

ABSTRACT

MEETING THE ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS THROUGH CO-TEACHING

English language learners (ELL) are the fastest growing student population. Co-teaching partnerships between ELL certified teachers and classroom teachers provide an alternative to pull-out programs for ELL students. This study examines the impact of co-teaching on students and teachers over a four month period. An ELL certified teacher and fourth grade teacher co-taught in a general education classroom during reader's workshop and writer's workshop four days a week. The teachers shared responsibility for instruction of all students including English only students and English language learners. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected including standardized reading assessments, surveys, and interviews. Quantitative data did not show a statistically significant increase in the students' reading and writing levels. However, the reading level and language proficiency level of the ELL student in the study improved. This study presents the benefits of co-teaching for teachers and students.

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MEETING THE ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
THROUGH CO-TEACHING

by
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2005, Margaret Spellings, U.S. Secretary of Education, identified English language learners (ELL) as the fastest growing student population. “By 2025, English language learners will make up one out of every four students in our classrooms” (Spellings, 2005, para. 6). Even though over half of the ELL students are in the West, increasing numbers of immigrants are now settling throughout the Midwest and South (Flynn & Hill, 2005; National Council for Education Statistics [NCES], 2004). From 1994 to 2000, the ELL student population in the Midwest rose from 1.4 to 2.6 percent (NCES, 2004). States such as Kansas, Missouri, and Wyoming have experienced double digit growth in the percentage of ELL students in kindergarten through 5th grade. Nebraska, Colorado and South Dakota have experienced triple digit increases in the percentage of ELL population from 1990 to 2000 (Flynn & Hill, 2005).

Rapid influx of English language learners has left districts across the nation unprepared to meet the academic and language development needs of ELL students. According to Missouri’s 2004-2005 ELL census data, there is only one English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) certified teacher for every 50 ELL students (Sengsavanh, 2005). In English as a Second Language (ESL) programs ELL students are pulled out of the mainstream classroom for instruction from a specially certified teacher. However, Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004)

found that ELL students usually spend less than 10% of their instructional time in ESL programs. Therefore, most of the day is spent in the mainstream classroom. In Missouri, only three percent of the classroom teachers who had ELL students reported having eight or more hours of training on teaching ELLs in the last three years (Sengsavanh, 2005). The ESL teacher is often faced with meeting the academic and language development needs of English language learners and conducting in-service training for classroom teachers (O'Loughlin, 2003). In order to meet their language development and academic needs, all teachers of English learners must incorporate instructional strategies proven effective for English learners.

Throughout this project, I was guided by two primary questions: What is the most effective program model for providing support for English language learners in areas where the ELL population is relatively low, but increasing? What impact would replacing the ESL pull-out model with a co-teaching model have on ELL students and classroom teachers without ELL certification?

Historical Context

Pleasant Lea Elementary is one of 17 elementary schools located in the middle class suburb of Lee's Summit, Missouri. The majority of the homes in the Pleasant Lea attendance area were built in the 1970's, but there are also newer neighborhoods developed within the last 10 years. The Pleasant Lea area includes more affordable and low income housing than the newly developed areas of Lee's

Summit. The student demographics of the Lee's Summit School district and Pleasant Lea Elementary have changed gradually over the last decade. In 2002, the district added an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) certified teacher at Pleasant Lea Elementary to meet the needs of the growing number of English learners. Two other elementary schools in the district already had ESL programs

The ESL program serves a diverse group of immigrant students and the children of immigrants from countries in Asia, Central America, Eastern Europe, and Africa. The students' home languages include Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, German, Panjabi, Russian, Soninke, Spanish, Tigrinya, Urdu, and Vietnamese. When the program began at Pleasant Lea Elementary in 2002, there were 14 English language learners. In 2006, Pleasant Lea had 38 ELL students. Although the ELL population has grown, these students made up less than 7% of the 560 students attending Pleasant Lea Elementary in 2006.

I was hired in 2004 when the previous ESL teacher retired. Prior to moving to Missouri, I was a fifth grade classroom teacher in Los Angeles, California with 32 students who were all English language learners. In my new position in Lee's Summit, I became a pull-out ESL teacher of 25 kindergarten through 6th grade ELL students. Because I had experience teaching ELLs in the mainstream classroom, the principal requested that I provide training and support for teachers in addition to working with students. It was more of a challenge than I had anticipated.

Statement of the Problem

By the third year of my teaching assignment at Pleasant Lea Elementary, I was growing frustrated with pulling students out of classes for instruction. Why was I duplicating the content of lessons in the mainstream classroom? Would cooperative learning activities with English dominant classmates be beneficial for ELL students? Due to scheduling and language levels, some students had to be pulled out alone or with only one other student. I wondered if teaching students in isolation of others could be effective. I tried supporting the students within the mainstream classroom rather than pulling children away from English speaking peers. However, when I attempted to work with students in the classrooms, I felt more like a teacher's helper and tutor than a certified teacher. While in classrooms, I realized that the materials and strategies I provided at the training sessions were not regularly incorporated in many of the classrooms. My frustration spurred questions about how I could make changes to better meet the needs of ELL students and classroom teachers.

Exploration of the ELL Learning Environment

My concerns led me to question how the existing pull-out program was meeting the needs of the ELL students. Initially, I informally interviewed Allen and Jody¹, fourth graders from the same class who were receiving ESL services in the pull-out program. Both of these students were in the same mainstream

¹Pseudonyms for student names are used throughout the paper.

classroom. Jody came to the United States in August 2006. Her parents spoke English with few limitations and her two siblings in high school were excelling in school. Jody was highly motivated to learn and develop new skills in English. Allen came to the United States prior to kindergarten, moved several times in California and enrolled in our school in Missouri in the fourth quarter of third grade. His parents spoke very limited English and were not able to help him with work at home. In California Allen spent two hours each day in a Learning Center to receive small group instruction in reading, writing and math. Based on information from his progress reports, Alan had struggled to meet grade level expectations since first grade.

At the time of the interview, Allen and Jody came to the ESL room each day for an hour or more for daily instruction in reading and writing. I asked them questions about their classroom instruction and what they found especially challenging. I discovered that these ELL students had mixed feelings about leaving their classroom to receive instruction in the ESL classroom. Although they both liked learning in a small group, Allen and Jody preferred to stay in the mainstream classroom rather than be pulled out. Jody expressed dislike and discomfort with being pulled from the classroom and said it made her feel like she was the only one who needed help. She wanted to stay with English dominant classmates and receive help with the same work her classmates were completing. Although Allen preferred staying in the mainstream classroom, he did not mind

going to the ESL room for instruction. He explained that he needed to go to the ESL room because he could not do what the other students were doing. Allen's low expectations for himself appeared to be a cause of lack of effort in the mainstream classroom. For Jody, being pulled out made her feel like she was being kept from doing what the other students were doing. On the other hand, Allen seemed convinced that he had to be pulled out because he could not do what the other students were doing.

After talking with the two students, I spoke with the ESL paraprofessional who assisted in their classroom during math time. She said Jody did not seem to need or want help during math time. However, Allen needed help and would frequently disengage from the math lesson or independent work if the paraprofessional was not sitting next to him.

When I spoke with Allen and Jody's teacher, she agreed that the students would likely be more successful if they stayed in the room rather than being pulled out. She was agreeable to changing their schedule to allow more time in the classroom during the communication arts time. However, the teacher did express trepidation with being able to meet the ELL students' needs while addressing the needs of her other students. As a first year teacher, she was concerned that she did not know as much as she should regarding teaching English learners. I wondered if her concerns, questions, and comfort level regarding working with ELL students were typical of other teachers at our school site.

Within the same week of interviewing the two fourth grade students, their teacher, and the paraprofessional, I received a phone call from the mother of a previous student who had attended fourth and fifth grades at my school and was attending sixth grade at a private school. This family moved to the United States when her daughter was a third grader. Her daughter came to the ESL room each day during reader's or writer's workshop and for math three times a week. While the mother was on the phone, I told her that I was in the process of evaluating our current program model and asked her for candid comments regarding her daughter's experience at our school. Although the mother did find our school a positive learning environment, she and her daughter felt like expectations for English language learners' academic performance were lower than other students. Her daughter expressed frustration that when she asked for help on an assignment, her classroom teacher would often say, "You're still learning English, you don't have to do this assignment" or "Maybe Mrs. Soliday can help you when you go to her room." The student and the mother became discouraged that teachers seemed to have low expectations of her ability and seemed convinced that she could not or should not be expected to do grade level work. The girl admitted to her mother that after a while she had stopped trying so hard since her teacher did not expect her to be able to do the work. This parent confirmed that there were negative aspects of our existing pull-out program.

Observing in the Mainstream Classroom

I observed Jody, who was rapidly developing skills in speaking, listening and reading in English, in her mainstream classroom. In the ESL classroom, she was a fast worker, who boldly asked for help or clarification when needed. Jody enjoyed working independently and at her own pace. While in a small group of English language learners, Jody seemed to grow frustrated when the pace of others did not keep up with her during group activities. She was receiving in-class, ESL paraprofessional support during math as well as instruction from me, the ESL teacher, during Communication Arts. I observed Jody's interaction in the classroom for a minimum of 15 minutes over the course of three days. I observed during three different class activities; math, study hall, and spelling.

Jody's interactions with peers were limited in the classroom during the times I observed. She sat in a group with three white, English only speaking students. She did not initiate interactions, yet seemed to welcome interaction with classmates when they initiated it. During Math, students at other table groups were working with classmates, but Jody did all the work herself. During study hall she had the opportunity to read with a partner, but she stayed at her desk by herself. Most of time, Jody was able to complete work independently without help from classmates or teachers.

I had suspected that Jody was a loner in the mainstream classroom. She might have been more intimidated by English only speaking classmates than I had

anticipated. In the ESL room Jody was very confident and outspoken. However, she was different in the mainstream classroom where she was very quiet and kept to herself. Even though I noted these differences, Jody's mainstream teacher did not have concerns about her involvement with peers. She reported that Jody interacted well with classmates, but rarely required help from peers.

The observations of Jody in the mainstream classroom added to my concern that pulling students out for ESL instruction may not be the best possible way to meet the language development and instructional needs of English language learners. Jody seemed like an outsider in her own classroom. Perhaps more could be done within the mainstream classroom. Jody had an excellent teacher, who had not yet received training in teaching English learners. The teacher was not aware of how specific strategies such as pre-teaching vocabulary, cooperative learning and providing scaffolding during instruction would help a bright and fast ELL learner like Jody succeed.

Survey of Teacher Attitudes and Knowledge

In addition to considering the current situation for students, I wanted to know more about the teachers' knowledge and beliefs regarding working with English language learners in the mainstream classroom. I created a survey online at www.surveymonkey.com and requested via email that the 28 regular classroom teachers complete the anonymous survey. The response rate was 75%. The text of the online survey is included in Appendix A.

The survey included four group or categorical questions, 15 Likert-type questions, and one text box for optional comments. The 15 Likert-type questions required a response from one to five. A response of one meant the teacher strongly disagreed with the statement. A response of five meant the teacher strongly agreed. Although I discouraged a response of three, neutral, the survey allowed for a neutral response to the statements. The table of frequencies and percentages of the entire survey is in Appendix B. Table 1 and table 2 below include only items regarding preparedness to work with English language learners in the regular classroom.

