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**IN DETERMINING THE DISPARITY BETWEEN ENGLISH AS A NEW
LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION COMPLETION**

Lilibeth Bernal

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IN DETERMINING THE DISPARITY BETWEEN ENGLISH AS A NEW
LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION COMPLETION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
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ABSTRACT

IN DETERMINING THE DISPARITY BETWEEN ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION COMPLETION

Lilibeth Bernal

Through a constant growing population of English language learners (ELL) within schools, there is a need to bridge the achievement gap effectively. Currently from the ELL population in New York State, 63.3% of ELLs are considered Newcomers (NYSED, 2019). Newcomer ELLs have been in US Schools for less than three years. The importance of looking at the perceptions of students and teachers within a stand-alone English as a new language (ENL) classroom is important in supporting the future success of English Language Learners. In knowing how the setting of a stand-alone ENL class impacts the student's high school success can decipher how to support an effective ELL program with an effective aligned curriculum.

This concurrent mixed method study explored student and teacher perceptions of stand-alone ENL classes while also exploring predicting variables of ELL graduation. The first phase was the qualitative phase which explored the perceptions of teachers and students who instruct stand-alone ELLs and collect data through interviews, class observations and lesson plans. The quantitative model used data from NYSESLAT scores, and a system database (ATS) to examine predicting variables of ELL students' graduation. The results of the qualitative analysis revealed that students and teachers believe that stand-alone ENL courses were not preparing students for mainstream courses adequately, there were program issues occurring when students were placed in stand-

alone ENL courses and that students would benefit from integrated ENL versus stand-alone ENL. The quantitative phase resulted in significant findings for first year entry level academic average in predicting ELL high school graduation. The quantitative findings supported early interventions for ELLs in secondary education. The findings in this study support the need for a push-in model for ELL content area courses to support the academic achievement of the growing number of ELLs in the mainstream classrooms.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

It is important to look at the components in the English language learner (ELL) policy particularly in New York City, the CR Part 154, to seek better ways to support the ELL subgroup. Exploring the effectiveness in the mandated amount of minutes that an ELL student is to be programmed in a stand-alone English as a new language (ENL) class can help ELL students stay on track towards graduation. Sequentially, it is also beneficial to look at the correlation between entry proficiency levels and graduation rates which allow for future success in bilingual education and the effectiveness of servicing ELL students overall. In knowing how English proficiency levels are related to high school success can decipher how to setup an effective bilingual program (The National Academic Press, 1999). Not only have laws changed the ways bilingual programs are implemented but also social attitudes. Three states have dismantled bilingual education due to ignorance of the fruits of bilingual programs. The ignorance of the public therefore affects majority vote and ultimately causing bilingual services in the educational arena to close down. For example, in 1998 voters in California voted that restrictions in bilingual education increase (Tully, 2016). The sector of English Language Learners (ELLs) of the Department of Education fail to inform the public how successful bilingual education have been for ELLs. Further research needs to be conducted where English proficiency levels are studied to observe associations with graduation rates. According to De Jong and Harper (2005), the lack of English proficiency should not limit ELL students from taking academic content classes.

The importance of exploring the student and teacher perceptions of stand-alone

English as a New Language (ENL) stand-alone classrooms is important to know how to support ELL academic success. Teachers should commit themselves to provide an ELL service that is well organized, planned and guided by the need of the ELL students (Commins & Miramontes, 2006). In knowing what support an ELL student needs can play an important role in the student's high school success and can decipher how to setup an effective ELL program with an effective aligned curriculum (De Jong & Harper, 2005). In preparing ELL students for higher education it is important to note that many of the ELL students are ill-prepared for content area at the college level (Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller and Frisco, 2009). According to Howard (2017), he says that it is important for educators to find the balance of strategy instruction, conceptual knowledge, and academic vocabulary to support ELL's reading level. Through a constant growing population of ELL students within schools, there is a need to discover ways on how to close the achievement gap.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to look at teacher and student perceptions of stand-alone ENL classes. This study was a convergent parallel design mixed methods that conducted a qualitative and quantitative study independently, compared the results and used the results of both phases for interpretation. The quantitative study helped to refine and support the findings in the qualitative study. This concurrent mixed methods design allowed for the quantitative data to emphasize and validate the importance of the results in the qualitative phase. The quantitative phase gave numerical data on the importance of early interventions as soon as newcomer ELLs entered school that added and validated the student and teacher perceptions conducted in phase one.

The qualitative phase of the study looked at teacher and student perceptions in the ENL classroom. The quantitative study looked at variables such as gender, Latino background, English proficiency, and years with in a US high school that may impact ELL students graduating on time. It is important to investigate whether there is a significant correlation with ELL's English entry proficiency levels and high school graduation rates in order to establish proper early interventions. After obtaining permission from the school principal and all other administrators of an urban Brooklyn high school, this non-experimental study used data from the 2012 NYSITELL English Proficiency exam scores. Schools are held accountable for the performance of their students in order to monitor progression and compliancy. To determine proficiency of the ELL student when they first enter the country, the exam scores from the NYSITELL exam were used. The New York City (NYC) Department of Education, specifically the CR-Part 154 mandate that all new entry ELL students take the NYSITELL exam within ten school days of enrollment to determine English proficiency (NYSED, 2015). For example, English Language Learner services are determined by student's English proficiency level. The English Proficiency levels of the 2012 NYSITELL exam were beginner, intermediate, advance and proficient. The scores were translated into level 1, 2, 3, 4, a level 1 ELL student was considered a beginner level, level 2 students were represented as intermediate level, a level 3 student was represented as an advanced student and a level 4 student was represented as a proficient level. In the year 2012, once a student reached proficient level, the student was allowed to enter all English mainstream classes (New York State Education Department, 2015). The English

proficiency level of the student dictates the amount of hours the student must be in a standalone ENL classroom or sometimes known as a stand-alone ENL class. All ELL students in this sample were only provided standalone ENL services as part of their mandated service as an English Language Learner. Finally, all ELL students within the sample were new entry students. New entry ELL students also known as newcomer ELLs means that the student has entered a U.S. high school for the first time. The new entry ELLs were represented by various different grade levels within this high school that included 9th grade through 12th grade.

According to De Jong, Harper and Coady (2013), ELL students are often with teachers who are ill-prepared to address the needs of ELL students in mainstream classrooms. Looking at student and teachers' perceptions of stand-alone ENL classrooms and how these courses have supported the students for mainstream classes can influence policy makers in enhancing or changing current ELL policy. Specifically, in New York City, the ELL policy called the Cr-Part 154 policy may be supporting or retrieving students from graduating on time. The Cr-Part 154 mandates students to have a certain amount of stand-alone ENL periods according to their English Proficiency level (CR Part 154 Comprehensive ELL Education Plan (CEEP), 2019).

