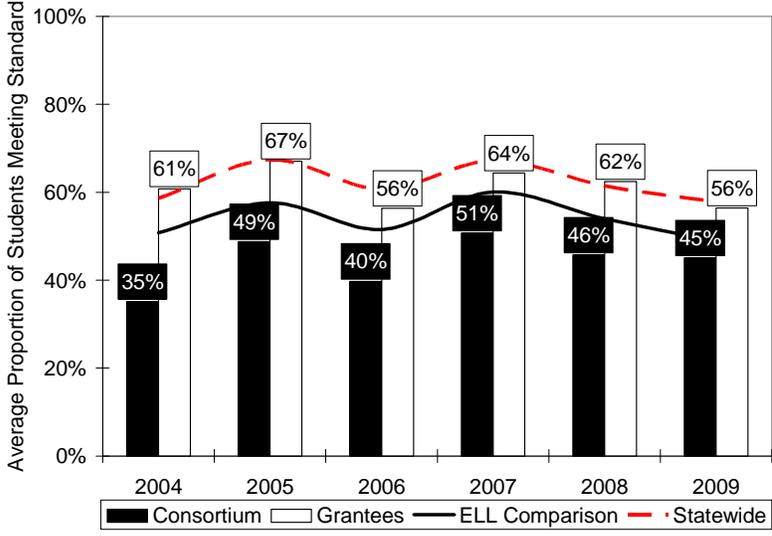
- Among all four groups, there was a substantial increase in the percentage of tenth-grade students scoring at or above proficient in reading, compared to the percentages in fourth and seventh grade.
- This trend is likely attributable to the implementation of statewide graduation requirements for the class of 2008.<sup>7</sup> Along with the new requirements, new options for meeting standard were made available. This meant there was more than one way to demonstrate proficiency in reading, which also resulted in higher numbers and proportions of students doing so.

---

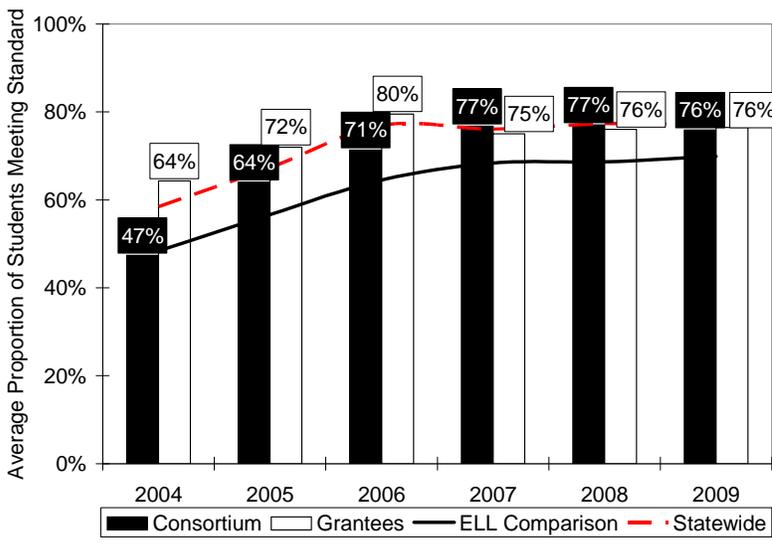
<sup>7</sup> For the class of 2008, state law mandated that all Washington state high school students demonstrate reading and writing skills in order to graduate. These students began the process of taking the tenth grade WASL in 2006. The ways in which students were able to demonstrate meeting standard in reading were expanded beyond passing the WASL to include specific state-approved alternatives: collection of evidence, grades comparisons, and Advanced Placement/college admission test scores. The data released by OSPI and presented in this chapter include all students who met the reading standard, whether by passing the WASL or these alternatives means.



**Figure 7-1**  
**Proportion of Students Meeting**  
**WASL Standard, Reading 4<sup>th</sup> Grade**



**Figure 7-2**  
**Proportion of Students Meeting**  
**WASL Standard, Reading 7<sup>th</sup> Grade**



**Figure 7-3**  
**Proportion of Students Meeting**  
**WASL Standard, Reading 10<sup>th</sup> Grade**

## Mathematics

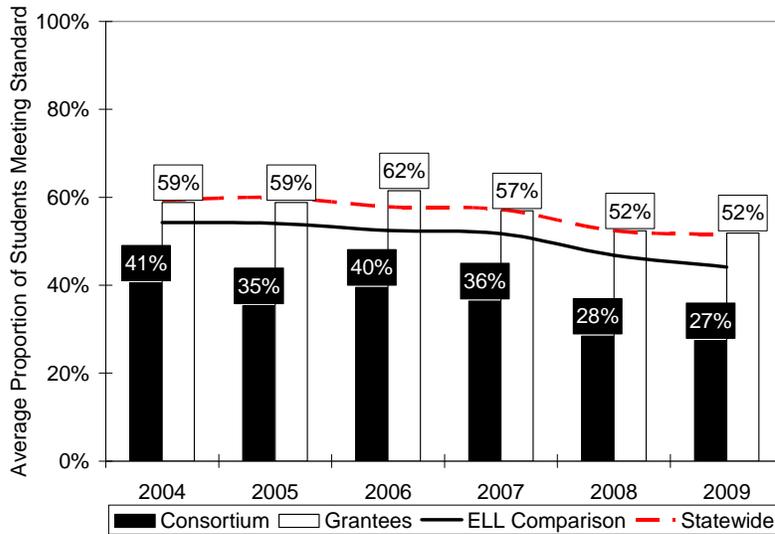
Figures 7-4 through 7-6 present trends in student achievement on the mathematics component of the WASL over the past six years, for fourth, seventh, and tenth grades, respectively. They show the average percentage of students scoring proficient or above. The performance of consortium and grantee schools (bars) is compared to two standards (lines): the statewide average and the average of the ELL comparison group.