The survey revealed four significant points of information. First, the survey indicated that 85.7% (n=18) of the teachers in our building have taught English learners in the regular classroom. However, despite experience teaching English learners, the same number, 85.7%, indicated that they have received less than three hours of training to work specifically with English learners.

Table 1

Frequencies and percentages of responses to the question: Have you had or do you currently have English language learners in your class?

	n	%
I have never had an ELL in my class.	3	14.3
I currently have at least one ELL in my class.	9	42.9
I have had at least one ELL in my class before.	9	42.9

Table 2

Frequencies and percentages of responses to the survey item: Think about all the training you have received to work with ELL students. About how much training have you received to work specifically with ELL students?

	N	%
No training	3	14.3
0-1 hour	6	28.6
1-3 hours	9	42.9
3-6 hours	2	9.5
Over 6 hours	1	4.8

I was surprised by this second piece of information, especially since the question was not limited to training received within the current school year. Instead, the question asked, “How much training have you received to work specifically with ELL students?” Thus in their entire careers, 85.7% of the

teachers in my building had received 0-3 hours of training to work with English learners even though 71.4% (n=15) of the teachers indicated that they had been teaching for more than 10 years. On the other hand, I was encouraged that the classroom teachers acknowledged the need for more training (m=4.05) and 95% (n=20) expressed interest in learning more about working with ELL students. Seventy-one percent (n=15) of the teachers believed that the ESL teacher should be the one to provide the training for regular classroom teachers.

Table 3

Means and standard deviations of survey items related to teacher training

	M	SD
I have adequate training to work with ELL students.	2.57	1.165
I can think of 5 or more instructional strategies to use with English learners.	3.57	1.326
I am comfortable teaching ELL students in the regular classroom.	3.81	.928
I think the ESL teacher should provide training for regular classroom teachers	3.81	.928
Regular classroom teachers need more training to work with ELL students.	4.05	.973
I am interested in learning more about working with ELL students.	4.48	.512

The results of the survey convinced me that I needed to provide more training for teachers. However, with district-mandated training on unrelated topics, I was unsure how to fit more training into the professional development plan for our building.

Path to Co-Teaching

As I reflected on the observation and conversations with the ELL students, parent, and teacher, as well as the teacher survey, I was convinced that I needed to make changes to our pull-out ESL model to better meet the needs of ELL students and classroom teachers. ELL students needed to be effectively integrated in the mainstream classroom with teachers utilizing instructional strategies appropriate for English learners. Students and teachers needed to believe ELL students can meet grade level expectations and act accordingly.

I began researching alternatives to pull-out ESL programs. I read about how schools in the St. Paul Public Schools district were meeting the needs of training teachers and teaching ELLs through co-teaching partnerships among mainstream classroom teachers and ESL teachers. As I read more about co-teaching, I discovered that co-teaching had the potential to simultaneously meet the needs of students and teachers. I decided to conduct action research to determine what impact co-teaching would have on English language learners and mainstream classroom teachers.

Methodologies and Data Collection

Using a variety of co-teaching approaches, I co-taught in the fourth grade classroom for 60 minutes each day. I assessed the students' academic progress, development, and beliefs about ELL through individual interviews, anonymous

surveys and standardized reading and writing assessments. In addition, I interviewed the classroom teacher about the co-teaching experience.

Organization of the Project Report

In this project I investigated the impact of co-teaching on students and teachers. Chapter 2 is the literature review of research examining the effectiveness of pull-out ESL and co-teaching. Requirements for successful co-teaching, the pitfalls of co-teaching, and the impact of co-teaching on students and teachers are addressed. In chapter 3, I describe how I collected qualitative and quantitative data over a four month period in the spring of 2007 as we implemented a co-teaching model in a fourth grade classroom. The findings examine student growth in reading and writing, an ELL student's attitudes about receiving extra support in the classroom setting, and the professional development of the mainstream teacher. In chapter 4, I describe what I learned through this project, the impact co-teaching had on the students and teacher, implications for other teachers considering co-teaching and my action plan for the coming school year.

Pull-out ESL did not meet the needs of all ELL students and mainstream teachers. It was exciting to be able to do a small scale action research project as a way to implement an alternative model. Co-teaching, as an alternative to pull-out ESL programs, increases integration of English language learners in the mainstream classroom while providing modeling of appropriate instructional strategies for mainstream teachers. As the ELL population grows and the expected

level of academic performance increases, it is vital to provide the best possible educational experience for each student. This project seeks to determine what is the best instructional model for English learners in schools with limited numbers of ELL students and few teachers specifically trained to teach ELL students.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

According to the United States Department of Education, between 1994 and 2004, U.S. schools experienced a 46% increase in enrollment of kindergarten through 12th grade students identified as English language learners (ELL). The Urban Institute's Program for Evaluation and Equity Research conducted a study which compared schools with high populations of English learners to schools with few to no ELL students (Cohen, Deterding, & Clewell, 2005). The 1999-2000 School and Staffing Survey sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics provided data representing 49,826 public elementary schools, 23 million students and nearly two million English language learners. The results showed that almost one-third of all English learners in the United States were enrolled in schools with a low population of English learners. The study found that only 25% of the mainstream teachers at these schools had received at least eight hours of professional development regarding English language learners within the last three years. These low-incident schools were less likely to offer special support and enrichment programs after school or in the summer. Within the mainstream classroom, few teachers adapted instruction to meet the academic needs of English learners. In order to address the problem, the study called for increased in-service training in order to improve the effectiveness of all teachers.

Midwestern states such as Missouri, have experienced growth in the ELL population far beyond the U.S. average. From 1994 to 2004, Missouri's English language learners increased from 5,442 to 15,403, a growth of 183% (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2006). Despite this growth, English language learners are a small minority who represent only 1.7% of the total school enrollment of Missouri (NCELA, 2006). In a 2005 report from the Institute of Public Policy at the University of Missouri, Sengsavanh wrote that 100 school districts reported having English learners, yet only 89 districts reported that they had at least one English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) certified teacher during the 2005-2006 school year (Sengsavanh, 2005). Of the 67,097 credentialed teachers in Missouri, only 372 or 0.6% had the ESOL certification. The lack of trained teachers, as well as the challenge to meet the academic requirements of English learners, necessitates an instructional model that will meet the needs of teachers and students.

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an analysis of co-teaching as a replacement for pull-out teaching of English language learners. In a pull-out model, ELL students are pulled out of the mainstream classroom in order to address language acquisition needs (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 1995). Co-teaching includes two or more licensed teachers participating in the instructional process within the mainstream classroom (Friend & Hurley-Chamberlain, 2006). This literature review seeks to answer the following questions. Can co-teaching address

teacher training and the language and academic development needs of English learners? What are the academic outcomes for students in co-taught classrooms? What factors must be considered in implementing a co-teaching model?

Meeting Requirements Despite Teacher Shortage

The Equal Educational Opportunities Act requires schools to “take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in instructional programs” (Missouri Department Education, 2006, p. 5). For low-incidence districts, meeting this mandate presents a significant challenge when teachers have not received training in how to facilitate language acquisition in addition to teaching grade level content. Nationally, the ratio of teachers specially certified to teach ELL students is one teacher to 44 students. (Shreve, 2005). As a result of the shortage of properly trained teachers, school districts often attempt to meet the needs of English language learners through instructional models such as pull-out ESL (English as a second language) or ESOL (English for speakers of other languages). Missouri’s Department of Education (2006) identifies pull-out as the least effective instructional model in promoting academic achievement, yet admits that for some districts it seems to be the only alternative. Pull-out is a common model for districts with only one or two ESL/ESOL certified teachers who work with students across grade levels and sometimes even in multiple buildings (Missouri Department of Education; O’Loughlin, 2003).

Components of the Traditional Pull-Out Model

In a pull-out model, English language learners are removed from pulled out of the mainstream classroom for 15 to 50 or more minutes to work one-on-one or in small groups (Cornell, 1995; Diaz-Rico & Weed, 1995). During these sessions, in which only English is used, students spend time practicing oral conversation skills or basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) (O'Loughlin, 2003; Patton, 2006; Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997). Cary (1997) called these English skills "survival English" (p. 19). Students frequently work on spelling, grammar, vocabulary, reading or beginning literacy skills (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 1995; O'Loughlin, 2003). Sometimes, the time is spent reviewing or completing homework (Cornell, 1995; O'Loughlin, 2003). In a traditional pull-out model, all of these activities are done in isolation from the mainstream classroom (O'Loughlin, 2003). Thomas and Collier's (1997) collaborative five-year study of five school systems found ESL pull-out to be the least cost-effective of program models due to the need for employing extra resource teachers.

Criticism of the Pull-Out Model

Lack of Integration of Language Development and Grade Level Curriculum

English language learners in pull-out programs experience fragmented instructional periods that do not provide sufficient time to improve reading and writing skills (Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997; Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995). Due to scheduling, students may receive daily instruction in some subjects twice

and other subjects not at all (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995). Lack of coordination between ESL and mainstream teachers is frequently cited as a source of frustration as well as a detriment to the education of English language learners (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995; van Loenen & Haley, 1992; Xiaoping & Mingyuan, 2004). Integration between ESL and reading-language arts curriculum is rare therefore limiting English learners' development of a common academic language (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 1995; Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997). Cary (1997) insightfully observed "Students typically operate in two disconnected worlds of learning—ESL and core curriculum" (p. 19).

Lack of Integration of English Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom

Echevarria and Graves (1998) identified the opportunity for interaction and practice in English as a necessary factor for effective language learning. However, English learners in a pull-out program experience reduced time for interaction and authentic communication with mainstream peers (O'Loughlin, 2003; van Loenen & Haley, 1992). While out of the classroom for ESL classes, classmates receive instruction and take part in activities to apply learning. Upon return to the classroom, English learners frequently copy from classmates due to missing information to complete the assignments and lack of understanding of the content (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 1995; O'Loughlin, 2003). In addition to the reduction of time for peer interaction, English learners pulled out of the classroom do not receive sufficient exposure to grade level content (O'Loughlin, 2003; Portocarrero &

Bergin, 1997; van Loenen & Haley, 1992). As a result, Thomas & Collier (1997) found that students separated from the mainstream classroom are not familiar with the level of cognitive and academic work expected in the mainstream classroom and therefore “develop lower aspirations for their own academic achievement” (p. 52). Within the mainstream classroom, English learners are frequently treated as remedial learners and grouped separately leading to self esteem and self concept issues (Patton, 2006). The lack of full inclusion in the mainstream classroom “exacerbates an already difficult learning situation” (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 1995, p. 164).