Theoretical Framework

The Astin's Input-Environment-Output (IEO) Model

The theoretical framework in which this study was based on was Astin's Input-Environment- Output (I-E-O) model (Astin, 1993). According to Astin, inputs refer to personal qualities that students initially bring to the educational experience. In the quantitative phase, the study examined student demographic characteristics such as

gender and Latino background. Environment refers to everything that happens to a student during an educational program that might influence the outcomes being studied (Astin, 1993). This research examined school characteristics such as years within school. Lastly, outputs in this study were referred to as the dependent variables or outcomes. In this study, graduation was measured.

The Achievement Gap among ELLs

The next theoretical framework that this mixed methods study was based on is the fact that English Language Learners are one of the subgroups that have the lowest graduation rate in US public schools (NCES, 2014). Therefore, they are a group that should be targeted in order to enhance instructional and or support services. Constantly school leaders are battling how to target their subgroups in order to close their achievement groups. Schools also attempt to increase their enrollment in order to receive enough funds from the state and federal government. Graduation rates constantly affect a parents' and child's choice in choosing which high school to attend. A school with a 40% graduation rate will usually receive a reduction in enrollment. Information such as graduation rates are easily accessible to the public. Therefore, school leaders need to target subgroups such as English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities in order to raise the graduation rates and close the achievement gap (NCES, 2014).

Significance of the Study

According to the new amendments in the CR Part 154, ELL regulations, teachers are required to receive constant professional development in the area of bilingual education (NYSUT, 2015). Through these regulations, students are mandated to sit in

stand-alone ENL classes for a certain amount of minutes per week according to their level of English proficiency. Therefore, in the quantitative phase of this study English proficiency levels are explored in determining whether they predict student graduation.

With the new regulations in the CR Part 154, ELLs will receive support in the English language through stand-alone English as a New Language (ENL) classes previously known as ESL classes. ELL students will also have an ENL (English as a New Language) teacher in some subject core classes, called Integrated ENL. Subject core classes include mathematics, science, English, and history. There is a specified amount of time that a student must be in a stand-alone ENL and in an integrated ENL class according to their level of English proficiency (CR Part 154 Comprehensive ELL Education Plan (CEEP), 2019) . ELL's English proficiency level is measured by the NYSESLAT, a standardized exam for ELLs in New York City that is taken every school year around the month of May. Therefore, looking at student and teacher perceptions within a stand-alone ENL classroom is equally important because it will look at whether the mandated hours of stand-alone ENL also known as stand-alone ENL according to policy are supporting or hindering the student on successfully graduating.

An integrated ENL class is an instructional strategy that is similar to an integrated co-teaching class in special education in which a content area teacher and special education teacher jointly and seamlessly teach a class. An integrated ENL class can also be solely taught by a teacher who is dually certified in ENL and the content area (Integrated English as a New Language (ENL) Resources, n.d.). For the purposes of this study, we are only looking at teacher and students' perceptions within a stand-alone ENL classroom.

The CR Part 154 in accordance to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, attempts to support the ELL population in advancing academically and transitioning into English fluency. The NCLB sought to improve student achievement through standardized testing, monitoring progress and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers. Highly Qualified Teachers (HQTs) indicated that the teacher had to be competent in the academic core subject area they were teaching (Cadiero-Kaplan & Rodriguez, 2008; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006).

In the quantitative phase, it was important to study NYSITELL scores and how they relate to graduation rates in determining programing and ELL needs. ELLs are either entering, emerging, transitioning, expanding, and commanding in their proficiency levels according to NYSITELL scores currently in 2018. Previous NYSITELL scores were beginner, intermediate, advanced and proficient which were the scores used in this study from the 2012 data scores. These English proficiency levels will be used as the metric to determine entry proficiency levels in English in the quantitative phase of the study. Therefore, the rationale is that if most of the ENL services are based on the students English proficiency level such as mandated stand-alone ENL classes, then it is important to research the influence that a student's English Proficiency level has on his or her graduation (The National Academic Press, 1999).

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed in the qualitative phase of the study:

- 1.) What are teacher perceptions on the effectiveness of stand-alone ENL classes?

2.) What are ELL student perceptions on the effectiveness of stand-alone ENL classes?

The quantitative phase of the study will seek to further illuminate the results of the qualitative analysis and to address these additional questions:

Does the ELL's first year entry English Proficiency level, first year first semester average grade, years in NYC high school, Latino continental region, and gender influence students graduating by expected year?

H₁: The ELL's first year entry English Proficiency levels, first year first semester average grade, years in NYC high school, Latino continental region, and gender will predict if students graduate by expected year.

H₂: The ELL's first year entry English Proficiency levels, first year first semester average grade, years in NYC high school, Latino continental region, and gender will not predict if the students graduate by expected year.

Definition of Terms

Academic English: The English language ability necessary for academic achievement in content areas classes and their activities also known as CALP, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (Cummins, 1981).

Bilingual Education: a program in which the native language and the English Language are used to provide instruction in the class. Each bilingual education program may vary in the amount of time indicated for instruction in either language.

Caribbean Origin- in this study it refers to all Latino students from Caribbean countries. For example, students from the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

English Language Learner (ELL): A student with a native language other than English who is not yet fluent in speaking, reading, or writing the English language (Great Schools Partnership, 2013).

English as a New Language (ENL): a type of service that is provided to ELLs in order to support English as a New Language (Great Schools Partnership, 2013).

English as a Second Language (ESL): in previous years the acronym used for the types of services provided to ELLs was ESL before ENL (Great Schools Partnership, 2013).

Differentiation: refers to a wide variety of teaching techniques and lesson adaptations used to instruct a diverse group of students (Great Schools Partnership, 2013).

Home Language Survey- the survey: The Home Language Identification Survey (HLIS) is filled out only once by the student's parent/guardian when the student is first enrolled in the New York City public school system. On the HLIS form,

parents/guardians answer questions about which language the student speaks in different places/situations. (ELL Consortium, 2018).

Integrated English as New Language (ENL)- classes where students receive core content area and English language development instruction. Integrated ENL classes are taught by a teacher dually certified in the content area and ENL or are co-taught by a certified content area teacher and a certified ENL teacher (NYSED, 2019).

Latino background- in this study includes all Latin Speaking Countries excluding Brazil.