### What did the data show about consortium schools?

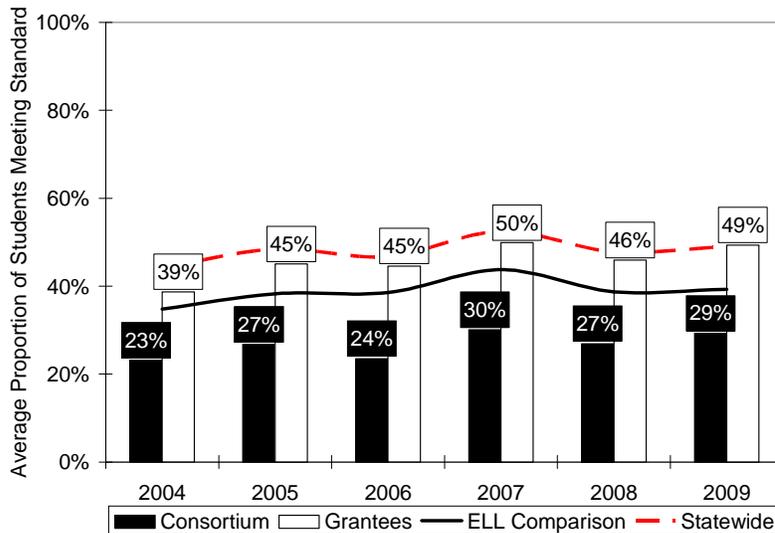
- Again, over the past six years, the bumps and dips of consortium WASL mathematics performance mirrored statewide patterns, although the consortium schools had lower percentages of students scoring proficient.
- In fourth and seventh grades, consortium schools had fewer proficient students than the ELL comparison group on the WASL mathematics measure. However, in the tenth grade they performed at roughly the same level or often higher than the ELL comparison group.

### What did the data show about grantee schools?

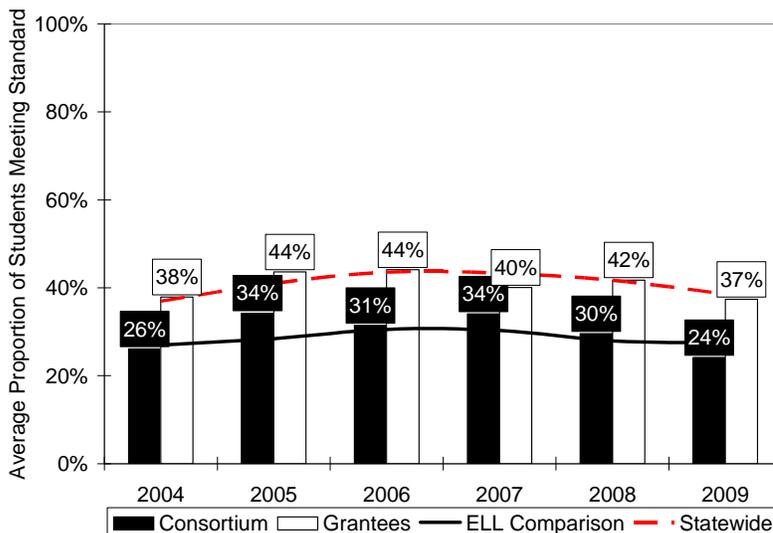
- On the whole, over the past six years, the improvements and declines in the performance of grantee schools on the mathematics portion of the WASL mirrored statewide patterns.
- These schools performed at a similar level as the statewide average on the WASL mathematics measure and higher than the ELL comparison group at all grade levels.



**Figure 7-4**  
Proportion of Students Meeting WASL Standard, Math 4<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Figure 7-5**  
Proportion of Students Meeting WASL Standard, Math 7<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Figure 7-6**  
Proportion of Students Meeting WASL Standard, Math 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **Why was the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency in reading and math consistently higher at grantee schools than at consortium schools?**

This difference in student achievement may be due to the lower percentage of ELLs in grantee districts, compared to the consortium districts. The only grantee district with as many ELLs as consortium schools was Tukwila School District (see Table A1 in Appendix A). Tukwila's student achievement data were lower than other grantee districts and similar to the consortium districts (data not shown here).

It is also possible that differences in the percentage of students eligible for FRL help account for the differences in outcomes. In fact, as the following section demonstrates, poverty rates are a better predictor of student achievement outcomes than are percentages of ELLs in a district.

### **What did student achievement data say about the impact of the ELL Demonstration grants in grantee districts?**

There was no increase in the percentage of students scoring proficient or higher on the WASL following distribution of the demonstration grants in fall 2007. This is not a surprising result. Grantee schools received funding for about 18 months (January 2008 through June 2009), and some of them saw their grants reduced due to the state budget shortfall. The districts used large portions of their grants to train their teachers in sheltered instruction. Prior research consistently finds that fully implementing substantial changes in instructional programs takes typically five years (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, Wallace, 2005); student achievement gains may not be evident in the early stages of change. In short, the 18-month period that grantee schools had funding was probably too short to expect changes in WASL scores.

## Relationship Between Percentage of ELLs and WASL Performance

Using a linear regression model, the study found that school-level WASL performance was driven more by poverty levels than by the size of its ELL population<sup>8</sup>.

Table 7-1 presents the results of the linear regression analysis. The important numbers are the beta values for ELL and FRL. The beta values are the estimate of the independent impact of the percentage of ELL students in a school and of the percentage of students eligible for FRL. Both of these numbers are negative for fourth grade, meaning that as the percentage of ELL students in a school goes up, the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the WASL declines.

Asterisks next to the beta values indicate whether or not the findings are significant—that is, whether there is at least a 95 percent chance that the relationship observed was not found by random chance. In fourth grade, both ELL and FRL had a significant effect on the proportion of students meeting standard on the WASL reading and mathematics assessments. In seventh and tenth grades, the effect of ELL was no longer significant, but FRL remained so.

### What do the regression findings mean?

The findings mean that for middle and high schools, a school’s proportion of ELLs was not a good predictor of their WASL performance. That is, it was not possible to reliably predict how a school was going to perform on the seventh or tenth grade WASL based on the percentage of ELLs at that school.

On the other hand, a school’s proportion of students eligible for FRL remained a good predictor of WASL performance at all grade levels. Schools with higher poverty levels typically had lower proportions of students meeting standard on the WASL.