Lack of Professional Development for Mainstream Teachers

Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004) found that ELL students usually spend less than 10% of their instructional time in ESL programs. Therefore, most of the day is spent in the mainstream classroom where the majority of teachers have not received high quality professional development in issues related to language acquisition, culture and language. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, less than 13% of mainstream teachers with ELL students in their classes received more than eight hours of training in a three year period (as cited in Shreve, 2005). Even more alarming, the American Federation of Teachers (2002) said that “only 30% of teachers with ELL students in their classes have received *any* training in teaching English-language learners” (p. 1). Lacking proper training, mainstream teachers don’t know how to meet the needs of English

learners and are often uncomfortable having these students in their classrooms (O'Loughlin, 2003; Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997; Xiaoping & Zhang, 2004). Conducting in-service training for classroom teachers is usually the responsibility of the ESL teacher (O'Loughlin, 2003), but too often, the training doesn't fit in the professional development plan, leaving mainstream and classroom teachers working in isolation of one another (Xiaoping & Zhang, 2004). Although criticized, pull-out instruction may be needed in some situations.

In Support of a Pull-Out Model

Although research in support of a pull-out model is difficult to find, researchers acknowledge that some situations limit the implementation of other instructional models for language learners. Each district and school has to take into consideration the needs of individual students as well as the resources available. In areas where there are low numbers of English learners, diverse language groups, and a lack of specially trained or bilingual teachers, ESL pull-out programs are a likely alternative to bilingual or immersion models (Rennie, 1993). Additionally, pull-out instruction may be necessary for students not learning as expected while immersed in the mainstream classroom (Cook & Friend, 2004). Haring, McCormick, and Haring (1994) warned that in some cases inclusion "may fail to meet the individual needs of the exceptional child and like the segregated classroom, be detrimental to the student" (p. 32 as cited in Williams (2003).

Newcomer students may still need and benefit from pull-out services until they have a basic understanding of English (Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997).

Even though labeled the least effective of models, in long-term studies Thomas and Collier (2002) found that ESL pull-out models are more effective in increasing student achievement than mainstream immersion with no instructional adaptations or language development strategies. Students with no services represented the largest group of dropouts as well as showed large decreases in math and reading by 5th grade. In contrast, students who received at least two to three years of ESL classes reached the 23rd percentile on national standardized tests by the end of high school. Although low-scoring, those who received ESL services outscored the students without services who only reached the 12th percentile on standardized reading tests. Implications are that ESL pull-out is at least more effective than no services. However, co-teaching provides results beyond pull-out's better-than-nothing-approach.

Co-Teaching as an Alternative Model

Exploration of other instructional models for English learners has been spurred by a greater emphasis on inclusion in the mainstream as well as the need for English learners' opportunities for social and academic language development (Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997). Friend and Hurley-Chamberlain (2006) defined co-teaching as a "service delivery option" (p.1) in which students receive all specialized instruction within the mainstream education classroom. Two equally-

licensed teachers share responsibility for the instruction and work with all students in the class. However, the researchers warn, co-teaching is not another teacher who helps, nor a pullout program "...relocated to the corner of a general education classroom" (Friend & Hurley-Chamberlain, 2006, p. 1). Instead, co-teaching is an opportunity for all students to benefit from the combined knowledge and expertise of mainstream teachers, specialized teachers and support staff (Clarke & DeNuzzo, 2003). Schools at both elementary and secondary levels have implemented co-teaching models in order to meet diverse educational needs in the mainstream classroom. The research base regarding co-teaching draws heavily from the special education field.

Co-Teaching in Special Education

Within the area of special education, inclusion of students with disabilities in the mainstream classrooms has increased in part due to the emphasis on the Least Restrictive Environment clause of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) (Clarke & DeNuzzo, 2003). The Least Restrictive Environment refers to the requirement that students with disabilities should be educated in mainstream classes "to the maximum extent appropriate" and not removed from the "regular educational environment" unless the nature or severity of the disability prevents satisfactory education in the mainstream classroom (IDEA). In response, collaboration between mainstream and special education teachers has become more prevalent. Positive experience with co-teaching and

perceptions of teachers about the success of co-teaching has caused enthusiasm to spread to other staff and areas of specialty (Schumm, Hughes, & Arguelles, 2001).

Co-teaching English Language Learners

Although collaboration in the form of co-teaching has had a longer history in the area of special education, co-teaching is a relatively new, but growing practice in the field of English language development (Coltrane, 2002).

Collaboration between ESL teachers and mainstream teachers within a co-teaching model has been presented as an approach with positive effects on student achievement. In addition, co-teaching addresses the concerns presented previously such as lack of specialized training of mainstream classroom teachers as well as the fractured instructional day students in a pull-out program experience.

Research Regarding Co-Teaching in Special Education

Friend and Hurley-Chamberlain (2006) wrote that “The missing piece in co-teaching concerns academic and other outcomes for students” (p.1). Instead, much of what has been published regarding co-teaching is related to teachers’ perceptions, preferences and experiences in implementing the model as well as advice on how to create co-teaching programs. Although limited, researchers have studied co-teaching arrangements and their effects on student achievement.

Studies have included entire school districts, local schools, and individual classrooms. The research presented in this section includes co-teaching special education students; however, the information is applicable to other co-teaching

situations. English language learners, like special education students, represent a select student group with specific instructional needs that are not always met within a mainstream classroom. Special education teachers often work in isolation rather than in collaboration. In addition to these similarities, co-teaching within the field of special education is more common and more research has been done than in the area of ELL instruction. Therefore it is appropriate to include research of co-teaching in special education in considering co-teaching as an alternative to pull-out instruction.

East Rock Magnet School

At East Rock Magnet School in New Haven, New York approximately 100 students received special education services separate from the mainstream classroom (Clarke & DeNuzzo, 2003). This school, which served over eight hundred students ages three to grade eight, included a majority of African American students from families of low socio-economic status as well as 35% of the students who did not speak English at home. Although the goal of the special education services was to “remediate deficits and provide specialized strategies that would allow students to be mainstreamed back into regular education classes,” the majority of students stayed in special education and never returned to mainstream education (Clarke & DeNuzzo, 2003, p. 3). Not unlike the situation previously described in pull-out ESL programs, curriculum in the special education classes did not always parallel mainstream curriculum. In part, this was

due to limited collaboration of mainstream and special education teachers. Staff operated in isolation of others. Additionally, student achievement levels were unacceptably low and referrals to special education increased. Tension grew among special education teachers who were frustrated with mainstream teachers' inability to meet students' diverse needs and mainstream teachers who perceived the special education teachers as unwilling to help. Clarke and DeNuzzo (2003) found, "In this system of 'our kids, your kids' mentality all students and staff suffered" (p. 3).

In 1994, a co-teaching and collaboration model was implemented on a small scale and was later expanded as a school-wide initiative (Clarke & DeNuzzo, 2003). Over a ten year period, the students steadily increased performance on state-wide standardized tests. Criterion referenced tests in phonics, sight words, and writing also showed increased proficiency. Although anecdotal, reports also indicated higher achievement and lower drop out rates at the high school level. In addition, Clarke and DeNuzzo (2003) cited social and behavioral growth, higher self esteem, significantly fewer referrals to special education, and reduced stigma attached to getting help. Furthermore, teachers no longer worked in isolation. Through co-teaching arrangements, special education teachers became more familiar with the mainstream classroom's curriculum and expectations. Simultaneously, mainstream education teachers learned to modify

and adapt instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners within the mainstream classroom.

Calavera Hills Elementary School

On a smaller scale, Garrigan and Thousand (2004) conducted a study to determine the effects of co-teaching on the literacy performance of 2nd grade special education students as well as 2nd graders not eligible to receive special education services. Teachers in the study met several times prior to the school year to plan. Once co-teaching began, participating teachers met once a week for 45 minutes to plan and divide responsibilities. Special education teachers spent two hours each day co-teaching lessons in the mainstream classroom. Data was collected over a five month period on only four students with learning disabilities and six students not eligible for special education. The study reported significant gains on multiple measures of literacy. On standardized reading phonics and oral reading assessments, students demonstrated increased performance two to four times the expected growth. Although impressive, the generalizability of the study is questionable due to the small sample.

Clarke and DeNuzzo's (2003) as well as Garrigan and Thousand's (2004) research, although limited, demonstrate a positive impact on the achievement levels of students in co-taught classrooms. Students were included, not excluded, and teachers worked collaboratively rather than in isolation of one another.

Florida Schools

In response to a statewide pilot to increase inclusion of special education students, 69 Florida schools increased the level of collaboration between special education and mainstream teachers. Schumm et al. (2001) conducted observations and interviews of teaching staff and the administration at the participating schools. Although the researchers cited increased student achievement of special education and general education students as an outcome of co-teaching, the data lacked quantitative evidence of student outcomes. Instead, claims of academic gains were based on the surveys and interviews of staff. Teachers also noted increased social skills and self esteem of the special education students. Special education teachers and classroom teachers experienced professional growth and increased instructional strategies by working collaboratively. Co-teaching changed the way both groups of teachers viewed students. As Schumm et al. (2001) summarized “Students were no longer thought of as ‘yours’ or ‘mine’, but rather as ‘ours’” (p. 58).

Minneapolis Public Schools

Marston (1996) conducted a more comprehensive study of special education models including inclusion or co-teaching only, a combination of co-teaching and pull-out, and pull-out only in Minneapolis public schools. Special education teachers responded to a questionnaire regarding service delivery and student academic performance. Although the return rate of the questionnaire was only 37%, the wide range of opinions expressed by the 80 teachers, as well as the

fact that no significant differences among the three groups' pretest indicated that the results were likely valid despite the low response rate. Of the 240 elementary students who participated in a pretest of reading performance in the fall and a posttest in the spring, 33 students were in the inclusion only group, 36 students were in the combined services group, and 171 students in the pull-out only group. All of the students were identified as having a learning disability. A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) showed that the reading progress of students in the combined services group was significantly greater than students in the inclusion only or pull-out only groups. The inclusion-only group scored slightly higher than the pull-out only group. Marston concluded that the best special education program is not pull-out only or inclusion-only, but a combined services model. A special education teacher involved in the study stated, "Each student should get what he or she needs to succeed in school, whether that is pull-out, inclusion, or a mixture of services" (Marston, 1996, p. 129).

Research Regarding Co-Teaching English Language Learners

Chicago Public Schools

Discussions between administrators and teachers in Chicago Public Schools in 1991 revealed the need for increased collaboration between ESL and mainstream teachers (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995). The administrators and teachers decided, "A broadly based effort was needed to upgrade teacher competencies in adapting materials and instruction, selecting learning materials,

revising curricula, utilizing more whole language and cooperative learning approaches, and generally infusing the teaching day with ESL methods” (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995, p.7). A program, Teamworks, was started to provide professional development and support for teacher collaboration. Each local school developed a plan to meet the two main goals of improving coordination between ESL and mainstream teachers and to improve all teachers’ competence in providing instruction for English language learners. At least one school developed co-teaching partnerships between mainstream teachers and ESL teachers. Teachers were required to integrate ELLs and English dominant students in the mainstream classrooms. Documentation for the project included logs of progress and activities, surveys of teachers and principals on perceptions related to the project, other documentation pertaining to goal-related activities, and pre and post project surveys. However, the study did not provide data regarding students’ academic achievement. Instead, results reported that the ELL students made new friends, learned more English, increased interaction with English speaking classmates, and expressed comfort in being in the mainstream classroom. Pre and post surveys of teachers revealed enhanced instructional competencies of mainstream and ESL teachers. Qualitative analysis of the project’s results revealed that the factors that greatly impacted successful collaboration models included: a) a school administrator who was involved and committed to greater coordination, b) low teacher turn over, c) stability of the student population, d) commitment and

persistence of teachers, e) supportive structures already in place, and f) school faculty with minimum divisiveness (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995).