Long Term English Language Learner: An English Language Learner who has continuously been in the United States for 6 or more years, has not yet met reclassification criteria, and shows evidenced of inadequate progress toward meeting that criteria (Olson, 2010).

Native Language- The first language that a person acquires in life and is used to identify as a member of an ethnic group.

Newcomer ELLs- ELLs who have entered a school in the United States for the first time and whose native language is other than English.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001): the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education act of 1965. The reformed act increased accountability of results and the flexibility of local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods based on scientifically-based research. The reformed act was signed into law during the George W. Bush presidency.

NYSESLAT: is an English Proficiency level exam that is given to ELL students midyear through the academic year (Great Schools Partnership, 2013). This exam was

developed for the New York State Education Department under the No Child Left Behind Act. Students in grades K-12 whose primary language is not English are required by law to take this yearly assessment until they reach the commanding level. The NYSESLAT tests the students in the following modalities: reading, writing,

NYSITELL: is an entry English proficiency exam developed for the New York State Department of Education under the No Child Left Behind Act. When a student is determined to be an ELL student in a NYC public school for the first time, he or she is asked to take this exam to determine the student's entry English proficiency level into the school.

Transitional Bilingual Program (TBE): a type of bilingual program that is provided to ESL students where at least two content classes are provided to students in their native language (Great Schools Partnership, 2013).

Subject/Content Area- Content areas are academic subjects as math, science, English and social science.

Stand-Alone ENL- is a class where English Language Learners (ELLs) receive instruction in order to acquire or learn the English Language. The class is held by an ENL teacher and with only ELL students.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

In 2001, the Bush administration amended the previous education policies and called it the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The amended policies attempted to ensure that all subgroups were catered for trying to close the achievement gap (NCLB, 2002, stat. 1425). Although the idea of the NCLB Act was to not leave any child behind it did not provide specific details in supporting English Language Learners (Abedi, 2004). A specific detail that was not explicitly addressed in the NCLB was the issue of assessing ELLs in secondary education (Abedi, 2004; Cadiero-Kaplan & Rodriguez, 2008; National Education Association, 2008). Abedi (2004) addressed that ELL students were tested in “content areas without being given sufficient time to develop English proficiency for valid testing.” The NCLB fails to support the challenges teachers face in supporting the needs of ELLs (Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005). The NCLB mandates that schools have to demonstrate growth in ELL’s English proficiency and content areas but does not support schools in providing qualified teachers that meet the needs of ELLs (Cadiero-Kaplan & Rodriguez, 2008; National Education Association, 2008; Whitehurst, 2008).

It is the civil right of all students to gain equal access to education (Olson, 2010). English Language Learners are one of the subgroups who have the lowest graduation rate in US public schools (NCES, 2014). Therefore, the need to support instruction for this specific subgroup is inevitable. School policy makers are constantly researching ways on how to close the achievement gap in the United States.

This study will be framed on the Astin’s Input Environment Output (IEO) Model.

The inputs of the model in the quantitative phase of the study were the background of the student. In this study, the type of Latino backgrounds was used. Environment refers to everything that happens to a student during an educational program that might influence the outcomes being studied (Astin, 1993). The quantitative phase of the study examined school characteristics such as years within school. Lastly, outputs referred to the dependent variables or outcomes. In this phase, whether the student graduated by expected year was measured.

Literature reflects the possible predictors of ELL academic success. Collier and Wayne (2002), determined that short term programs are not sufficient for attaining English Proficiency among the ELL population. Variables such as students' age on arrival, length of residence in the United States, grade of entry into US schools, family's educational and socioeconomic background, and students' former exposure to Western/urban lifestyles were found to be predictors of ELL's academic success (Wassell et. al, 2010). According to Revees (2006), mainstream teachers reveal that they are stressed by having insufficient time to address the needs of ELLs in the classroom and the additional work it entails. According to Wassell et. al (2010), teachers tend to feel frustrated believing in the student's inability to understand the content, which then causes them to water down the curriculum. Other indicators such as access to curriculum were not researched in this study as an indicator of the graduation rate, this evidently should be further researched among the ELL high school population.

Stacy J. Lee (2012) addresses that high school immigrant new arrivals face significant challenges. Research indicates that among these challenges are passing the regents or any other standardized exam. High school graduation rates have demonstrated

low rates in subgroups simultaneously having a higher dropout rate. Most of these ELL students have been assigned to ESL (English as a Second Language formerly known as ENL) classes to learn English which often excludes them from learning other academic content areas. Finally, Lee (2012) says that ELL teachers usually assume the English Learners can't do the academic work until they are proficient in English. Then, when ELLs are prepared to leave the ESL program, they are unprepared to handle the academic work because they haven't been prepared in content area curriculum.

All of the ELL students researched in this study have exclusively received stand-alone ENL instruction for a maximum of three periods. Therefore, literature was reviewed in how stand-alone ENL instruction have supported academic success in the content areas through transcript records. Callhan et. al (2009) determined that stand-alone ENL instruction helps to keep students in school but lacks to support students in other academic content areas.

Further exploration of the phenomenon from the perspective of English proficiency as an indicator for graduation is lacking within the first entry ELL high school population within an Eastern Urban area. It certainly merits continued research. According to Gwynne et. al (2009), ninth-grade course performance was a much stronger predictor of graduation than either language proficiency level or interruptions in students' education. Literature does reveal that English proficiency can be correlated with amounts of years in the country, social contexts, and prior schooling (Carhill et. al, 2008). This study focused on whether English proficiency levels as evaluated by NYSITELL exams (English Proficiency exams administered to ELLs in NY) are predictable indicators of graduation. Simultaneously, other variables were considered such as parent Latino

background, gender, first semester academic average and years within in high school. An urgent matter of English proficiency as a predictor of graduation was researched further in order to enlighten instruction, social contexts, and teacher professional developments that will support English proficiency for ELLs.

The search for literature on the topic of servicing ESL students specifically in stand-alone ENL courses and English Proficiency's level as a predictor of the ELL graduation rate revealed minimal results. Therefore, literature review was discussed including all types of ENL services, teacher perceptions from tutoring sessions and the importance of motivating ELL students to read in content areas. Furthermore, the challenges that ELL students faced in higher education were reviewed in order to view a sense of urgency in preparing ELL students for college readiness through literacy strategies during the high school stage. Finally, literature review included other variables possibly affecting the graduation rate such as immigrant concentrated schools, peer SES and academic success specifically for the ELL population.