**Table 7-1**  
**Regression Analysis Summary for ELL and FRL Enrollment Predicting WASL Achievement**

		<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>Grade 10</b>
Reading	Intercept	89.20	74.88	89.48
	Beta ELL	-0.16**	-0.06	0.22
	Beta FRL	-0.31**	-0.40**	-0.34**
	R <sup>2</sup>	.43	.35	.18
	Model sig.	.000	.000	.000
Mathematics	Intercept	74.63	69.66	60.05
	Beta ELL	-0.17**	-0.02	0.37
	Beta FRL	-0.47**	-0.49**	-0.59**
	R <sup>2</sup>	.44	.39	.32
	Model sig.	.000	.000	.000

Independent variable = School proportion of students eligible for TBIP funds

Dependent variable = School proportion of students meeting standard on WASL measure

\* < .01    \*\*<.001

### **What happens when ELLs test out of eligibility for TBIP funds?**

It is possible that the percentage of ELLs was a strong predictor in fourth grade, but not seventh or tenth grades, because there are more ELLs in elementary schools. As ELLs age and move to higher grades, increasing numbers of them test out of eligibility for TBIP funds because of their improved English proficiency. At this point, they become former ELLs. The performance of former ELLs was not recorded separately from that of students who were never classified as ELLs on school and district report cards, so it was not possible to include the percentage of former ELLs in the regression analysis. Additional data would be required to examine the academic achievement of former ELLs.

---

<sup>8</sup> Poverty was measured by the proportion of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch (FRL). ELL was measured by the proportion of students eligible for TBIP funds.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In the course of developing this report, we met many professional educators who were deeply dedicated to ensuring that ELLs received the excellent education they deserve. Many were frustrated, however, by the insufficient resources, staffing, materials, or training they had available to them; they often believed that the system could work better than it did. As the population of ELLs in Washington schools continues to grow, the need for an effective system of effectively educating ELLs will not diminish in the coming years. Strengthening the system will benefit the thousands of ELLs currently in Washington schools, as well as many more in future years.

In this final chapter, some of the most important findings presented in previous chapters are presented along with recommendations to build on Washington’s system of educating ELLs.

**Finding: High-quality bilingual instruction leads to the best outcomes and educators were interested in providing more of these programs. However, their ability to do so was hindered by a shortage of qualified staff.**

There is substantial research demonstrating the effectiveness of well-designed, well-implemented bilingual programs, particularly dual language or late-exit programs (Slavin and Cheung, 2005; August and Shanahan, 2006). Bilingual programs are currently available to only about 9 percent of Washington ELLs, and most often, they are early- rather than late-exit programs. Schools and districts often report they would like to provide more bilingual programs, but they cannot due to the shortage of qualified staffing. Schools and districts also report that they establish early- rather than late-exit programs because the required state assessments are offered only in English, which means that ELLs aren’t getting the best program model possible.

**Recommendation: Make long-term investments in the state’s capacity to offer viable bilingual programs.**

In order to offer viable bilingual programs to ELLs in the future, the state should make long term investments in building staff capacity. Specific steps include:

- **Prepare a sufficient number of appropriately qualified bilingual teachers.** There are multiple strategies for doing this, including reaching out to bilingual high school students interested in becoming teachers and creating career ladders to help bilingual instructional aides go back to school to earn a teaching credential.

One example of such a program is OSPI’s contract with the Latino/a Educational Achievement Project (LEAP) to identify and mentor at least 50 bilingual high school juniors to encourage them to become teachers (Deussen & Greenberg-Motamedi, 2008). These efforts should be tracked to monitor the number of new bilingual teachers coming out of such programs. If the numbers are not up to anticipated levels, it would be helpful to explore the reasons and make necessary program adjustments.

- **Extend program reach to languages other than Spanish.** Almost all current efforts to develop on bilingual teachers focus on Spanish speakers. While Spanish speakers are predominate among ELLs, in certain parts of the state there are large subpopulations of students speaking other languages. Those populations could benefit from the development of bilingual teachers speaking Russian, Somali, Korean, or other languages.
- **Create supports for the functioning of bilingual programs.** A long-term investment in bilingual education also requires attention to other aspects of instruction. This includes:
  - ◆ Ensuring that the language skills of bilingual teachers go beyond conversational skills to include academic language
  - ◆ Providing high-quality professional development and on-going support for bilingual teachers
  - ◆ Aligning curricular materials in other languages to state content standards, including ensuring there are aligned intervention materials for struggling students and extensions for students who excel
  - ◆ Providing Spanish-language assessments, including formative assessments and the possible creation of a Spanish-language version of state assessments

### **Finding: Many educators were not fully trained to work effectively with ELLs.**

The 91 percent of ELLs who receive instruction in English also need highly qualified teachers who are prepared to help them learn language and content at the same time. At the present, however, most teachers serving ELLs have received only introductory levels of training in effective ELL instruction. This is because most teacher pre-service programs do not adequately prepare future teachers to work with ELLs; the responsibility for doing so thereby falls upon in-service professional development. This professional development should focus on appropriate content and be ongoing, of sufficient duration, and include active engagement. Some, but not all, professional development in the districts included in this study met these standards.

In addition, ELLs often receive instruction from aides. While aides are a critical part of many schools and bring valuable resources to their positions, they have the least formal preparation, and receive the least amount of professional development.

### **Recommendation: Ensure that ELLs are taught by appropriately trained staff.**

Providing high-quality, research-based instruction to ELLs requires a significant investment in professional development. Specific steps to ensure that ELLs are taught by highly qualified and appropriately trained staff include the following:

- **Fund the TBIP program at levels that allow districts to hire sufficient certificated teachers to work with all ELLs.** In 2008, the Basic Education Funding Task Force recommended increased TBIP funding, particularly for districts serving students from more than ten language backgrounds or where more than 75 percent of students are ELLs. These

recommendations are additional evidence that there is a broad consensus about the need for additional funding for the education of ELLs.

- **Endorse and support implementation of the recommendations of the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board** that all teacher pre-service and professional development address the five research-based principles and implications outlined in first year report of this project, *What Teachers Should Know About Instruction for English Language Learners* (Deussen, Autio, Miller, Lockwood, & Stewart, 2008).

Ensuring a minimal level of training in ELL issues across all teachers will also help alleviate the concerns of some districts that they invest heavily in ELL training for new teachers, only to have them move on to other districts in a few years. If all teachers have training in the five principles/implications, this eliminates inequalities in preparation of teachers across districts and reduces the financial burden of training them.