Viers Mill Elementary School

Like the schools in Chicago, Viers Mill Elementary School in Silver Springs, Maryland, developed a co-teaching model out of concerns regarding the ineffectiveness of their existing instructional program for English learners (Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997). The ESL curriculum was not integrated with the mainstream reading and language arts curriculum. Prior to implementing co-teaching, time for reading and writing instruction was described as fragmented and limited. Teachers observed that students were not interested in reading or writing. Standardized test scores were consistently low. In addition to these concerns, mainstream teachers were not comfortable working with English learners. Upon visiting neighboring districts, the Viers Mill school staff discovered a co-teaching model in which ESL teachers co-planned and co-taught reading and writing together. The initial pilot program included two first grade classes and two second grade classes. First year success led to implementing the model in another grade level each year. ELL students were clustered in mainstream classes in groups of eight or fewer. Clustering allowed the ESL teacher to work in fewer classes at each grade level and therefore increased the time for each group of students. Reading and Writing Workshop were co-taught in each class. Reader's Workshop included self-selected books that the students read, recorded, responded to, and

conferenced about with the teacher. Writers' Workshop included students independently using the writing process from prewriting activities to publishing writing. Writer's Workshop also included conferences with the teacher and other students. The workshops did not replace mainstream teacher's guided reading sessions, but were in addition to guided reading. Both ESL and mainstream teachers conferenced with students during workshop time about books they were reading or their writing. Each teacher kept anecdotal records which were used later to plan instruction. The consistent routines of the workshop format increased the comfort level of the English learners.

Unlike the Chicago Teamworks program, Portocarrero and Bergin's (1997) data collected in the study of Viers Mill focused on student achievement levels. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to measure the progress of students in the co-taught classrooms. Qualitative measures included teacher observations, anecdotal records and informal reading assessments. Quantitative data included standardized reading inventories, readings tests, and performance assessments. Some assessments were administered once each year and others took place in the fall and spring. Portocarrero and Bergin's (1997) published study did not make a distinction between the results of English learners and English dominant students. Assessment results showed that the majority of students in the co-taught classrooms made steady progress in reading, writing and language use and improved their scores each year. Each year, the overall percentage of students

reading on grade level increased. By the third year of the program, 90% of second grade students were reading on grade level or higher. Using the workshop approach increased enthusiasm because students were encouraged to take ownership of their learning.

St. Paul Public Schools

The St. Paul Public Schools district was identified as the urban district “doing the best job of closing the achievement gap between kids who are learning English and those who already speak it” by Michael Casserly, the executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools (Walsh, 2006, p. 1). On standardized reading tests of 3rd and 5th grade students, St. Paul Public Schools students made more than a 20 percentage point gain in the 2004-2005 school year (Walsh, 2006). District leadership attributed the gains to program changes in which co-teaching replaced pull-out services for English learners (Zehr, 2006). ESL teachers and classroom teachers co-taught during part of the district-mandated Reader’s Workshop and Writer’s Workshop time. Mainstream and ESL teachers shared responsibility for instructing and assessing each child. When first implemented, participation was voluntary. Because of the success of the model, co-teaching was mandated district-wide (Zehr, 2006). Saint Paul Public Schools, as well as others, discovered that implementing co-teaching requires more than recognition of the need and acknowledgement of its success.

Requirements for Successful Co-Teaching

Voluntary Participation

Successful co-teaching arrangements are not easily implemented. Literature regarding co-teaching recommends that co-teaching participation and selection of partners should be voluntary (Schumm et al., 2001; Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997; Cook & Friend, 2004). However, Cook and Friend (2004) say student needs, not teacher preference, have to be kept in proper perspective. Instead, “Collaboration should be kid driven” (Marston, 1996, p. 131).

Compatible Partnerships

Ideally, when pairing teachers, use of a philosophical inventory could help determine compatibility and pair teachers that that would complement one another (Piechura-Couture, Tichenor, Touchton, Macisaac, & Heins, 2006). While teaching styles and philosophies should match, it is also important that partners be equal in skill and talent in order to ensure respect for one another as professionals (Clarke & DeNuzzo, 2003; Cook & Friend, 2004; Schumm et al., 2001).

Open Communication

In order for a co-teaching arrangement to be successful, teachers must also be willing to communicate openly and reach agreement regarding structures, routines, instructional content, and expectations for students. There must be clear understanding of each teacher’s roles and responsibilities as well as recognition

that there are two professionals in the classroom, not one teacher helping the other (Clark & DeNuzzo, 2003; Cook & Friend, 2004; Schumm et al., 2001).

Varied Instructional Approaches

In describing instructional approaches within co-teaching models, Cook and Friend (2004) identified six different approaches that prevent the ESL teacher from serving as a classroom helper. The first approach is *one teach, one observe*. In this approach, which is planned ahead of time, one teacher teaches while the other teacher observes students for previously decided upon behaviors, participation, or comprehension. Second, the *one teach, one drift* approach allows for one teacher to provide direct instruction while the other teacher drifts throughout the room helping students, explaining concepts, and checking for understanding and participation. In the third approach, *parallel teaching*, both teachers are simultaneously teaching the same content, but with the class divided. *Station teaching* is similar in that the class is divided, but each teacher teaches and then repeats the same content to each half of the class. *Alternative teaching* involves one teacher working with a large group while the other teacher gives specialized attention to a smaller group. The sixth and final approach is referred to as *team teaching* or “tag team teaching” (Cook & Friend, 2004, p. 15). Through this approach, both teachers take part in delivering instruction at the same time. All of these approaches can be used within the same co-taught classroom in order to ensure sharing of territory and responsibilities.

Administrative Support of Common Planning Time

Common planning time is necessary in order to adequately plan for instruction, coordinate English language development and mainstream curriculum, and to discuss student progress (Coltrane, 2002; Cook & Friend, 2004; Piechura-Couture et al., 2006; Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997; Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995; Schumm et al., 2001; Williams, 2003). Friend (1995) suggested multiple ways of finding time for collaboration including (a) having two classes team to release one teacher, (b) have an administrator or counselors cover classes, (c) find funds for substitute teachers, (d) stay after school once a month, or (e) have school-wide staff development sessions start late or end early to allow time for co-planning. Administrative support of co-teaching models will help ensure that teachers have the opportunity to meet regularly (Coltrane, 2002; Cook & Friend, 2004; Schumm et al., 2001). The administration can also be instrumental in providing opportunities for teachers new to co-teaching to visit successful co-taught-classes (Schumm et al., 2001).

Ongoing Professional Development

In order to equalize the learning base, teachers should participate in ongoing and common professional development (Schumm et al., 2001). This is especially important in new co-teaching arrangements (Clark & DeNuzzo, 2003; Cook & Friend, 2004). Furthermore, by working closely with ESL teachers,

mainstream teachers will have the opportunity to understand and learn proper evaluation and instructional methods for English learners (Williams, 2003).

Willingness to Share Territory

The willingness to share territory presents a hurdle for teachers. Williams (2003) found it was easier for teachers to work with an aide or subordinate than someone of equal authority. Flexibility and openness to try different solutions will help teachers be successful in working collaboratively in a co-teaching model (Coltrane, 2002; Schumm et al., 2001). Williams (2003) offered simple, yet appropriate advice: “Be nice to your teaching colleagues” (p. 2).

Time

As with other changes within the school environment, co-teaching models should be given time to emerge and strengthen (Clarke & DeNuzzo, 2003; Schumm et al., 2001). As teachers’ effectiveness improves through the collaboration and professional development co-teaching provides, student achievement will also likely improve (Spraker, 2003).

Challenges and Pitfalls of Co-Teaching

Co-teaching models are neither simple to implement nor to maintain. Williams (2003) warned that even if all steps are followed, there is no guarantee that all will go smoothly. As Portocarrero explained to Coltrane (2002), "This model is not perfect. There is no such thing as a perfect model. You have to be

open to trying new solutions, and they don't always work for everyone.

It is continually a work in progress" (p. 7).

Lack of Clarity of Roles

The most commonly expressed concern by teachers involved in Sakash and Rodriguez-Brown's (1995) study was lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities. Not only did lack of clarification cause concern, it was also a cause of anxiety and stress among teachers. Without careful planning and consideration, specialized teachers felt like aides or assistants in the mainstream classroom (Schumm et al., 2001).

Increased Work Load for Teachers

Co-teaching does not reduce the amount of work or planning time for teachers. Instead, many teachers in studies reported increased time devoted to planning for instruction (Schumm et al., 2001). Building structure within the day to allow for co-planning is difficult. It requires administrative support and strategic scheduling of classes to allow for shared planning time (Coltrane, 2002; Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995).

Challenge of Flexibility and Compromise

Schumm, Hughes, and Arguelles' (2001) study considered increased flexibility as the "essential component" of successful co-teaching (p. 57). In order to work successfully with one another, more give and take is required from each teacher in a co-teaching partnership. Although teachers should share a common, or

at least compatible, philosophy, teachers also have to learn to compromise on issues of assessment, instructional practice, routines, discipline, expectations of students, and sharing of space (Schumm et al., 2001; Williams (2003); Zigmond & Magiera, 2001).

Classroom Placement of Students

Clarke and DeNuzzo (2003) warn that due to the presence of two teachers, co-taught classrooms tend to become a “dumping ground for all behavior and learning problems” (p. 7). In order to avoid this, student placement in co-taught classrooms should be carefully balanced. If too many students in need of specialized instruction are placed in a classroom, then it appears to be a remedial class. If too few students in need of modified instruction are in a co-taught classroom, then it is difficult to justify the ESL teacher’s increased time required to co-teach (Zigmond & Magiera, 2001). In the 2006-2007 ELL Handbook for staff, Saint Paul Public Schools recommends that ELL students do not exceed 50% of any class roster. No matter the number of English learners placed within a class, teachers must maintain grade level standards and offer accommodations only for students who need those (Cook & Friend, 2004).

Teacher Availability

If co-teaching is implemented at every grade level, additional personnel have to be hired (Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997). Budget constraints, as well as a shortage of ESL certified teachers, limits the number of specially trained teachers

available to co-teach in the mainstream classroom (Coltrane, 2002). Additionally, Coltrane revealed that some teachers are resistant to co-teaching. For schools with only one ESL teacher, co-teaching in multiple classrooms leaves little time for individualized pull-out services (Zigmond & Magiera, 2001).

Not a Fix-All Solution

Clark and DeNuzzo (2003) warned that co-teaching should not be seen as the only service delivery option. Instead it should be part of a “continuum of service delivery options...based on the individual needs of each student” (p.3). Likewise, Zigmond and Magiera, (2001) cautioned that co-teaching can’t exist alone and should be one of a variety of services offered.

Student Benefits of Co-Teaching

Although convincing evidence or even measurement of student academic achievement was not always included in the research regarding co-teaching, other benefits to students were frequently identified.