Exposing ELLs to Literacy

A qualitative study by Rachael M. Howard (2017) studies investigated reading support and book preferences of fourth grade English Language Learners who were struggling readers. The sample for students were three fourth grade students chosen which were identified as limited English proficient on the oral language proficiency test our district used. Of the three students, two of them were Spanish speaking females who immigrated to the United States from Mexico. The male's student's home language was Hindi and he moved to the United as an infant. All three students were identified as struggling readers based on the district test called, ITBS language test. The data

collection used was interviews, library records, and observations. The interview conducted offered a sense of the ELLs reading preferences, their literary history and their reading habits at home. Library records were collected to record the type of books the students would borrow. Record from the students' participation in online reading programs such as Accelerated Reader and Texas Readers are Leaders were printed to analyze progress.

Triangulation was used in to compare the trends seen in the interviews and the findings from the library book data to establish the results. The results indicated that students enjoyed books that are about topics that interest them. The students consistently commented that they were using an online program called Destiny's Quest to view other recommendations to decide what books to check out. The frequency in which this program came up suggests that teachers can take advantage of this program to encourage ELLs to read. Finally, the study suggests that offering meaningful literacy activities such as literary circles and books clubs would support in persuading students to read for enjoyment. In turn, ELL students' reading abilities would improve from these collaborative and deliberate activities. The limitations of this study include generalizability where the participants were specifically ELLs that were considered struggling readers. Another limitation is that this study included self-reported data from interviews that considers what people say and can contain possible bias.

Teacher Perceptions in ELL Tutoring Program

Joe D. Nichols and Kyaw Soe (2013) analyzed the perceptions of undergraduate preservice teachers as they engaged in a Saturday morning, service-learning volunteer opportunity over a 14-week period to tutor students in grades K-5. For this study, the

methods of a case study were used. The sample consisted of students from K-5 who are born in the United States but whose parents do not speak English. Most of the students originated from Myanmar or Thailand who came to the United States within ten years. The elementary and secondary teachers that were recruited volunteered for the literacy program or were attempting to fulfill a course requirement. The volunteers came from a university in the Midwest of the United States which were predominantly of white ethnic backgrounds. Each tutoring and instructional session included language objectives and built background knowledge in connection to their culture. The data was collected from journal reflections written by the teachers and students to observe emerging themes. The results indicated that teachers demonstrated little preparation working with new immigrant students and their parents and there was frustration and anxiety from both the student and the parent. An equal number expressed in their journal entries that they were delighted with the opportunity to work with ELLs. A limitation in this study is generalizability where the ELL students were considered generation 1.5 where these types of ELLs who were born in the US and their home language was another language other than English.

The Struggle of an ELL Student in Higher Education

Elizabeth Bifuh Amber (2009) addresses three main questions. The first question is, "What are processes by which an ELL attending a U.S University develops literacy skills?" The other questions are, "What difficulties does the student encounter in the content area?" and "What strategies does the ELL use to comprehend the subject matter?" The primary participant was Kim from Korea where her first language was Korean. She also spoke fluently Japanese and some French and was a doctoral student

for mass communication at the university. Secondary participants included three other faculty involved with implementing programs for English Language Learners. Data collection included interviews and observations in various settings such as classrooms, cafeterias, and examination of artifacts such as GPAs, exam papers and class notes. Using a comparative method, emerging themes were described and analyzed. Triangulation was implemented through various data sources such as various interviews of ELL faculty, the ELL student, artifacts and field notes. Participants examined and verified rough drafts for accuracy of meanings and interpretations to ensure validity.

The results indicated that Kim encountered various difficulties that can be set into four categories which are receptive and expressive language difficulties, difficulties in comprehension content areas, and difference in teaching, learning and awareness models. There were instances that Kim had difficulties in content areas due to not understanding specific vocabulary and the inability to understand the structure of texts assigned. Kim was taught in her country to simply provide facts without much opinion and critical thinking, while in the US instructors wanted her to provide insight on her written assignments. Kim provided written assignments without much critical thinking which is why she received a lower grade than the rest of the class. The strategies that were used in the content area were categorized as personal, interpersonal and academic. Personal strategies included motivation, studying, spending more time on tasks, and employing various metacognitive strategies such as self-solving and inquiry. The interpersonal strategies included socializing, having a peer coach, and participating in study groups. The academic strategies included note taking methods, and using textbooks and dictionaries as additional resources. The limitations of this study include generalizability

where the participant is a Korean ELL student at a graduate level course and the location of this study is in a southeastern University. Another limitation is that this study included self-reported data from interviews that considers what people say which can include some type of bias.

Howard (2017) reiterates that meaningful literacy strategies in the content classes are important in supporting second language learning and literacy acquisition. Therefore, his study results reflect the need to have ELL students motivated and engaged in reading through books that interest them in all content area courses. Furthermore, he states that literacy activities such as literacy circles and book clubs are important to constantly engage an ELL in reading. Nichols and Soe (2013) included teacher perceptions that resulted in teachers feeling frustrated because they felt that they were ill-equipped to teach ELL students. Bifuh-Ambe (2009) researched the difficulties that an ELL encounters within higher education and found possible strategies that can help overcome some challenges as an ELL student in higher education.

ELL Students in an Immigrant Concentrated School

A national study viewed how ESL placement effected immigrant achievement (Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller and Frisco, 2009). The study found that first-generation ESL students performed poorly in schools where there were a few immigrants. On the same hand, the study found that second-generation students benefited mostly from ESL placements when they attended schools with many immigrant students. The amount of immigrants in the school may dictate whether an ELL student feels a part of the majority or a small subgroup of the school. In high-concentrated ELL schools, ESL placement resulted in significantly lower rates of failure overall especially for second- generation

immigrant students in particular. ESL courses many times have just served to keep these students in schools but have not prepared them significantly in course work as demonstrated on their high school transcripts. Consequently, the few that graduate and go on to a four-year college have demonstrated to be ill-prepared for college level coursework. Although second-generation immigrants in ESL in high concentrated high schools do better than other immigrants, they still fall far below college entry requirements.

Ninth Grade Course Performance as ELL Graduation Predictors

The study by researchers Pareja, Gwynne, Ehrlich, and Allensworth (2009) focus primarily on Hispanic students who are ELLs and belong to the public school system in Chicago. The literature revealed the following findings that ninth-grade course performance indicators predict graduation in much the same way for ninth-grade ELLs, former ELLs and the General Ed population. Ninth-grade course performance was a much stronger predictor of graduation than either the language proficiency level or interruptions in students' education. Long-term English proficient students performed relatively well on ninth-grade indicators and had the highest graduation rate of any group of Hispanic students. New ELLs did as well as or better than any other group in their ninth-grade classes, but they graduated at lower rates than all other groups except long-term ELLs; and ninth-grade ELLs. New ELLs were less likely to graduate than other students with the same grades and attendance in the ninth grade.