- **Target and require ELL professional development for mainstream teachers.** This broad recommendation includes a range of activities:
  - ◆ Train all teachers in their school’s ELL program model. All teachers should be trained in their school’s program model, and this should be done in a consistent and coherent fashion. Encourage investment in the full program model training, rather than abbreviated, watered-down versions. Provide schools with the financial resources needed to do so.
  - ◆ Provide training on the topic areas identified in this report. Use this report, in combination with the district-specific information, to select training topics, focusing on where there is a gap between what research says about effective practices and teacher use of and comfort with those practices. Across all the schools in this study, these include:
    - **Multiple representations:** Training might focus on how to maximize use of these strategies and regularly apply them in classrooms with ELLs. Consortium districts in particular might emphasize training in these strategies for middle and high school teachers.
    - **Academic language:** Training might be targeted especially for middle and high school teachers, where the use of academic language is particularly important.
    - **Cultural competence:** All principals wanted teachers in their schools to have more training in this area.
    - **Primary language supports:** Ensure that all teachers understand the benefits of primary language supports and the many ways in which they can be encouraged.
    - **Use of data:** Ensure that specialists, teachers, and instructional aides have access to appropriate assessments and know how to use them, particularly to make decisions about modifying instruction for ELLs.
- **Recognize that training needs are not the same in all places, and differentiate appropriately.** While some needs apply statewide, many are district- and school specific training needs. Variations exist based on program model, student population and, in particular, by what teachers already know.

More specific district-level information on teacher use of and comfort with research-based practices will be provided to districts. The variations noted in this report and in the forthcoming district-specific data may provide helpful information for administrators to make decisions about what needs the most time and focus in differentiated professional development. If necessary, the state could facilitate conversations about how to best utilize

this information for targeting ELL professional development. These findings should be used constructively, to help direct district decisions about what is needed next, and how best to target professional development efforts.

- **Provide training and ongoing professional development to instructional aides.** Alongside teachers, aides need ongoing ELL-related professional development so they can best support teachers in their classrooms. In addition, expanding career ladders for talented, interested bilingual aides to become teachers is another way to enhance the pool of qualified teachers.
- **Thread ELL issues throughout professional development.** Time for teacher professional development is inevitably limited, and there is a delicate balance between ELL and other training needs. In addition to the recommendations above, one solution is to include ELL issues as a thread through other trainings that are not already specific to ELLs. For example, when adopting an elementary math curriculum, professional development providers should consider how it connects to delivery of bilingual or sheltered instruction.

### **Finding: There was confusion about what ELL program model schools use, how different models fit together, and the role of the ELL specialist.**

Schools can utilize one of five broad categories of program models to deliver instruction to their ELLs; many make use of more than one model. Within each model, there are multiple ways of assigning instructional staff. This variation is often entirely appropriate, given differences in student demographics, community needs, the design of program models, and teacher preparation.

It requires intensive planning at the district and school levels to coordinate multiple program models, to connect ELL models with general education, and to match the use of ELL specialists to the needs of the district. However, decisions about how to use staff with ELLs are often made for fiscal reasons—for example, to stretch TBIP funding across as many bodies as possible—rather than for programmatic reasons. Perhaps this is why so many teachers often do not understand the role of ELL specialists in their buildings. Even a few principals did not know what ELL program model existed in their building. This confusion does not support the efficient use of resources or the effective collaboration of educators.

### **Recommendation: Ensure that districts have clear, coherent program models that work together and are well-communicated with educators throughout the district.**

To build more coherent and collaborative instructional programs, the following steps are recommended:

- **Increase the focus on coherence and collaboration during OSPI technical assistance.** Since 2008, the OSPI Migrant/Bilingual Program has provided districts with additional, customized, and much-appreciated technical assistance as they create their annual TBIP plans (Deussen & Greenberg-Motamedi, 2008). This assistance can put increased emphasis on helping districts build coherence and collaboration into their plans.

- **Ensure that districts communicate their plan to all staff.** Once they have a coherent plan, districts should communicate with all their staff, explaining the program models, how they interact with general education, and the expected roles for ELL specialists and teachers within each of the models.

### **Finding: Newcomer programs faced shortages in qualified staffing and appropriate materials.**

Newcomer programs are an important gateway for new immigrants into the U.S. school system. Two primary challenges stand out with current newcomer programs: staffing and materials.

Staffing problems arise because of the complex and multi-faceted expertise needed to teach in a newcomer program. While expert researchers in the field recommend that newcomer programs hire highly experienced teachers with a range of skills in language development and cross-cultural skills (Short & Boyson, 2003), this expertise can be hard to find.

Curricular materials are a challenge because of the diversity of newcomer students. Some newcomer students arrive with interrupted schooling, or little previous schooling, and are not able to jump into materials for the grade their age suggests. The lack of age-appropriate materials at a range of levels means that some newcomer programs pull together materials from many different programs that do not necessarily fit together, and curricular coherence is lost. Other times teachers create their own materials from scratch.

### **Recommendation: Strengthen newcomer programs for new immigrant students.**

Specific steps to address these issues include:

- **Implement this report's recommendation to increase the pool of qualified teachers,** which will help to address this concern.
- **Allocate funds for the creation of newcomer materials.** This would ensure that districts and/or schools have designated time to create coherence in materials they create or select for newcomer students. In addition, allocate funds for training in the creation of non-traditional curricula, so that this process results in materials that align to state standards.

### **Finding: Districts and schools found building connections to ELLs' families and communities especially challenging.**

Because the norms and expectations of ELLs' home lives may differ from those at school, building connections to students' families and communities can be particularly supportive for them. While district and school staff recognize the importance of reaching out to parents of ELLs and have undertaken a number of initiatives to do so, more than half of principals and teachers said that communication with ELLs' parents remains difficult.

## **Recommendation: Support district and school outreach to ELLs' parents and communities.**

Steps to enhance outreach to ELLs' parents and communities include:

- **Support and provide resources for innovative and research-based approaches, particularly those that are under-utilized.** Currently, in order to welcome parents and engage them in groups and activities, districts and schools have a number of important initiatives underway, such as family nights, often with translators, or adult education opportunities offered in the schools. Some schools and districts, and some Migrant programs, had particularly polished versions of such activities, which should be shared with others trying to accomplish similar goals.

There are other promising practices that experts believe are helpful, such as setting up mentoring for families new to the district, having teachers conduct home visits, and establishing partnerships with community-based organizations. These approaches, overall, were rare or non-existent. These could be targeted activities to improve outreach in the future, perhaps initially as pilot projects so that a few locales could develop and test their approaches.

Organizations that have a history of effective parent involvement, such as the Parent Involvement Resource Center (PIRC) or Head Start programs, might serve as advisors for such initiatives.