Social and Emotional

Qualitative data, including student observations, concluded that students in co-taught classrooms, instead of pull-out instructional programs, experienced positive social and emotional outcomes. Observers noted increased heterogeneous groups of students working together and improved student attitudes about school (Schumm et al., 2001; Spraker, 2003; Williams, 2003).

Literature also reported increased self-esteem and gains in self-confidence as students previously pulled-out of the mainstream classroom worked at their own level under the same expectations of mainstream classmates (Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997; Schumm et al., 2001). Integration rather than isolation led to a greater sense of belonging among students previously served outside the mainstream classroom (Coltrane, 2002; Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997; Spraker, 2003).

Cultural Awareness and Community Building

Inclusion of English learners in the mainstream classroom increased cross-cultural understanding within the entire school environment (Sakash and Rodriguez-Brown, 1995). A teacher interviewed in the Schumm et al. (2001) study commented, “The students are thriving in the environment of acceptance and the celebration of diversity” (p. 58). Wunder and Lindsey (2004) called the co-taught classroom “a richer context for all learners” (p. 1).

Improved Learning

Students in co-taught classrooms were provided with better instruction and a variety of teaching strategies and styles (Coltrane, 2002; Cook & Friend, 2004; Schumm et al., 2001). The co-teaching partnerships led to increased coordination of instruction and curriculum between ESL and mainstream teachers thus eliminating the “disconnected worlds of learning” (Cary, 1997, p. 19) that students previously experienced (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995). Remaining in the

mainstream classroom allowed for large blocks of uninterrupted instructional time which provided greater opportunity for increased development and improvement of skills (Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997). The increased exposure to the reading/language arts curriculum provided English learners additional opportunities for developing social and academic language (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995; Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997).

Teacher Benefits of Co-Teaching

Co-teaching not only provides advantages for students, but teachers also benefit from co-teaching. Schumm et al., (2001) reported that most teachers participating in co-teaching models “perceived co-teaching as a positive experience” (p 56). The literature identified numerous advantages for teachers in co-teaching models.

Increased Knowledge and Confidence

Co-teaching models allowed for both mainstream and ESL teachers to learn from each other as they shared techniques and strategies, thus increasing their instructional repertoire and providing ongoing professional development (Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997; Schumm et al., 2001; Spraker, 2003). Mainstream teachers gained confidence and familiarity with working with diverse learners, while ESL and special education teachers became more aware of the pace of the mainstream classroom, the curriculum, and academic and behavior expectations (Cook & Friend, 2004; Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997; Schumm et al., 2001). Since

ESL teachers often have greater understanding of other cultures, they were able to help mainstream teachers understand situations related to culture or learning styles (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995). Teachers in the co-taught classrooms gained a “more balanced understanding of the needs of language minority students” (Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995, p. 6). Teachers were less frustrated as they moved beyond a one size fits all approach to teaching (Schumm et al., 2001). Overall, teachers felt more accountable for all students and replaced the “yours and mine” with “ours” (Schumm et al., 2001, p. 58).

Increased Collegiality

Co-teaching led to increased collegiality among teachers and reduced the number of teachers working in isolation of others (Schumm et al., 2001; Spraker, 2003). Co-teachers often reported that the sense of support was the most noticeable advantage of co-teaching (Cook & Friend, 2004). Not only did co-teachers share responsibility for instruction and assessment, but the partnership also facilitated sharing of resources such as instructional units and lesson materials (Coltrane, 2002; Schumm et al., 2001). Teachers felt like they were part of a team as they worked collaboratively to meet student needs (Schumm et al., 2001).

Implications and Conclusions

In a “Meta-Analysis of Co-Teaching Research” Murawski and Swanson (2001) synthesized data regarding the effectiveness of co-teaching as an option for students with disabilities. They concluded that the 89 studies reviewed provided

“limited results that must be generalized with caution” (Murawski & Swanson, 2001, p. 265). Only six studies presented conclusive quantitative evidence that the effectiveness of co-teaching is moderately successful. However, despite limited evidence, Murawski and Swanson (2001) went on to say that co-teaching should not be eliminated, but studied further and additional data collected as the data suggested no negative impact on students’ academic progress (Piechura-Couture et al., 2006). Further research is needed to provide conclusive evidence about the effect on the language development and academic achievement of English learners in co-taught classrooms.

In considering a co-teaching model, it is important to acknowledge the benefit of increased professional development of teachers. In the literature reviewed, increased teacher confidence and knowledge was repeatedly identified as a benefit of co-teaching partnerships between mainstream teachers and specialized teachers.

This project, and future long range and broader scope research, will attempt to add to the body of evidence regarding ESL and mainstream teachers co-teaching English learners in the mainstream classroom. English learners represent a fast growing minority. It is imperative, even legally mandated, that all possible is done to provide an effective, quality education for all students including students acquiring English. To fail to improve the education of English learners in the mainstream classroom is potentially limiting their ability to achieve grade level

competencies, have equal opportunity for higher education, or to compete within the work force as an adult. Efforts such as implementation of a co-teaching instructional model can help address the need for equal and high quality education for all students including those who are marginalized and often overlooked.

Chapter 3

ACTION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

My action research began with questioning how I conduct learning activities for English learners as well as how I provide professional development for mainstream teachers. As the only teacher at my school with a specific credential to work with English language learners, my responsibilities as ESL teacher include teaching students and training teachers. Convinced that I could do my job more effectively, I set out to find options to a pull-out ESL program that removed English learners from their mainstream classrooms. My research approach was a mixed-method experimental research design. I collected qualitative data from students and teachers including interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations. I also collected quantitative data including students' scores on standardized language proficiency assessments, and reading and writing assessments. My research was guided by the question, what impact does co-teaching have on English language learners, their English dominant classmates, and mainstream classroom teachers?

The results of the informal data presented in chapter one and literature reviewed in chapter two convinced me that I needed to make modifications in the current instructional model for English language learners and the amount of ELL related training provided for mainstream classroom teachers. Teachers wanted and

needed more training and ELLs needed to be integrated in the mainstream classroom more. Co-teaching with classroom teachers may help meet both needs.

In this third chapter, I discuss the methodology and results of my action research project. The action research included co-teaching during reader's and writer's workshop in a mainstream fourth grade classroom. After summarizing the co-teaching methods used, I report quantitative data on students' reading lexile level. I then disseminate qualitative information regarding changes in students' writing interests and attitudes. Finally, I discuss students' and teachers' perceptions related to co-teaching.

Our Co-Teaching Approach

Through my review of the literature related to co-teaching, I developed a growing interest in the research and implementation of collaborative teaching models in which the ESL teacher no longer works in isolation, but co-plans and co-teaches with the mainstream teacher. I began co-teaching for one hour each day during communication arts in a 4th grade mainstream classroom as a small scale test. When I started my action research, the class included 19 English dominant students and two English learners. However, at the end of February, Allen, one of the ELL students suddenly moved out of state. The co-teaching between me, the ESL teacher, and Ms. Spencer, a mainstream classroom teacher, took place during the third and fourth quarters, February until the end of May. I chose this class because Ms. Spencer wanted to learn more instructional strategies appropriate for

ELL students. In addition, she was open to me being in her classroom, she was willing to work collaboratively, and her classes' communication arts time worked well with my schedule and the established ESL pull-out program.

I co-taught in Ms. Spencer's class four days a week from 2:00 to 3:15 pm each day. Initially, we planned to adjust our lunch or after school schedules in order to provide time for collaborative planning. This became difficult for us. Planning often happened within the rushed minutes of the morning or in the hall as students took a restroom break. Nevertheless, we were able to implement various co-teaching arrangements in order to prevent my role from becoming a teacher's helper. We varied our approach utilizing Cook and Friend's (2004) six different approaches to co-teaching.

One Teach, One Observe

At least once each week, we used the *one teach, one observe* approach. For example, while I presented a SMARTBoard lesson on figurative language, Ms. Spencer observed teaching strategies including technology integration as well as the level of engagement of students. Through this approach, we both noticed that we often miss cues that a student may be misunderstanding lesson content, or need rephrasing to increase understanding. We learned new strategies from each other and noticed more about how students did or did not react to lesson material.

One Teach, One Drift

The *one teach, one drift* approach allowed for one teacher to provide direct instruction while the other teacher drifted throughout the room helping students, explaining concepts, and checking for understanding and participation. This approach allowed one of us to work individually with students while the other teacher continued working with the rest of the class. This was helpful for Jody and another student seated near her who had difficulty staying focused. For Jody, I was able to clarify difficult vocabulary, create graphic organizers to explain key concepts, or check for understanding if the lesson called for independent practice.

Both the *one teach, one observe* and the *one teach, one drift* approaches were helpful during reader's or writer's workshop time in which one teacher presented a mini-lesson, led guided practice, and then gave students opportunity for independent practice through reading or writing.

Parallel Teaching

We did not often use *parallel teaching*, where both teachers are simultaneously teaching the same content, but with the class divided. However, we did use this approach for collaborative project work that was better suited for small groups. For example, in a collaborative poster making session students brainstormed describing words, then used dictionaries to check the spelling before neatly writing the words on a poster that they presented to the principal on Principal's Day. Each teacher provided guidance for half of the class.

Alternative Teaching

Alternative teaching involves one teacher working with a large group while the other teacher gives specialized attention to a smaller group. We used this approach when assessments or observations identified small groups of students who needed additional instruction on certain skills. One teacher worked with the whole group, while the other teacher worked with a small group at a table at the side of the room, on the floor, or in the hall. An ELL student was not always part of the smaller group needing remediation. Ms. Spencer and I alternated who worked with the small groups based on teacher expertise and familiarity with lesson content.

Team Teaching

The final approach we used is referred to as *team teaching*. Through this approach, both teachers take part in delivering instruction at the same time. This approach let us both share in teaching and interacting with all the students. Our teaching style and varied knowledge base complemented each other. While teaching we often added to what the other person said, rephrased what was said, charted information, or drew a picture or graphic organizer to increase understanding.

The use of co-teaching approaches including *one teach, one observe, one teach, one drift, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and team teaching* helped the mainstream classroom teacher and I share territory and responsibilities. It also

helped ensure that my time in the classroom was well-spent. Ms. Spencer was able to see effective instructional strategies in use which helped her gain knowledge and confidence regarding working with ELL students. Co-teaching allowed her to observe use of appropriate ELL instructional activities such as cooperative learning, visual and graphic representation of information, repetition, adjusted speech, modified assignments, technology integration, and scaffolding techniques that helped provide comprehensible input for the ELL student. Prior to our co-teaching, Ms. Spencer was unsure of what to do to help ELL students and what she was doing that did not help ELL students. The following sections examine the impact that co-teaching had on students' reading and writing levels.