Factors That Impact English Language Proficiency

A study conducted by researchers Carhill et. al (2008) aims to increase understanding of factors that impact academic English language proficiency. The sample

consisted of 274 adolescents first generation immigrant students from China, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Central America, and Mexico. The present study describes the academic English language proficiency of immigrant youth after, on average, 7 years in the United States. Findings show that although differences in individual student characteristics partially explain English language proficiency, the schools that immigrant youth attended were also found to be important. The study also found that the amount of time that students spent speaking English in informal social situations were predictive of English language proficiency. Data shows that although students' individual resources contributed to second language acquisition outcomes, social factors played an important role in how successful students were in learning academic English. The authors suggest teacher trainings in the role of social context factors that affect ELLs in an individual level. These results also suggest that regardless of a student's opportunities, learning academic English takes time.

Possible Predictors of High School Graduation

Hanson and Schmeiser (2012) analyzed middle school grade point average (GPA), psychosocial and behavioral factors as possible predictors of high school GPA. The study had a sample of 4,600 middle-school students from 24 schools in Iowa. The findings demonstrated that middle school grades and achievement are the strongest predictors of high school GPA and that behavioral and psychosocial factors add validity to prediction of GPA. These findings suggest that physiological and behavior factors present in middle school should be assessed and used to help students perform and receive the support needed to have a smooth transition from middle school to high school.

SES of Peers as a Possible Influence on Students' Individual Academic Achievement

Caldas and Bankston (1997) researched the relationship between Social Economic Status (SES) of peers and individual academic achievement which were examined in this study. A study of 42,041 resulted in significant findings for students who go to school with classmates from relatively high family social status creating a strong and significant contribution to academic achievement independent of the student's family SES or race. The student achievement was measured by a factor score of the three 10th grade Louisiana Graduation Exit Examination. The study suggests that if a young person is from a disadvantaged socioeconomic background, has parents with low social status and belongs to a minority race than the majority of the student population within the school they are most likely to be successful academically. A student would privy from the resources and background of the well advantaged students. Therefore, the study suggests capping the proportion of socially disadvantaged students in any school at 30% to provide an advantageous social environment for the students in poverty status.

De Jong and Harper (2005) analyze general education teachers instructing ELLs in mainstream classrooms. De Jong and Harper create a framework that tries recompense for the lack of cultural and linguistic instruction that support the ELLs in the mainstream classrooms. In the article, it is explicit that it is not enough to know the student's native language in order to support their needs in the classroom. The authors make it evident that a good classroom not only teaches them the language but the content as well simultaneously. The authors also realize that it is harder for a teacher to educate ELLs that all come from various learning backgrounds. In secondary students, teachers may face ELLs with interrupted instruction and various English Proficiency levels.

Kate Menken (2010) analyzes the mandates of the No Child Left Behind policy for English Language Learners. The accountability of having ELLs take standardized exams in English was assessed. The NCLB mandates ELLs to take standardized exams that assess their knowledge on academic content and English. The NCLB requires every state to demonstrate progress. Therefore, these exams have become high-stakes because they can affect funding for schools, students, teachers and the states. Therefore, ELLs must take English proficiency exams and academic content area standardized exams. The author concluded that a content-area test administered to an ELL in English is unlikely to render true results because language will intrude with their ability to show their mastery in the academic content area. Therefore, researchers have concluded that it is not valid to determine high school graduation and other promotional criteria based on test results (Gándara & Baca, 2008; Menken, 2008; Solórzano, 2008). The researcher analyzed the word frequency in the test passages to target the linguistic complexity that exists in these exams. 9.38% of the words in the Math A Regents exams were considered off-list words which were words that were considered low frequency. Furthermore, in New York only 41% of ELLs are able to pass the ELA Regents to graduate (New York State Department of Education, 2008). Therefore, ELLs are barred from graduating due to an exam where 76% of English Proficient students do pass the exam. Therefore, this study indicates some of the flaws that exist within the NCLB policy. The CR Part 154 policy is a New York State regulation created in accordance to the NCLB policy. This study will explore the perceptions of students and teachers in the teachings of the mandated minutes of stand-alone ENL classes according to the CR Part 154.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Mixed-Methods Research

This mixed method study was fixed because the researcher planned a mixed methods design where the quantitative data would validate the results of the qualitative data. The researcher planned in advance the order and emphasis on analysis prior to beginning the study which is why this study is considered a fixed mixed method (Creswell & Clark, 2011). In the mixed-methods design, both qualitative and quantitative data are used to understand the particular topic (Teddie & Tashakkori, 2009). In this study the type of mixed methods design used was concurrent. The study implemented the convergent parallel design where the qualitative and quantitative studies occurred independent of each other. After conducting the studies, the results of the qualitative and the quantitative study were related and used in the interpretation of the findings. According to Creswell (2005), in the convergent parallel design, data from the qualitative and quantitative studies are used. Through concurrent timing, both methods were given priority and their findings were compared and mixed in the interpretation (Creswell, 2005).

The present study used a convergent parallel design mixed methods. The qualitative study preceded the quantitative study. The qualitative part of the study explored the perceptions of ENL teachers and ELL students in ENL stand-alone classrooms. The quantitative phase of the study looked at predicting variables of ELL student graduation. The rationale for using a concurrent mixed methods design in this case was that it permitted investigation from various perspectives. The qualitative phase

consisted of data that was collected through individual structured interviews of teachers, interviews of students and a review of lesson plans and classroom observations. The qualitative phase was designed to provide information regarding the perceptions that ENL students and teachers have regarding stand-alone ENL classes. The quantitative part of the study provided significant results for certain predicting variables of ELL graduation. The quantitative phase provided statistical data that further explained the need to review and enhance ELL policy. The CR-Part 154, ELL policy in New York state, mandates students to a certain amount of minutes a week to be programmed in a stand-alone ENL class solely based on the students English proficiency level. Therefore, it was important to explore whether the English proficiency level was a strong predictor of ELL graduation. The quantitative analysis would support or not the amount of autonomy the English proficiency levels have in programming students. Once the quantitative analysis was completed, the qualitative and quantitative analysis results were synthesized, and the quantitative data was reviewed in order to address whether the results inform, validate and/or explain the qualitative results.