- **Create more opportunities for sharing information about parent outreach.** Schools frequently lament the shortage of teacher in-service days, and it can be problematic to create too long a list of topics that should be covered in professional development. Not all information requires extended teacher training, however.
  - ◆ It might be helpful to create a forum for sharing these ideas, whether at conferences, through P-20 webcasts, or on a website dedicated to this purpose.
  - ◆ Some information can be shared comparatively easily and quickly as **part of a staff meeting**; examples include
    - A recent report published by the Institute for Educational Sciences provides information about how to address parents from many different linguistic groups in culturally appropriate fashion (Marcus, Adger, Arteagoitia, 2007).
    - In schools with large populations of students from the same cultural background, it can be helpful to inform teachers about the major cultural holidays that their students might be celebrating. This helps teachers know if there are days when students might be absent, or allows the structuring of assignments that might include students reading or writing about their experiences.
    - A few schools mentioned that a brief overview of the differences between native-born ELLs and immigrants, or between traditional immigrants and refugees, was very helpful to their teachers.

## Moving Forward

To move forward and successfully implement the five recommendations arising from this report, we suggest two steps:

### **3. Build long-term initiatives that recognize the amount of time needed to make meaningful change in schools.**

Two-year legislative funding cycles are not easily made compatible with the longer periods (five or more years) required to make meaningful, lasting changes in schools. At the same time, it is clear that for the grantee schools and districts in this study, 18 months of funding was not sufficient to yield measurable results in student outcomes. To support a long-term vision of a stronger educational system for ELLs, the state should make a long-term commitment to building programs and initiatives that last beyond any single two-year funding cycle, even if the decisions about specific funding levels have to be revisited every two years to correspond to state budget cycles.

### **4. Monitor the implementation of the recommendations laid out in this report.**

To ensure that the five recommendations are put in place and that the state, district and schools make progress, the state should create a system to monitor the implementation of the recommendations on a regular basis, at least every two years. A monitoring system could consist of the following components:

- A task force or working group charged with monitoring implementation and holds systems accountable for that implementation.
- Accountability for teacher training institutions for teaching the five principles and their instructional implications described in first year report of this project, *What Teachers Should Know About Instruction for English Language Learners* (Deussen, Autio, Miller, Lockwood, & Stewart, 2008). Monitor implementation in state-funded teacher preparation programs and state-funded professional development for practicing teachers. In consultation with institutions of higher education, develop a timeline for the implementation of the principles.
- Use these data as a baseline and evaluate progress over time. The descriptions of classroom practices and larger structures to support ELLs presented in this report can serve as a baseline from which future change is measured.

Washington educators and legislators have an opportunity to improve instruction for the many ELLs enrolled in their public school system. The commissioning of this project in 2007 is indicative of a commitment to make those improvements. Continuing immigration trends mean that the size of the ELL population and importance of addressing this issue will not diminish in future years. Implementation of this study's recommendations will make Washington a leader among other states in this area. Even more importantly, ensuring that ELLs receive research-based instruction and support will help thousands of current and future ELLs succeed in school and later as citizens of Washington state.



## REFERENCES

- Abedi, J., Lord, C., & Hofstetter, C. (1998). *Impact of selected background variables on students' NAEP math performance* (CSE Tech. Rep. No. 478). Los Angeles, CA: University of California, Los Angeles, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.
- Abedi, J., Lord, C., Hofstetter, C., & Baker, E. (2000). Impact of accommodation strategies on English language learners' test performance. *Educational Measurements: Issues and Practice*, 19(3), 16-26.
- Abedi, J., Lord, C., & Plummer, J.R. (1997). *Final report of language background as a variable in NAEP mathematics performance* (CSE Tech. Rep. No. 429). Los Angeles, CA: University of California, Los Angeles, Center for the Study of Evaluation.
- Adult Learner Resource Center. (Ed.). (2003). *Involving immigrant and refugee families in their children's schools: Barriers, challenges and successful strategies*. Chicago, IL: Illinois State Board of Education, & Chicago, IL: Illinois Department of Human Services. Retrieved August 11, 2009, from [http://www.isbe.state.il.us/bilingual/pdfs/involving\\_families.pdf](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/bilingual/pdfs/involving_families.pdf)
- Arias, M.B., & Morillo-Campbell, M. (2008). *Promoting ELL parental involvement: Challenges in contested times*. East Lansing, MI: Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice. Retrieved August 11, 2009, from [http://www.greatlakescenter.org/docs/Policy\\_Briefs/Arias\\_ELL.pdf](http://www.greatlakescenter.org/docs/Policy_Briefs/Arias_ELL.pdf)
- August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Banilower, E.R., & Shimkus, E.S. (2004). *Professional development observation study*. Chapel Hill, NC: Horizon Research.
- Ben, W. (n.d.). [Excerpt from] *Project of Academic Excellence evaluation: Project GLAD*.
- Bretchel, M. (2001). *Bringing it all together: Language and literacy in the multilingual classroom* (Rev. ed.). Carlsbad, CA: Dominic Press.
- Bye, T. (2004). *Berkeley Unified School District second evaluation of GLAD training*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Unified School District.
- Callahan, R.M. (2005). Tracking and high school English learners: Limiting opportunity to learn. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(2), 305-328.

- Cohen, D.K., & Hill, H.C. (2001). *Learning policy: When state education reform works*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Colorín Colorado, & the American Federation of Teachers. (2005). *AFT toolkit for teachers: Reaching out to Hispanic parents of English language learners*. Washington, DC: Greater Washington Educational Telecommunications Association. Retrieved November 13, 2009, from <http://www.colorincolorado.org/guides/toolkit>
- Cummins, J. (1984). *Bilingualism and special education: Issues in assessment and pedagogy*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *The right to learn: A blueprint for creating schools that work*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Davison, C. (2006). Collaboration between ESL and content teachers: How do we know when we are doing it right? *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 9(4), 454–475.
- DeLeeuw, H., Malagon, H., Barron, R., Nguyen, P., & Finnegan, P. (2008). *Washington State Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (STBIP) guidelines*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Desimone, L.M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher*, 38(3), 181–199.
- Desimone, L.M., Porter, A.C., Garet, M., Yoon, K.S., & Birman, B.F. (2002). Effects of professional development on teachers' instruction: Results from a three-year longitudinal study. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(2), 81–112.
- Deussen, T., Autio, E., Miller, B., Lockwood, A.T., & Stewart, V. (2008). *What teachers should know about instruction for English language learners: A report to Washington state*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Deussen, T., & Greenberg-Motamedi, J. (2008). *External evaluation of the Washington state bilingual program*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Echevarria, J., & Short, D.J. (2001). *The effects of sheltered instruction on the achievement of limited English proficient students*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Echevarria, J., Short, D., & Powers, K. (2006). School reform and standards-based education: A model for English-language learners. *Journal of Educational Research*, 99(4), 195–210.
- Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D.J. (2007). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