Impact on Student Reading Levels

The curricular content of the co-taught lessons included a focus on writer's workshop and reader's workshop. While co-teaching in the 4th grade classroom, I collected data regarding the students' reading levels. Reading levels had just been assessed in January. I used these January scores as their pre-test and repeated the test in May for test scores in an experimental design. The students' reading Lexile level was assessed using the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). This software is used in our district to provide information regarding students' reading level and progress. The SRI assessment is completed individually in the school's computer lab. Students read passages and answer fill-in-the blank, cloze-type questions. Passages gradually become longer and more difficult as the student progresses

through the assessment. Most students finish the SRI in 20-30 minutes. Some students take longer than an hour. The SRI analyzes students' responses and measures students' reading level on a Lexile framework scale. Lexile scores range from 0 to approximately 1800 according to Scholastic, Inc. (Scholastic Inc. Customer Service, personal communication, April 11, 2007). The fourth grade range of proficiency is 600 to 900. Levels below 100 Lexile appear as BR or Beginning Reader. Scholastic considers readers at or below this level as not ready for independent reading and therefore not accurately assessed using the SRI assessment. One student received a score of BR on the pretest. Although this student demonstrated growth from BR to a Lexile of 312, the January score of BR was not measurable by SRI's standards and therefore this student's scores were not included in the analysis of the data.

Table 4

Students' Lexile Levels as Measured by SRI Test Completed in January and May

	January Lexile	May Lexile	Increase or Decrease in Lexile Level
	BR	312	**
	242	437	195
	678	831	153
	962	1108	146
	911	1043	132
	290	419	129
	858	954	96
	843	936	93
	*143	*216	*73
	433	495	62
	977	1014	37
	776	804	28
	1059	1035	24
	767	774	7
	821	820	-1
	950	946	-4
	1089	1014	-75
	941	779	-162
	1129	960	-169
	1180	927	-253
January Mean	792.05	May Mean	816.42

*English Language Learner

**Unable to determine increase in Lexile level.

The correlation coefficient between the January and May tests is .926 ($p < .001$). For my research question regarding reading level gains as shown by the SRI test, in the dependent t-test, there is not a statistically significant increase in Lexile levels ($t = -.884$, $df = 18$, $p = .194$) from the January test ($M = 792.05$) to the

May test ($M = 816.42$). It is interesting to note that the difference in the mean of the January test ($M=792.05$) and the May test ($M=816.42$) is 24.37. However, the one English language learner's reading level increased from a Lexile of 143 to 216, a gain of 73. This is an encouraging result!

The table of data regarding the January and May SRI tests show that the Lexile level of 6 of the 20 students actually decreased. One of my suppositions is that the students' performance reveals a lack of motivation within the last few weeks of the school year. In addition, within the months of January through May, these students experienced the following disruptions to their school schedule: three unexpected snows days, three weeks of disruption to the schedule while I administered the state language proficiency assessment as well as testing of upcoming kindergarten students, spring break in March, two weeks of standardized testing in communication arts and mathematics and another week of field testing of a new state standardized test in May.

Impact on Student Writing

Writing Interest and Attitude Survey

Since the co-taught lessons included writer's workshop, I wanted to become more familiar with the 4th grade students' writing attitudes and interests. I created a survey to find out more about their current attitudes, interests and self evaluation of their writing skills. The results of the survey provided insight into how the 4th graders in the co-taught class felt about their own ability to write and

their level of interest in writing. In order to show if there was a change in the students' writing interests and attitudes during the time I co-taught the class, students completed a writing interest and attitude survey in February and again in May at the end of the school year. The survey is included in Appendix C – Writing Survey.

I asked 13 continuous, Likert-type questions about writing attitudes and interest. I asked 5 group or categorical questions about gender, grade level, class assignment, length of time at the school, and language category. I also asked two open-ended questions about what they do when they start a writing assignment and about different types of writing the students do.

Before administering the survey, I explained that I wanted to know more about how they felt about writing since I would be working with their class during the Communication Arts block. I explained that they should not write their names on their papers. I also explained the various degrees of answer choices from strongly disagree to strongly agree. I asked students to carefully consider each question and try to avoid marking neutral as a response. Students were allowed to raise their hand if they had any question about an item or if they would like an item read to them. There was no time limit to the survey. Student mentors administered the survey in an interview format to four students who arrived late from the Learning Center.

Twenty students completed the survey in February and nineteen in May. There were 8 boys (40%) and 12 girls (60%) in February and 8 boys (42.1%) and 11 girls (57.9%) in May. I calculated the frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations for all the Likert, or continuous, items. Table 5 shows the mean and standard deviations for the continuous items and the frequencies and percentages.

The results of the February survey were not incredibly revealing. Most responses fell in the neutral to positive range. After observing many of these students during writing time, I was not surprised that most of these students aren't interested in writing more at school. However, I was encouraged that on the February survey a significant majority (n=15, 75%) of students agreed or strongly agreed that they want to be better writers. By May, the responses to the survey item "I'd like to be a better writer" increased from a mean of 4.0 to 4.26. Perhaps instructional modification and additional writing conferences with teachers contributed to the increase in positive interest and attitudes towards writing.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of February and May Writing Interest and Attitudes Survey

	February		May		Increase or Decrease in Mean
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
I like to write.	3.3	1.302	3.84	1.463	+.54
I like to write letters.	2.55	1.317	2.95	1.545	+.4
I like to write about what I'm reading.	2.6	1.353	2.89	1.049	+.29
I like to write stories.	3.4	1.429	3.68	1.529	+.28
I would like to be a better writer.	4	1.414	4.26	1.046	+.26
I am good at writing.	3.3	1.031	3.53	1.172	+.23
I am a better writer than my classmates.	2.4	.940	2.58	1.376	+.18
My classmates are better writers than I am.	3.45	1.146	2.68	1.376	-.77
Writing assignments are easy for me.	3.45	.945	2.89	.809	-.56
I like for other people to read what I write.	3.15	1.268	2.95	1.268	-.2
I wish we had to write more at school.	2.3	1.081	2.16	1.068	-.14
I wish we wrote less at school.	3.55	1.468	3.47	1.467	-.08
I like to read.	3.55	.999	3.53	1.429	-.02

Since the survey was completed anonymously, I could not compare individual responses from the February and May surveys. Instead I looked at the level of which the means of responses increased or decreased. Although the data did not prove a significant increase in the writing attitudes and interests from the

February to May surveys, the results were not discouraging. After all, the mean of the responses for “I like to write” and “I would like to be a better writer,” both increased. Considerable time in the last two quarters of the school year was spent on writing. Because there were two teachers in the room, Ms. Spencer and I were able to conference with students frequently about their writing. We both provided the students encouragement, guidance, and suggestions for improving their writing. Although only a slight increase, the students improved in their self perception and desire to improve their writing.

Student Writing Conferences

At the end of the school year, I conferenced with 10 students about their end of the year writing assessments. All 4th grade students wrote to the same prompt, “Describe your favorite day of this school year.” I met one at a time with four boys and six girls including one English language learner. I had students read their final drafts aloud. Then each student identified their strengths in writing and what writing traits showed room for improvement. During the writing conferences, eight of the ten students commented that their writing improved over the school year. Six of the eight students stated that they believed they improved more from January to May than from August to December. Reasons for the improvement included increased practice, writing lessons, and getting suggestions for improvement from the teacher during writing conferences.

Lack of Quantitative Data from Student Writing

I did not collect quantitative data regarding the writing assessments. Our school adopted the 6+1 writing traits assessment during the school year. However, teachers were quickly introduced, not adequately trained, on using 6+1 Trait writing assessment rubrics. Teachers learned more about using the new writing assessment rubrics in an April in-service. Although we used the 6+1 trait assessment rubrics, students did not receive systematic instruction in each of the traits. Therefore, the writing assessments from January to May were scored inconsistently. As we learned more about the writing traits and taught them to students, our expectations and assessment of student writing changed. As a result, comparing the writing assessment scores from January to May would not be valid comparison.

Students' Perceptions of Co-Teaching

At the end of April I interviewed six boys in the class and 11 girls including one English language learner. During these interviews, I asked the students about writing, having ELL students in their class, and their perceptions of co-teaching. The interview protocol is in Appendix D. Table 6 includes the frequencies and percentages of responses to the question: "Do you think it's helpful to have two teachers in the classroom at the same time?" Although I interviewed 17 students, some students gave multiple answers that were in more than one category.

Table 6

Frequencies and percentages of responses to the question: “Is it helpful to have two teachers in the classroom at the same time?” (n= 17)

<u>Category</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
1. More people can get help or you don't have to wait as long for help	11	64.7
2. One teacher can work with students while the other teacher is doing something else	4	23.5
3. Learn more	4	23.5
4. Different styles keeps class interesting	3	17.6
5. Keeps kids from doing nothing	2	11.8
6. Kids get more work done	1	5.9

Note. Some students gave more than one reason. As a result, the added percentage is more than 100%.

All of the students believed that it was helpful to have more than one teacher in the classroom. Forty-four percent of the students' responses identified being able to get individual attention as a reason it was helpful to have two teachers in the room. One student answered:

Like when someone's raising their hand, like, like, it's hard to, well, it's hard to like keep raising your hand 'til everybody else has been called on and it gets tiring and if there's two teachers then you won't

have to raise your hand for a long time. So, and they can teach two students at once.

Four students identified increased learning as a benefit of co-teaching. Their comments included: “You learn different things from different teachers. Like they teach you different things about different subjects” and “Since kind of you guys do different things, I’ll learn two ways to do it.”

Two students said having two teachers in the room increased student productivity and interest. “Kids can get their work done faster. They won’t be sittin’ there and doing nothing. It keeps kids from doing nothing.” As another student humorously admitted, “Sometimes you can get a break from the other teacher.”

Teacher’s Perception on the Impact of Co-Teaching on Students

During an interview after the end of the school year, Ms. Spencer responded with the following when asked what she perceived as the impact of co-teaching on students:

Thinking how it went the few months we tried it, I think co-teaching works really well. The kids get more out of it. I have a certain way of doing things and then you would come in and say or teach things in a different way and then maybe kids who didn’t understand before, would say, “Now I get it!” Co-teaching gives them more

opportunities for understanding concepts and things being taught.

They benefit from the different teaching styles.

Students' Perceptions of English Language Learners in the Classroom

These students have grown accustomed to having ELL students in their classes. When the ESL program started in 2002 with one ESL teacher and 14 English language learners, the current 4th graders involved in this study were kindergartners. Each year the program has grown giving these students the opportunity to attend school with students from several countries and language groups. When asked about having English language learners in their classroom, all of the fourth graders were positive about the experience. "I love to have other people from other countries because it's just awesome. They can share things with us and we can share things with them and they're...I just love people from other countries."

Students were also positive about ELL students remaining in the classroom for instruction. I asked "Should ELL students stay in the mainstream classroom or go to the ESL room for instruction?" The frequencies and percentages of the response appear in Table 7. Fifty-six percent of the responses indicated that all instruction should be in the mainstream classroom. "When she's um with the class more she's up to date." "When she had to go to a different classroom maybe when she came back it was a little hard and she needed help." "I think it's good that

she's in our room more because she kind of like knows what we're doing and she kind of like knows like what we're going to be doing and it's kind of easier for her.”

Thirty-one percent of the fourth graders said ELL students should receive instruction in the mainstream classroom and in the ESL room. Reasons students cited for combining instruction included: “She can learn some of our stuff and so she can learn other stuff and like learn more English and stuff like that” and “I think they should stay in the class most of the day and then go to another class because we don't learn about like still talking and stuff.”