Qualitative Research Design

The qualitative phase was conducted in a low-income urban high school in Brooklyn, New York. The methods of a case study were used. Through the case study method a more interpretative inductive form of research is used where the deep meaning of perspectives and experience can be explored when there is a smaller amount of participants. Through the narrative inquiry approach, the usage of teacher interviews, student interviews, classroom observations and the collection of artifacts such as lesson plans were utilized to fulfill the study. In the entire school, there were 127 English

Language Learner (ELLs) students which were twenty-three percent of the student population when the study took place. The school wide student population was composed of fifty-three percent Latinos, forty-five percent blacks, one percent Arabic and one percent other.

The teachers were asked about their personal opinion, perspectives, and classroom instruction of ELL students specifically in the stand-alone ENL class. While reviewing literature, it constantly appeared that ELLs were not prepared for the academic work in content areas during secondary school and postsecondary school (Lee, 2005). Therefore, it was imperative to explore the perception of ENL teachers and ELL students in the instructions of stand-alone ENL classes where the questions were geared toward the readiness of ELL students in mainstream content area classes. There was a focus in exploring how the stand-alone ENL classes prepared ELL students for their language and academic needs. Although ELL teachers may be prepared to teach the English language they are not prepared to address all the other needs of the students such as academic (De Jong & Harper, 2005).

Grounded Theory Method

Through the grounded theory method, the comparative approach supports the construction of theory (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Through a deep analysis of the data collected, the theory arises from the data. The data that was gathered through the interviews and artifacts were looked at through the purpose of the study. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Through the diligent usage of coding, the categories were defined and the data was thoroughly analyzed to construct the themes that created the conceptual framework of the study.

Sample and Population

In this phase, purposive sampling was used where the sample was small in size and intentionally selected (Teddie & Tashakkori, 2009). The purpose of choosing purposive sampling was to “maximize what we can learn” (Stakke, 1995). In this case, choosing ENL teachers and ELL students that experienced teaching or learning in a stand-alone ENL class contributed to learning about their perspectives in that particular setting.

The researcher interviewed two ENL teachers who have been teaching with a TESOL certification for more than five years. A TESOL certified teacher is able to teach English to students whose native language is other than English. One ENL teacher who was interviewed had been teaching for fourteen years. This was her first year teaching at the current school but came from teaching another high school as well. She shared that in her previous school there were not as many ELLs as in the current school she is teaching. All the teachers shared three lesson plans from their stand-alone ENL class.

The other ENL teacher interviewed had been teaching for six years. He was previously a paraprofessional for more than ten years in an elementary school where he also worked with ELL students and became an ENL teacher afterwards. His first year teaching as a secondary ENL teacher was at the current school site where he was interviewed.

The selection of the teachers and students who participated in the interviews was purposeful. The teachers were both ENL certified and were teaching at the same school. They were asked if they were available after school hours to participate in the interview process and they accepted with little hesitation. The teachers were asked which ELL

students did they both teach in the current or past years. The students who were taught by both teachers in the current and past years were considered. Another criterion for selection was that the students had to be at a transitioning English proficiency level. The grade of the students was also taken into consideration. The researcher wanted to speak to upperclassman in high school because they had more years exposed to stand-alone ENL classes and due to the level of maturity. Out of eight students that fulfilled these requirements in order to participate, three of the students accepted because they were available and able to participate in the interview after school.

There were three interviews that took place with three students who were designated as English Language Learners after taking the NYSITELL. These students attended that same school as the teachers interviewed and at one point throughout the school year had at least one of the ENL teachers for their stand-alone ENL class. The students were upper classman. All three of the students were females. One student was a junior while the other two students were seniors. Coincidentally, all three students were from the Dominican Republic. One student had entered middle school in the eighth grade the first year she arrived to the United States. The other student entered the United States as a freshman to the current high school where she was interviewed. Finally, the last student entered high school as a sophomore when she just arrived to New York from her home country. All three of these students were on track to graduate on time. All three of the students had scored a transitioning level English proficiency on their latest NYSESLAT exam. Each student had experienced a stand-alone ENL class before the interview. Each interview lasted approximately thirty to forty-five minutes.

Data Sources, Collection and Procedures

The data for this study consisted of interviews of teachers and students, classroom observations and a collection of lesson plans in order to triangulate data.

The model that was used to conduct the interview was the phenomenological Interviewing method by Siedman. At the beginning of the interviews, the questions were geared towards establishing the context of the teachers' experience and their perspective on the topic. Then, the questions and responses were targeted towards learning about their experience and perceptions in relation to teaching ELL students in a stand-alone ENL setting and how these courses prepared students for their mainstream courses. Finally, the interviews ended in reflecting how to improve and how effective current teaching practices have been in supporting ELL's English Proficiency level and learning academic content area.

All of the interviews took place at the school site. Prior to the start of the interview, the research asked the participant to review and sign the Consent to Participate Form (Appendix A). All three students were of age eighteen, legal adults in the United States, regardless as a courtesy the parents of the students were asked to sign a consent form as well (Appendix B). The researcher took notes during the interview which were used in the analysis and as part of the triangulation of the data. The interviews were recorded with the permission and consent of the participants.

The Teacher Interviews

The teacher interviews began with background information regarding the interviewee's experience in education (See Appendix D). Each interview lasted about thirty to forty-five minutes and was recorded. The interviews took place after the regular

school day but were conducted at the school site. The first part of the interview focused on the teachers' background experience in teaching English Language Learners.

Questions about their perspectives of stand-alone ENL classes followed. Finally, they were asked to talk about their feelings on ELLs preparedness for mainstream academic content area classes. My goal of the interviews was to find out their perceptions of ELL students learning in stand-alone ENL classes and its support or not for ELL students in the mainstream academic content areas.

The Student Interviews

The student interviews lasted about the same time. The students were all interviewed after regular school hours at the school site. The interview questions focused on their perception of learning English in the stand-alone ENL class and how this class helped them learn in the subject area classes such in mathematics, English Language Arts, social studies and science classes (See Appendix E).

Classroom Observations

After being given permission from the respective school administrators at the school, the researcher conducted the class observations. There were four observations conducted in total where two observations took place in each of the teachers' stand-alone ENL class. The observations took place in the classes of the interviewee teachers. The researcher used a classroom observation form suitable for taking field notes (Appendix C). Because the researcher was observing the teacher, his or her instruction and interactions with the students, the researcher did not participate in the lesson in any manner. The teachers invited the researcher into the class therefore, the researcher did not appear in their class without prior notice. The researcher was conscious of any biases

towards the teachers and their teaching practices so that it did not impact the study. Such biases include the researchers' own perception of the components of an effective stand-alone ENL class. The teachers directed the researcher where to sit down and take field notes but was given permission to walk around the class. The field classroom observation form was used because it allowed flexibility for walking around and observing students. The researcher took descriptive field notes and recorded the teachers' lesson. By recording the instructions and the teachers' interaction with students, a more accurate account of each observation was obtained. During the observation, written field notes on the observation form and collective description data of the 45-minute period took place. When conducting the classroom observations, the researcher sought evidence where English proficiency was tied to academic content areas. After each transcription of the observation, the teachers were asked to look at the transcriptions of their observations to see if they agreed. The transcriptions were later coded and analyzed in the same manner as the interviews.