- Ferguson, C. (with Ramos, M., Rudo, Z., & Wood, L.). (2008). *The school-family connection: Looking at the larger picture. A review of current literature*. Austin, TX: SEDL, National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools. Retrieved August 11, 2009, from <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/sfclitrev.pdf>
- Fixsen, D.L., Naoom, S.F., Blase, K.A., Friedman, R.M., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature*. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, National Implementation Research Network.
- Francis, D.J., Rivera, M., Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., & Rivera, H. (2006). *Practical guidelines for the education of English language learners: Research-based recommendations for the use of accommodations in large-scale assessments*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research, Center on Instruction.
- Frost, S. (2003). The shortchanged high school. *American School Board Journal*, 190(11), 29–31.
- Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depth of educational reform*. New York, NY: Falmer Press.
- Garcia, G.E., & Godina, H. (2004). Addressing the literacy needs of adolescent English language learners. In T.L. Jetton and J.A. Dole (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy research and practice* (pp. 304–320). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Garet, M.S., Porter, A.C., Desimone, L., Birman, B.F., & Yoon, K.S. (2001). What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(4), 915–945.
- Genesee, F. (Ed.). (1999). *Program alternatives for linguistically diverse students*. Santa Cruz, CA: University of California, Santa Cruz, Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence.
- Genesee, F., Lindholm-Leary, K., Saunders, W., & Christian, D. (2006). *Educating English language learners: A synthesis of research evidence*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Hargett, G.R. (2006). *Evaluation of Project GLAD training*. Salem, OR: Willamette ESD Title III Consortium.
- Heller, R., & Greenleaf, C.L. (2007). *Literacy instruction in the content areas: Getting to the core of middle and high school improvement*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Retrieved August 27, 2009, from <http://www.all4ed.org/files/LitCon.pdf>
- Henderson, A.T., & Mapp, K.L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement. Annual synthesis 2002*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools. Retrieved August 11, 2009, from <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

- Hiebert, E.H. (2008, October). *Reading content-area texts: What's involved for English language learners*. Paper presented at the CREATE Conference, Minneapolis, MN.
- Ho, A.D. (2008). The problem with "proficiency": Limitations of statistics and policy under No Child Left Behind. *Educational Researcher*, 37(6), 351-360.
- Howard, E.R., Sugerman, J., Christian, D., Lindholm-Leary, K.J., & Rogers, D. (2007). *Guiding principles for dual language education* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Ireland, L. (2008). *Graduation and drop-out statistics for Washington's counties, districts and schools: School year 2005–2006*. Olympia, WA: Office of the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Kagan, S. (1993). *Cooperative learning*. San Juan Capistrano, CA: Kagan Cooperative Learning.
- Kennedy, M. (1998). *Form and substance in in-service teacher education* (Research Monograph No. 13). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, National Institute for Science Education.
- Kindler, A. (2002). *Survey of the states' limited English proficient students and available educational programs and services: 2000–2001 summary report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students. Retrieved September 28, 2009, from [http://www.ncele.gwu.edu/files/rcd/BE021853/Survey\\_of\\_the\\_States.pdf](http://www.ncele.gwu.edu/files/rcd/BE021853/Survey_of_the_States.pdf)
- Lee, J., Grigg, W.S., & Donahue, P.L. (2007). *The nation's report card: Reading 2007. National Assessment of Educational Progress at grades 4 and 8* (NCES 2007-496). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved November 13, 2009, from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2007/2007496.pdf>
- Lee, O., & Luykx, A. (2006). *Science education and student diversity: Synthesis and research agenda*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, Y. (2007). *English language proficiency tests, one dimension or many?* Olympia, WA: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Malagon, H., & DeLeeuw, H. (2008). *Educating English language learners in Washington state, 2005–06: Report to the Legislature*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Marcus, N., Adger, C.T., & Arteagoitia, I. (2007). *Registering students from language backgrounds other than English* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2007-No. 025). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>

- Menken, K., & Atunéz, B. (2001). *An overview of the preparation and certification of teachers working with limited English proficient (LEP) students*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, and Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education.
- Moss, M., & Puma, M. (1995). *Prospects: The congressionally mandated study of educational growth and opportunity. First year report on language minority and limited English proficient students*. Washington, DC: George Washington University, National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. (ERIC ED394334)
- National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs. (2006). *Washington: Rate of LEP growth 1994/1995 to 2004/2005*. Washington, DC: George Washington University.
- Pennock-Roman, M. (2007). Language and cultural issues in the educational measurement of Latinos. In L.D. Soto (Ed.), *The Praeger handbook of Latino education in the U.S.* Portsmouth, NH: Greenwood.
- Saifer, S., Edwards, K., Ellis, D., Ko, L., & Stuczynski, A. (with Dorfman, D., & Kirkham, J.). (2005). *Classroom to community and back: Using culturally responsive standards-based teaching to strengthen family and community partnerships and increase student achievement*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Scarcella, R. (2003). *Academic English: A conceptual framework* (Technical Report 2003-1). Santa Barbara, CA: University of California, Santa Barbara, Linguistic Minority Research Institute.
- Short, D.J., Boyson, B.A., & Coltrane, B. (2003). *Final project report: First National Conference for Educators of Newcomer Students and pilot study on newcomer program literacy and assessment practices*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Short, D.J., & Fitzsimmons, S. (2007). *Double the work: Challenges and solutions to acquiring language and academic literacy for adolescent English language learners. A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Slavin, R.E., & Cheung, A. (2005). A synthesis of research on language of reading instruction for English language learners. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(2), 247-284.
- Snow, C. (2008, October). *Intervening to increase general academic vocabulary*. Paper presented at the CREATE Conference, Minneapolis, MN.
- Thomas, W.P., & Collier, V. (1997). *School effectiveness for language minority students* (NCBE Resource Collection Series No. 9). Washington, DC: George Washington University, National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.
- Thomas, W.P., & Collier, V. (2002). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement: Final report*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley, Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence.