Table 7

Frequencies and percentages of responses to the question: “Should ELL students stay in the regular classroom or go to the ESL room for instruction?” (n=16)

<u>Category</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
1. All instruction in regular classroom	9	56
2. Combined services in regular classroom and ESL room	5	31
3. ELL student's choice	2	13

Impact of Co-Teaching on an English Language Learner

Jody, the English language learner in Ms. Spencer's class, was positive about the change in the instructional program that allowed her to stay in the

mainstream classroom rather than be pulled out. I included her in the student interviews. When I asked if she liked staying in the classroom, she answered:

I like staying in my room. If I went there [*ESL Room*], I'm not going to learn and if they learn math then I'm not going to learn. I like going there, but, hmmm, I felt something like I'm not doing that good.

At the end of the year, I repeated the Woodcock Muñoz Language Survey, a language proficiency assessment used by our district. Jody's first assessment was completed January 8, 2007 after she transferred to our school from another school in a neighboring city. Table 8 shows the results of the January assessment and the May assessment. The results of the reading portion of the assessment showed an increase of two levels from 1-Negligible to 3-Limited. Her overall language proficiency increased from a rating of 1-2 Negligible to 3-Limited. Jody made tremendous progress in language development in the short period of time. Her progress during January to May is typical of the progress a student makes during an entire 10-month school year.

Table 8

Jody's Woodcock Muñoz Language Survey Results

	January 8, 2007	May 23, 2007
Speaking	2—Very Limited	3—Limited
Listening	2—Very Limited	3—Limited
Reading	1—Negligible	3—Limited
Writing	1—Negligible	2—Very Limited
Overall	1-2 Negligible	3—Limited

Impact on Teachers

This co-teaching project had a positive impact on both teachers involved. For me, it allowed me to apply my teaching skills in a whole class setting as well as with English dominant students. As a result, I became more familiar with the procedures and expectations in the mainstream classroom.

Ms. Spencer became more knowledgeable and confident in working with English language learners as she saw appropriate instructional strategies used in the context of reader's or writer's workshop. She gradually began to increase use of strategies such as cooperative learning, graphic organizers, and simplifying text during the co-teaching time and in other class periods. During an interview after the last day of school, Ms. Spencer shared what she gained from the co-teaching experience.

Co-teaching was good for me, too, not just the students. I learned a lot from it. I think it kind of calmed me down. I saw the things you did and how you changed things in the lesson and I thought, “Hey! I can do that!” I really think it was good for me and the kids.

Limitations of the Study

This research study was limited by the small sample size of only one class. Data from a control group such as one of the other fourth grade classes, would allow for more comparisons between the two classes to determine if the results were typical or if there were differences between the treatment group and control group.

Another limitation was the minimal elapse of time from the start of the co-teaching in February to the end of the school year in May. Adding to the limited time, February, March, and April are months in our district in which instructional schedules are preempted for standardized tests of language proficiency for ELL students, and state tests in Communication Arts for grades three through six.

In addition, our effectiveness as co-teachers was hindered by our lack of experience co-teaching. We were able to apply many of the recommendations for successful co-teaching from the literature such as voluntary participation and compatible partnerships. However, we did not have a common planning time. Additional and ongoing professional development for both teachers is also

recommended. Even after reviewing the literature regarding co-teaching, I continued to learn new information about co-teaching.

Summary of Results

Despite the limitations, the impact of co-teaching on all students appears to be positive, even if not significant. For the English language learner, her additional time in the mainstream classroom raised her self perception and confidence regarding grade level work and interaction with grade level peers. Jody experienced gains in reading and language development during the time she was in the mainstream classroom for instruction in reading and writing. The impact of co-teaching on the students and teachers involved in this action research project warrants further implementation and research to definitively answer my research question of what impact co-teaching has on English language learners, their English dominant classmates, and mainstream classroom teachers.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSIONS AND ACTION PLAN

My implementation of co-teaching came from my questioning the effectiveness of our current pull-out model for English language learners. I wondered if instruction outside of the regular classroom was beneficial to the students, or if another instructional model would better serve the ELL students. I realized that some ELL students felt stigmatized by leaving their regular classroom for instruction in the ESL room. These students wanted to be fully included in their classroom rather than have their school day disrupted.

As the ESL teacher, I was also faced with the challenge of providing classroom teachers with ongoing training to improve the education of students learning English and grade level content. I was discouraged that meaningful ELL training opportunities for regular classroom teachers had diminished as greater training demands for the district's literacy plan monopolized grade level meetings and staff development days. My circumstance was not unlike that discussed by O'Loughlin (2003) and Xiaoping & Zhang (2004). I was responsible for professional development that did not fit in the schedule which left the regular classroom teachers and me working in isolation from one another.

Although I was aware of the need to integrate the ESL program with the regular classroom's instruction, I was becoming overwhelmed with the challenge of integrating what I taught in the ESL room with what was happening across

seven grade levels and eleven classrooms. It seemed the ELL students and I were both operating in that disconnected world of learning described by Cary (1997). I knew there had to be a way to do my job more efficiently and effectively.

In Search of Efficiency and Effectiveness

As I reviewed the literature presented in Chapter 2 regarding pull-out programs, I was not encouraged. The negative aspects of pull-out that O'Loughlin, (2003), Portocarrero & Bergin, (1997), Thomas & Collier (1997) and others wrote of was what students and teachers at our school were experiencing. The ELL students in the pull-out program were experiencing fragmented instructional periods as they transitioned from their classroom to the ESL room. ELL students like Jody received instruction alone or with only one other student which reduced time for interaction and authentic communication with mainstream peers. I occasionally observed lower aspirations for academic achievement and reduced expectations of teachers when students' instruction was separate from the regular classroom. Additionally, classroom teachers with ELL students were not always using instructional methods appropriate and beneficial for English language learners.

With only 25 to 40 ELL students across seven grade levels and multiple languages represented among the ELL students, it seemed I had few opportunities or the ability to make significant changes to the current pull-out ESL model. Our school is one of the "low population" schools educating one third of the nation's

two million English learners (National Council for Education Statistics, 2004). In Missouri, the 2005 ELL Census reported that 19,092 ELL students were enrolled in 203 schools throughout the state. One hundred nineteen of the Missouri school districts enroll fewer than 20 ELL students. Twenty-three school districts enrolled only 20 to 40 ELL students. (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2005).

As I explored what other schools and districts were doing, I came across information about schools and school districts that have replaced pull-out programs with co-teaching partnerships among ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers. I was intrigued by their students' progress and the positive results of co-teaching and set out to learn more. My quest ultimately led me to trying co-teaching in a fourth grade class.

My trial implementation of co-teaching was guided by my research questions: what impact does co-teaching have on English language learners, their English dominant classmates, and regular classroom teachers? Can co-teaching meet the need for teacher training and the language and academic development needs of English learners?

Findings in Relation to Previous Studies

Student Impact

The results showed that the most significant gains appeared to be for the English language learner and the regular classroom teacher. Jody's increased

inclusion in the classroom resulted in additional time to interact with English speaking classmates. Like the students in Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown's (1995) study, Jody learned more English, increased interaction with English speaking classmates, and expressed comfort in being in the regular classroom. Jody became more interactive with classmates and seemed more at ease in her classroom. Jody also experienced gains in reading and writing ability and language proficiency. Her writing ability progressed from little to no response to a writing prompt in January to being able to write simple paragraphs in response to a prompt in May. According to qualitative data, the English dominant students benefited from increased individual attention and varied instruction as demonstrated in their writing attitudes and interests.

Teacher Impact

The classroom teacher, Ms. Spencer, improved in her level of confidence in working with English language learners as well as learned new instructional strategies appropriate for ELL students, yet beneficial to English dominant students as well. The co-teaching experience helped her develop what Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown (1995) called a "more balanced understanding of the needs of language minority students" (p. 6).

Personal Impact of Co-Teaching

As the ESL teacher, I gained familiarity with regular classroom routines and grade level expectations. It was satisfying to move from working in isolation

to working in partnership with another teacher. In the literature, co-teachers often reported that the sense of support was the most noticeable advantage of co-teaching (Cook & Friend, 2004). I felt like Ms. Spencer and I were a team working collaboratively to meet student needs, instead of individual teachers working in isolation. The shared responsibility for the students made it easy to move from thinking of the students as “yours and mine” to “ours” (Schumm et al., 2001, p. 58).

Limitations of the Study

Similar to other research studies on co-teaching, my quantitative results did not show significant gains in the students’ reading comprehension levels or writing assessment scores. In part, the lack of significant academic impact on students may be due to the limited time period in which we were able to co-teach. According to Spraker (2003), if we had been able to improve our effectiveness then the student achievement would have also improved.

In our zeal to implement co-teaching, we did not adequately follow the list of requirements the literature suggested for successful co-teaching. What we did adhere to were the suggestions of voluntary participation, compatible partnership, open communication, varied instructional approaches, and willingness to share territory. We lacked collaborative planning time. In addition to increased preparation and planning, we needed more time. Clarke & DeNuzzo, (2003) and Schumm et al., (2001) all agree that co-teaching models should be given time to

emerge and strengthen. Four frequently interrupted months did not give us enough time to fully implement co-teaching and determine its impact on student learning. The Portocarrero & Bergin (1997) study in Viers Mills lasted over 3 years. A longer period of time would have allowed for more conclusive data collection as well as time for additional professional development related to co-teaching English language learners.

Learning from Experienced Co-Teachers

An additional limitation in the study was not having colleagues who had experience co-teaching. However, at the end of the school year, another teacher and I had the opportunity to visit with experienced co-teachers in St. Paul Public Schools in Minnesota. We visited four schools and met with six teachers of English language learners who co-teach with regular classroom teachers. We were encouraged to hear from teachers who worked through the challenges of transitioning from pull-out to co-teaching. Each program was different based on the individual needs of students and the strengths and weaknesses of teachers.

One of the teachers who has co-taught for five years said, “It’s the best way to teach. I don’t know why anyone would want to teach on their own” When we asked about the student progress in the co-taught classes, she described the progress as “quite stunning!” At another school, the teacher encouraged us to “Give it a try. It’s not like you’re going to have everything perfect. Learn as you go. Using the ELL strategies is going to benefit all the kids.” We met after school

with a teacher who had been part of training teachers new to co-teaching. She advised, “It’s not going to be easy. You have to sink your teeth in.” However, she has seen the benefit for students, “I have seen ELL kids blossom as readers and writers in the regular classroom.” At the last school we visited, the teacher shared that co-teaching requires teachers to step out of their comfort zones and learn new ways of teaching. However, in her experience, she said co-teaching “relaxes the whole teaching experience and makes it richer to work with someone.” This teacher also shared a benefit for students that we had not yet considered. Co-teaching requires problem solving, collaboration, and respect for the other teacher all taking place in front of students. Not only do students learn the academic lesson, but benefit from the model of a healthy adult relationship and how to solve disagreements appropriately (St. Paul Teachers, personal communication, June 7-8, 2007).