Lesson Plans

The researcher collected and examined teacher lesson plans from each participating teacher, in addition to looking in each classroom for evidence of student work that had an academic content-area focus. When conducting classroom observations, the researcher looked for and noticed evidence of student class activities that were tied to an academic content area such as math, science social studies and or ELA. When the lesson plans were examined, the researcher looked to see if there were similarities of what was observed in the classroom and in the documents submitted by the teachers.

Then, the lesson plans were examined to check for evidence of academic content areas in the stand-alone ENL class. The researcher labeled, coded and analyzed the lesson plans.

Data Collection Process

The interviews and field notes were accurately transcribed and carefully analyzed by the researcher. The coding process began with the initial stage. According to Charmaz (2006), in the initial process the researcher needs to remain open to any type of theoretical suggestions that the data depicts. The researcher used a line by line process used to depict anything that the interviewees were saying implicitly or explicitly. The researcher labeled each line with a word or phrase that demonstrated a process or action in that particular line. Each word or phrase was then categorized into titles or brief descriptions that were later considered some particular category. The researcher was very careful in ensuring to be open to all data and constantly comparing data to prevent researcher biases from intervening into the coding process. The transcriptions of the lesson plans were also used to compare data that was later used to develop categories.

After the initial coding, the focused coding was based on the codes created from the initial stage in order to establish categories. Through the constant comparison of data and through the initial and focused coding process, conceptual categories began to form. There were small notes on the margin also considered memo writing during the coding process that helped ensure that accuracy of the coding that later formed into themes (Charmaz, 2006). Through memo writing, the codes were scrutinized and compared into common categories.

In order to increase the focus on the data, the researcher returned to the transcripts and had the recurrent themes color coded and highlighted. I underlined and noted trends

that were common and important information. Special attention was also given to the body language of the interviewees and quotes in the field notes which also supported the creation of categories. The researcher created a chart that supported the responses of each interviewee under each question. The chart helped to support the theoretical coding which later supported the emergence of key themes. The coding process produced numerous categories that were reduced into the following themes programming issues, lack of adequate academic content area instruction in the stand-alone ENL class, and immersion of ENL teachers and content area teachers.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, design and implementation of the research incorporated the following techniques: triangulation, peer debriefing and referential adequacy (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher learned in-depth information of the topic and attempted to understand anything that may distort the findings. Lesson plans previously conducted in the stand-alone ENL classes were collected from the interviewees. The data was triangulated through interviews, classroom observations and lesson plans. Peer reviews were conducted by two researchers who were also colleagues of the researcher. Each colleague had been in the education system over 15 years and they were asked to review and provide feedback of the study. Coding and transcripts were reviewed by the respective researchers as well. The technique of referential adequacy refers to the way data is collected. Data was recorded and transcribed immediately. All hard copies of the artifacts and lesson plans were obtained and held.

Clarifying Researcher Bias

It is important to reveal any possible biases in the study that could exist in the part of the researcher (Creswell, 2008). The researcher was previously an ELL student. Although she studied in the Catholic school system, she felt that she constantly was losing classroom instruction every time she was pulled out for ENL services. Although she only experienced this ENL service pull out service during elementary school. When the researcher became a high school teacher, she experienced that many of her ELL students were behind on the content areas she taught Living Environment and Algebra. She felt that their ENL classes, where some students had to stay for three periods in a row could be more helpful in having students pass their academic content areas. When she started teaching she only had two ELL students in her class then her ELL population started growing until almost half of the class were ELL students. The researcher personally experienced the growing population of ELL students in her class and realized the need to service the ELL population in the best possible way.

Quantitative Research Design

The campus chosen was located in an urban area in Brooklyn, New York. The researcher worked as an ELL coordinator at one of the three schools. The researcher gained permission from the administration of the other two sister schools in order to access the data needed for the study. There were three schools within the campus. The sample of ELLs were obtained from all three schools within the campus where only new registered ELLs were targeted who entered in 2012. The sample consisted of 116 ELL students who were all new entrant also called newcomer ELLs from another country other than the United States. These students had only received stand-alone English as a

Second Language (ESL)/ENL services throughout their years in high school. The campus did not offer integrated ENL courses until the academic year 2017. Nearly 25 percent of all students in the freshman cohort within the campus are identified as ELLs. 70% of all ELLs are at the Beginner and Intermediate English Proficiency level as measured by NYSESLAT/NYSITELL exams. 99% of all ELLs speak Spanish where 1% speak Arabic. A significant number of ELL students in the school qualify for free or reduced lunch. Stand-alone ESL has existed for many years at the campus as the only service available for ELLs. Therefore, all students in the sample had only received ESL services. The academic year 2016-2017 was the first year where a Transitional Bilingual Program (TBE) had become available for incoming ELL freshman at the campus. Please see Table 1 for the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1.

Demographic characteristics of the participants

Variables	Category	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	75	64.7
	Female	41	35.3
Latino Background	Caribbean	92	79.3
	Other	24	20.7
English Proficiency	Beginner	60	51.7
	Intermediate	38	32.8
	Advanced	12	5.2
	Proficient	10.3	10.3
Years in high school	1	2	1.7
	2	9	7.8
	3	17	14.7
	4	88	75.9

Quantitative Research Procedures

The dependent variable in this research was graduation by the expected year, a binary categorical variable. The independent variables were interval variables except for gender which was coded as dummy variables. The interval variables were first year entry level academic average, entry English Proficiency level, gender, Latino American continental background, and years within high school.

Variables such as economic status were rejected due to a lack of significant differences in the means. 99.9% of the ELL sample received free lunch and therefore the majority were considered to be in a low income status. First year fall semester grade average was considered as a possible predictor of graduation. Due to the Latino diversity within the school, the Latino background was broken down into Caribbean or other as a dichotomous variable through a study of the demographics of the ELL sample within the the school and was considered as a possible predictor of dependent variable.

The dependent variable, graduation by expected year was a dichotomous variable into two levels: the students graduating on time or not. A binary logistical regression analysis was used as the method for this research. The Logistical regression estimates the probability of graduation occurring while controlling for predictor variables.