- Tinkler, B. (2002). *Review of literature on Hispanic/Latino parent involvement in K–12 education*. Denver, CO: University of Denver, & Denver, CO: Assets for Colorado Youth.
- Verplaetse, L.S. (1998). How content teachers interact with English language learners. *TESOL Journal*, 7(5), 24–28.
- Yoon, K.S., Duncan, T., Lee, S.W., Scarloss, B., & Shapley, K.L. (2007). *Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2007-No.033). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest. Retrieved November 10, 2009, from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>
- York-Barr, J., Ghere, G., & Sommers, J. (2007). Collaborative teaching to increase ELL student learning: A three-year urban elementary case study. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 12(3), 301–335.
- Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2008). *Washington state report card: Adequate yearly progress summary, 2007–08*. Retrieved September 18, 2008, from <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ayp.aspx?year=13>
- Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2009, May 8). *Evaluating the validity of English language proficiency assessments (EVEA): Technical narrative. A proposal submitted in response to the Request for Proposals under the Enhanced Assessment Grants Program (CFDA 84.368)*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- WestEd, Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center. (2009). *Framework for high-quality English language proficiency standards and assessments*. Retrieved November 13, 2009, from [http://www.wested.org/online\\_pubs/ASDS-09-01.pdf](http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/ASDS-09-01.pdf)

## APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

This descriptive study collected information in 2008 and 2009 about the practices schools and districts use to support their ELLs. The study utilized data from a variety of instruments and respondents, each of which is described in more detail below.

### Sample

There were two groups of schools in this study: schools from consortium districts and schools from grantee districts. Table A-1 lists participating districts and their demographics; note that not every school in every district participated.

### Consortium Schools

Superintendents from 14 districts in south-central Washington (in and around the Yakima Valley) meet together on a regular basis to discuss educational issues they have in common. One of these issues has been the educational success of the many ELLs in some of their districts. All 14 of the consortium districts were invited to participate; 10 chose to do so (listed in Table A-1).

The ELLs in these consortium districts and schools are predominantly Spanish speakers. Most of the districts also had substantial migrant populations.

**Table A-1**  
**Participating District Demographic Data**

	Enrollment	Percentage of Students			
		ELL	Free or Reduced Lunch	Special Education	Migrant
<b>Consortium Districts</b>					
Grandview School District	3467	28%	80%	12%	14%
Granger School District	1482	36%	93%	10%	16%
Mabton School District	928	38%	84%	10%	30%
Prosser School District	2879	18%	61%	12%	24%
Royal School District	1406	40%	79%	11%	18%
Sunnyside School District	5948	25%	77%	13%	23%
Toppenish School District	3447	32%	98%	11%	18%
Wahluke School District	1992	58%	61%	9%	26%
Yakama Tribal School*	143	11%		8%	
Zillah School District	1346	11%	51%	10%	7%
<b>Grantee Districts</b>					
Camas School District	5734	1%	19%	13%	0%
Federal Way School District	22440	12%	47%	13%	0%
Fife School District	3554	9%	39%	9%	0%
Spokane School District	29701	5%	53%	15%	0%
Tukwila School District	2822	35%	74%	9%	0%

Source: 2008–2009 OSPI Washington State Report Card

\*Yakama Nation Tribal School data from the Bureau of Indian Affairs Annual Report Card 2007–2008

For the consortium schools and districts, this report serves primarily as a description of their current practices. Each district will receive a short report summarizing findings from that district.

### **Grantee Schools**

Under the ELL Demonstration Project funded by the legislature in fall 2007, five districts were awarded two-year grants to focus on improving the education of ELLs. Districts generally used these grants to invest in sheltered instruction training, delivered in a variety of ways (for more description, refer to Chapter 1 of this report). Because they received funding through the project, all five grantees were asked to participate in the study; all five agreed to do so.

Compared to consortium schools, ELLs in grantee schools come from many different linguistic backgrounds; in fact, serving students from multiple language backgrounds was one of the criteria for receiving a grant under this project.

Originally, this report was intended to provide a full evaluation of the work conducted with ELL Demonstration Project funding. The state budget crisis intervened, however, and reduced both the amount of funding available to some of the grantees as well as the funding available for the evaluation. Consequently, data collection from the grantee schools was less comprehensive than from the consortium schools. Nevertheless, participating districts will also receive a short summary of their results.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data were collected through multiple methods, each of which is described in greater detail below.

### **Surveys**

Customized surveys for principals, mainstream teachers, ELL specialists, and instructional aides were developed for this study. Each survey consisted of 45 to 102 close-ended questions about program models, staffing, professional development, instruction, assessment, and beliefs about ELL education.

In March 2009, surveys were mailed to schools in grantee and participating consortium districts. Each package was sent to the attention of the principal with explicit instructions for administration, which encouraged respondents to be candid in their answers. Each respondent was given a confidentiality envelope to seal before returning their survey. Cover sheets for each survey further explained the purpose of the study and intended use of the data.

Completed surveys were received from 72 of the 78 schools, a 92 percent response rate. This included surveys from 52 principals, 553 mainstream teachers, 75 ELL specialists, and 295 aides.

## Interviews

District staff were interviewed in spring 2009 using semi-structured protocols comprised of open-ended questions about program models, staffing, professional development, assessment, and perceptions about ELL education. Superintendents and ELL program directors/coordinators in nine of the 10 consortium districts participated. Interviews were planned for the five grantee districts, but cancelled due to budget cuts to this project in winter 2009.

## Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were conducted in the ten consortium districts that chose to participate in the study. The purpose of the observations was to document how schools provided instruction and support to their ELLs. Although a few schools provided Spanish-language instruction to some of their students, the focus of the observations was the instruction of ELLs in English and the degree to which practices supported by research were used in the classroom.

Observations were conducted using the SIOP checklist (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2007), a tool for documenting and the use of 30 instructional features in eight categories. Each feature is rated on a five-point scale, ranging from 0 (“not evident”) to 4 (“highly evident”). A rubric for rating each feature is published by the SIOP developers; in addition, the study team refined and tightened this rubric for use in rating the lessons that were observed for this study. Prior to conducting visits, all observers attended a two-day training in September 2008 and a one-day refresher course in January 2009.

In each participating district, at least two schools were visited, one elementary and one secondary school. In three larger districts, visits were conducted at three schools, an elementary, middle and high school. Observations were conducted primarily in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies classes, and across all grade levels (see Table A-2).