We came away from Saint Paul excited, yet aware of the upcoming challenges. The teachers who had experience co-teaching were positive, enthusiastic, and willing to share their perspective of the benefits of co-teaching. What they had to say not only informed my action research, but confirmed what I had read in the literature concerning the benefits of co-teaching for students and teachers. Shortly after the trip, my future co-teacher, Mrs. LeCluyse sent me the following note:

Collaboration energizes me. I believe that co-teaching will allow me to expand the implementation of sound teaching strategies and therefore, better meet the needs of each of my students. I believe that my students will greatly benefit from having two adults facilitating their instruction especially in the area of Communication Arts. I look forward to planning together and being able to reach more children individually at their instructional level...hopefully supporting greater academic growth in the areas of reading and writing which will impact all other subjects. (M. LeCluyse, personal communication, July 16, 2007)

Continuing the Action Research

Adhering to the opinion of Murawski and Swanson (2001), I conclude that co-teaching partnerships between ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers should not be eliminated. Additional data needs to be collected to determine the impact of co-teaching on students and teachers. As a result, my action plan includes expanding my co-teaching efforts to include two grade levels rather than one and the duration of the school year rather than part of one semester. During the 2007-2008 school year I will co-teach in a kindergarten and second grade class. Early enrollment figures include seven ELL students in the kindergarten class and five ELL students in the second grade class. I will collect data from a control class at the kindergarten and second grade level, which will allow for

stronger quantitative comparisons about the impact of co-teaching on all of the students.

Because we will be starting the school year with our co-teaching model, we will be able to follow the advice of the literature suggesting a common plan time. This will be built into our schedules with the support of our administrator. In addition, the teachers and I have the opportunity to meet collaboratively to plan and prepare prior to the first day of instruction. We are developing a co-teaching planning sheet that includes Cook & Friend's (2004) six different approaches to co-teaching. This will help us vary our instructional strategies in order to maximize the impact of lessons for students and teachers.

Throughout the year, we will collect and review data on all students including English language learners and their English dominant classmates. Since co-teaching provides an opportunity for all students to benefit from the combined knowledge and expertise of two teachers, it will be important for us to show the impact of co-teaching on all of the students including the language acquisition and academic progress of English learners. I am especially interested in collecting conclusive data that shows the impact of co-teaching on student learning.

Additional Questions to Answer

In addition to answering my original questions regarding the impact of co-teaching on students and teachers, I hope to answer the following questions as well. At what language proficiency level is co-teaching the most effective? Are

students with negligible to very limited English proficiency best served through pull-out classes? This research project took place in an intermediate grade, I wonder if there will be significant differences in the impact of co-teaching on primary students in kindergarten and second grade.

Pull-out May Continue

When considering future plans to replace pull-out ESL classes with co-teaching, we must have a plan to meet the needs of newcomers, those with negligible to very limited English, and ELL students who struggle without intensive small group or individual attention characteristic of a pull-out program (Cook & Friend, 2004). Until newcomer students have a basic understanding of English, they may still need and benefit from pull-out services (Portocarrero & Bergin, 1997). By co-teaching at two grade levels rather than all seven, my schedule will allow for newcomer groups or individual attention. As we continue co-teaching partnerships we must be mindful of the needs of individual students. Careful planning, effective communication, and frequent review of our progress implementing co-teaching as well as student progress, will be necessary to prevent the co-teaching model from being detrimental rather than beneficial for ELL students Williams (2003).

Implications of the Study for Others

While I am especially interested in adding to my own knowledge base about co-teaching and its impact on students and teachers, teachers at

other schools will benefit from what we continue to learn about co-teaching. This research study and others are beneficial to schools like ours with few English language learners and schools with a limited number of teachers with specific certification to work with English language learners. One of the greatest benefits of co-teaching is the professional development it provides for teachers. Too often districts or local schools provide workshops on ELL strategies that do not meet teachers' needs. Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004) discovered the following:

Professional development strategies found to improve teaching are: sustained, intensive development with modeling, coaching, and problem-solving; collaborative endeavors for educators to share knowledge; experiential opportunities that engage teachers in actual teaching, assessment, and observation; and development grounded in research but also drawing from teacher experience and inquiry, connected to the teachers' classes, students, and subjects taught.

(p. 7)

The fast growing English language learner population deserve to experience the best possible learning environment. Co-teaching provides more opportunities for professional development that improve teachers' ability to meet the needs of students of diverse languages. Closing the achievement gap between English only students and English language learners is a daunting task. It cannot

be accomplished through the efforts of one teacher. In order to increase English language learners' opportunities for success, all teachers must be prepared to teach in such a way that students have the opportunity to reach their greatest academic potential.

Co-teaching has a positive impact on ELL students, their classmates, and teachers working collaboratively in a co-teaching partnership. Co-teaching is a way to improve the education of English language learners to provide opportunities for success in school and the workforce.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
TEXT OF ONLINE TEACHER SURVEY

Working with English Language Learners (ELL)

Years of teaching experience 1-3 4-6 7-10 more than 10 years

I teach primary (K-2nd) intermediate (3rd-6th)

Have you or do you currently have ELL students in your class? *Please check the appropriate response below*

- I have never had an ELL student in my class
- I currently have at least one ELL in my class
- I have had at least one ELL in my class before

Think about all the training you have received to work with ELL students. About how much training have you received to work specifically with ELL students?

I have received no training 0-1 hours 1-6 hours over 6 hours

Of this training, how much have you received **in the last three years**?

I have received no training 0-1 hours 1-6 hours over 6 hours

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below. Do not overthink any item and please do not be offended by any of these questions. As part of my Master's project, it is important for me to know degrees of agreement and disagreement regarding these issues. Please be honest and feel free to keep responses anonymous. If possible, avoid neutral responses if you have even a slight level of agreement or disagreement.

Strongly **A**gree **A**gree Neutral Disagree Strongly **D**isagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. The inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classrooms creates a positive educational atmosphere.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. ELL students should spend most of their instructional time in the ESL room with a specially trained teacher.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. ELL students should not be in the regular classroom until they acquire a minimum level of proficiency in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. It is difficult for regular classroom teachers to find enough time to meet the needs of ELL students.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. The inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classrooms benefits all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. Teachers sometimes need to modify assignments, including tests, for ELL students.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. It is unreasonable to expect a regular classroom teacher to teach a child who does not speak English.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. ELL students should spend most of their instructional time in the regular classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. Regular classroom teachers need more training to work with ELL students.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. I have adequate training to work with ELL students.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

11. I am comfortable teaching ELL students in the regular classroom.
12. I am interested in learning more about working with ELL students.
13. I think the ESL teacher should provide training for regular classroom teachers in working with English learners.
14. Having ELL students pulled out of the regular classroom is the best way to meet their needs.
15. I can think of 5 or more instructional strategies to use with English learners.

SA	A	N	D	SD
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				

You may use the space below if you would like to write any comments or explain any of your answers.

Start typing here in gray box if using the online form ⇨

APPENDIX B
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES TO TEACHER
SURVEY

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Teacher Survey

Item	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
The inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classrooms creates a positive educational atmosphere.	0		0		0		4	19.0	17	81.0
ELL students should spend most of their instructional time in the ESL room with a specially trained teacher.	6	28.6	10	47.6	3	14.3	2	9.5	0	
ELL students should not be in the regular classroom until they acquire a minimum level of proficiency in English.	9	42.9	8	38.1	1	4.8	3	14.3	0	
It is difficult for regular classroom teachers to find enough time to meet the needs of ELL students.	1	4.8	2	9.5	1	4.8	15	71.4	2	9.5
The inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classrooms benefits all students.	0		0		1	4.8	9	42.9	11	52.4
Teachers sometimes need to modify assignments, including tests, for ELL students.	0		0		0		4	28.6	15	71.4
It is unreasonable to expect a regular classroom teacher to teach a child who does not speak English.	5	23.8	14	66.7	1	4.8	1	4.8	0	
ELL students should spend most of their instructional time in the regular classroom.	0		3	14.3	5	23.8	8	38.1	5	23.8
Regular classroom teachers need more training to work with ELL students.	0		2	14.3	0		11	52.4	7	33.3
I have adequate training to work with ELL students.	4	19.0	8	38.1	2	9.5	7	33.3	0	
I am comfortable teaching ELL students in the regular classroom.	1	4.8	1	4.8	2	9.5	14	66.7	3	14.3
I am interested in learning more about working with ELL students.	0		0		0		11	52.4	10	47.6
I think the ESL teacher should provide training for regular classroom teachers	0		3	14.3	2	9.5	12	57.1	4	19.0

in working with English learners.										
Having ELL students pulled out of the regular classroom is the best way to meet their needs.	2	9.5	12	57.1	3	14.3	2	9.5	2	9.5
I can think of 5 or more instructional strategies to use with English learners.	0		8	38.1	0		6	28.6	7	33.3

APPENDIX C

WRITING SURVEY

Survey

<i>Circle your answer to each question</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I like to write.	SD	D	N	A	SA
2. I am good at writing.	SD	D	N	A	SA
3. Writing assignments are easy for me.	SD	D	N	A	SA
4. Most of my classmates are better writers than I am.	SD	D	N	A	SA
5. I am a better writer than most of my classmates.	SD	D	N	A	SA
6. I like to read.	SD	D	N	A	SA
7. I like for other people to read what I write.	SD	D	N	A	SA
8. I wish we had to write more at school.	SD	D	N	A	SA
9. I like to write about what I'm reading.	SD	D	N	A	SA
10. I wish we wrote less at school.	SD	D	N	A	SA
11. I like to write stories.	SD	D	N	A	SA
12. I would like to be a better writer.	SD	D	N	A	SA
13. I like to write letters.	SD	D	N	A	SA
14. I am a ____ boy ____ girl					
15. I am in the ____ 3 rd ____ 4 th ____ 5 th ____ 6 th grade					
16. I have been at PLE ____ less than 1 year ____ less than 2 years ____ less than 3 years ____ more than 3 years					
17. I speak ____ English ____ English and another language					
18. Describe what you do when you start a writing assignment.					
19. What are some different types of writing you do at school?					

APPENDIX D

STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Student Interview Protocol

Introductory Protocol

I am currently working on a project as part of my classes at CalState Fresno. I would like to interview you about writing and kids from other countries. Would it be o.k. if I asked you some questions and recorded your answers?

A. Interviewee background:

1. How long have you been at PLE?

B. Writing

1. Do you like to write?
2. Do you think you're a good writer?
3. What would make you a good writer?
4. Is there anything a teacher could do to help you be a better writer?
5. Tell me what you do when you start a writing assignment? Are there steps that you follow?

C. CoTeaching

Introductory comment: I have been in your class quite a bit in the afternoon coteaching with Ms. Spencer.

1. Can you tell me some things you've noticed that I do in your classroom?
2. Do you think it's helpful to have two teachers in the room at one time?
Probe: How does it help?
Probe: Has it helped you?

D. English language learners

Introductory comments: You have someone in your class who before she came here she had just started learning English.

1. What do you think about having kids from other countries in your class?
2. Do you think she should stay in your classroom most of the day, or do you think she should go to another class most of the day?
 - a. Probe: Why should she stay in the classroom?
 - b. Probe: Why should she go to other classes?