**Table A-2 Distribution of Classroom Observations by Grade and Subject Area**

Grade level	Percentage of observations	Subject area	Percentage of observations
Elementary (K-5)	38	Language arts	34
Middle (6-8)	30	Math	30
High (9-12)	32	Science	17
		Social Studies	12
		English language development	2
		Other	5

A total of 349 lessons were observed at 24 schools between October 2008 and February 2009. Each school visit lasted two consecutive days, during which two observers observed an average of 15 lessons. Lessons were observed for their entirety (usually 45 to 60 minutes).

To establish inter-rater reliability, a subset of 45 classroom observations was paired, meaning they were watched by two observers who then rated separately. Inter-rater reliability was established at 84 percent (within one point of agreement). Seven items with the lowest levels of reliability were removed from the analysis.

Descriptive statistics were run for the 23 SIOP items included in this report to determine the percentage of observed lessons that demonstrated consistent use of each item was calculated and is defined as achieving a score of 3 or 4 on the rubric's 5-point scale, in which 0 = not evident and 4 = highly evident.

## **Document Review**

Documents from eight consortium districts were examined to evaluate hiring criteria and workshops available for professional development. These included job postings, iGrant applications, and professional development fliers.

## **Student Assessment Results**

School-level results from the WASL for the school years 2003-2004 through 2008-2009 and school-level demographic data from 2008-2009 were downloaded from the Washington State Report Card on the OSPI website (<http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/DataDownload.aspx>).

Schools were coded into one of three groups:

- Grantee schools that returned surveys (32 schools)
- Schools in consortium districts that returned surveys and/or hosted site visits (32 schools)
- A comparison group of other schools with at least 8 percent of students eligible for TBIP services in 2009 (565 schools)

Descriptive analyses compared these groups with each other, as well as the statewide performance of all schools in the state.

In addition, a linear regression model examined the degree to which a school's proportion of ELLs, as by the proportion of schools eligible for TBIP funds, predicted student achievement on the reading and mathematics WASL.

## **Limitations**

Several limitations to the research methods deserve mention. First, not all schools returned surveys. Missing data may have altered the overall findings. In addition, response to the surveys was not mandatory, and there may be bias in terms of who was motivated to complete it; often, those who respond to surveys are those who care most about the issues asked about. However, the high response rates obtained suggest that this is not as large a concern as it can be when response rates are lower.

Secondly, some survey items asked teachers, specialists and aides to self-report on their own behavior; these reports are sometimes subject to bias, as respondents may wish to respond in the manner they believe is socially desirable.

Third, the study team observed some lessons at each school on only two days out of the entire school year; it is possible that practices observed were not routinely used, or that other common practices simply did not appear on the days of the observations.

Fourth, the quantitative analyses in the student achievement chapter utilize school-level, rather than student-level, data from the WASL. It meant it was only possible to look at the proportion of students meeting standard, rather than at raw student scores. This is less than ideal, as using cutoffs such as the proportion of students meeting or not meeting proficiency can sometimes distort findings about achievement gaps (Ho, 2008). Future research of this type should attempt to use individual student-level raw scores whenever possible.

Fifth, this study examines two specific groups of schools in Washington state; it is therefore not possible or appropriate to generalize its findings to other schools.

Finally, budget cuts to this project, the result of a statewide budget crisis, meant that the evaluation of the work of grantee districts had to be scaled back. Although the iGrants applications lay out what districts intended to do with their funding, it was not possible to document the degree to which they fully implemented or changed their plans. Some districts also received smaller grants than originally planned for, and it was not possible to document what was eliminated from their plans. The study team was unable to comment on the degree to which grantee district instructional practices aligned with research-based findings.



## APPENDIX B: PROJECT TIMELINE

Table B1 provides a timeline summarizing the activities of the ELL Demonstration Grant (SB5481). It also includes events that affected the implementation of the grant.

**Table B1**  
**ELL Demonstration Grant Timeline**

Activity	Date	By Whom
Announcement that grants would be available to both Spanish-dominant and multi-lingual districts	June 25, 2007	OSPI
Availability of iGrant applications	August 15, 2007	OSPI
Resignation of TBIP director Alfonso Anaya	End of August, 2007	OSPI
iGrant applications due	September 15, 2007	OSPI
Contract for evaluation signed	November 25, 2007	OSPI and Education Northwest*
Howard DeLeeuw appointed interim TBIP director	December 1, 2007	OSPI
Districts notified of award of grants	December 5, 2007	OSPI
Evaluation plan sent for review to OSPI, legislators, and one district superintendent	December 11, 2007	Education Northwest
First convening of Advisory Panel	April 21, 2008	Education Northwest
Classroom observations at first half of consortium districts	Spring 2008	Education Northwest
Shared preliminary findings with ELL Workgroup in Seatac	June 25, 2008	Education Northwest
Second convening of Advisory Panel	August 20, 2008	Education Northwest
Draft of Year 1 report submitted to OSPI	September 22, 2008	Education Northwest
Classroom observations at second half of consortium districts	Fall 2008	Education Northwest
Feedback on draft of Year 1 report provided to Education Northwest	October 2008	OSPI
Draft of Year 1 report submitted to legislators, Governor's office	October 8, 2008	Education Northwest
Final Year 1 report submitted to OSPI	October 31, 2008	Education Northwest
Presentation of Year 1 study findings to PESB	November 19, 2008	Education Northwest
Grantee districts contacted regarding budget cuts to their demonstration grants	December 2008	OSPI
Education Northwest contacted regarding budget cuts to the research and evaluation study	December 4, 2008	OSPI
Contract modified to reflect reduced funding and scope of work	January 2009	OSPI and Education Northwest
Presentation of Year 1 study findings to January Conference in Seattle	January 8, 2009	Education Northwest
Reduced scope of work and budget finalized	February 2, 2009	OSPI and Education Northwest
Surveys sent to 76 schools in consortium and grantee districts	March 2009	Education Northwest
Surveys returned to Education Northwest	March-April 2009	Schools
Presentation of Year 1 study findings to Reading First Summer Institute in Yakima	July 28-29, 2009	Education Northwest
Draft of Year 2 report submitted to OSPI	October 15, 2009	Education Northwest
Feedback on draft of Year 2 report provided to Education Northwest	October 23, 2009	OSPI
Draft of Year 2 report submitted to legislators	October 25, 2009	Education Northwest
Final Year 2 report submitted to OSPI	November 16, 2009	Education Northwest

\* Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory changed its name to Education Northwest on September 1, 2009.