Assumptions

Four assumptions were met to make valid the interpretations with logistical regression. The first assumption is that the logistic regression does not assume a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The conditional probabilities are a logistic function of the independent variables. In this particular study

the probabilities are, indeed, a function of the independent variables as the dependent variable, graduation by expected year, is dichotomous.

Second, the dependent variable does not need to be normally distributed (but does assume its distribution is within range of the exponential family of distribution, such as normal (Poisson, binomial, gamma).

Third assumption, is that logistic regression does not require categorical or interval variables. It happens that in this research all variables are intervals. The observations are independent.

The fourth assumption is that one or more independent variables that were either continuous or categorical were used.

Instruments

Lab-r reports were generated from the ATS (Automated System) database. A Lab-r report indicates the English proficiency level of the student who has taken the NYSESLAT, the English proficiency exam, in the past academic year. This report will be backtracked to include all English Language Learners who entered the campus in the year 2012. All new admits from another country who according to their Home Language Survey spoke Spanish and were from a Latino background were part of the sample. A total of 116 students' information were obtained whose year within high school, gender and English proficiency level were obtained through reports from the ATS database. To ensure reliability, all ELL freshman cohort 2012 have taken the same NYSESLAT exam. (please see Appendix F to view the conversion chart). The NYSESLAT Exam administered in 2012 used the proficiency levels beginner, intermediate, advanced and

proficient which were the levels used in this study. The English Language Learners who entered high school before or after 2012 will not be taken into consideration. The amount of years in high school will be considered as a covariate in the study.

The next instrument that was used were graduation records from the ATS system. Freshman ELLs in the year 2012 were tracked in order to observe whether the student graduated by expected year or not. The expectancy of ELL students is that they would graduate in four years if they came in their freshman year, they graduate in three years if they enter within their sophomore year and so on consecutively. Therefore, if freshman in 2012 are still enrolled and have not graduated within four years it was considered as not graduated.

CHAPTER 4

Qualitative Results

The purpose of the qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of teachers and students who have experienced teaching or learning in a stand-alone English as a New Language (ENL) class and obtain insight into their personal beliefs, opinion, and experiences about the preparation that these class offer ELL students for mainstream courses and consequently helping them or not graduate on time. To protect the privacy of the interviewees, pseudonyms will be used when referring to the interviewers.

The Central Phenomenon

In grounded theory, the central phenomenon is recognized as the key concept of the study. In this study, teachers and students believe that the instruction in stand-alone ENL classes were not preparing ELLs for mainstream courses. The central phenomenon is then guided by the three additional themes that also emerged from the central data: (a) the programming issues that were evident in the stand alone ENL classes, (b) lack of adequate content area instruction in the stand alone ENL classes, (c) the immersion of ENL teachers and content area teachers.

In qualitative research it is important to have thick descriptions (Creswell, 2015). Therefore, qualitative research is based on the descriptive data in this case, interview transcripts, classroom observation transcripts, and lesson plans. To be as detailed as possible is important in qualitative research, “the written word is very important.... both in recording data and disseminating the findings” (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 5). The transcriptions went through the process of coding: initial coding, focus coding and theoretical coding, (Yi, 2008). The initial coding allowed separating, sorting and

synthesizing data. The focused coding allowed for a continuous synthesis of data and the condensing of categories. The theoretical coding stage allowed the extensive amount of categories to be merged or reduced into the generating themes.

Programming Issues that are Evident in the Stand-Alone ENL Classroom

All the teachers interviewed had experience in teaching stand-alone ENL class. The students that were interviewed had also experienced being in a stand-alone ENL class. When asked whether the ENL class was effective in helping students learn English, both teachers did not answer directly with a positive answer. Teacher A, who was the more experienced teacher in the ENL classroom, indicated that a stand-alone was meant to “support native speakers of another language in learning English.” She said that although she attempted to the best of her ability to teach students English that it was very difficult when she had various proficiency levels in her class. Teacher A expressed the following:

In my stand-alone classes I tend to have beginner level students to more advanced level students. So when lesson planning for these students to help them learn English it’s hard to teach them English when the class is at various levels.

Teacher A when on to explain that she did not pull back, she tried to help students learn English through grouping and differentiation techniques. Although she explained that she tried her best to help all her students learn she kept on claiming, “it is hard though.”

Teacher A indicated that the students at the higher level were not as attentive when the teacher taught lessons that they were too advanced for. For example, she said, “my advanced students even became a behavior issue in the class because they were not engaged in the lesson when I am teaching sight words and they are ready for essay

writing.” Teacher B indicated that when asking the corresponding administration to switch the higher level students to another period in order to support ELLs more effectively, he was told he would be helped.

Admin asked me for the list of students that were at a higher level in order to move them to another period where they would be together. I gave them the list and as the programmer looked through the list she told me that certain kids could not be moved because they were taking a specific class such as music or another class that was not available another period.

Through class observations, it was evident that there were students of various English proficiency levels in class. In one classroom observation, it was recorded that one group was working on finishing a graphic organizer they were given to begin an essay assignment. The other group was asked to look at pictures and identify with a word the action in the picture. The words they were allowed to use were provided in a key on the work sheet. Therefore, the level of rigor in the assignments due to the extensive range of the student’s English proficiency level class was also evident in the lesson plans. It is important to state that only in one class it was recorded that students had conversations in English without having to be prompted by the teacher while others spoke in conversational Spanish.

All students who were interviewed were at a transitional English proficiency level according their most recent NYSESLAT scores. Student 1 was very consistent in saying that she dreaded the ENL class, she said, “Everyone knew that when you came out of that class it was because you were an ESL student. I think that if I was just in my content class that could have just pushed me to speak English with the other students and

teacher.” Student 2 was more optimistic in saying that the ENL class or ESL class the way they called it was the area where she felt she could ask questions about writing. Although she felt that the ENL could be helpful for students learning English she implicitly indicated that with various level students in the class the opportunity for the teacher to give you his or her full attention was hard.

It helped me with questions like how to write a thesis statement but sometimes the teacher did not have enough time because she tried to help more the students that did not know English at all in the class.

Student 3 expressed that she liked the ENL class because she felt she was not alone in the struggle of learning English. In an ENL class, all the students there were learning English. On the same hand, she said, “In my ESL class almost everyone knew Spanish. I spoke more Spanish than English. Some students did not know any English so I could not practice my English with them.”

All the interviewees express that the stand-alone ENL class where they were placed had an extensive range of English proficiency level students. The ENL teachers expressed the challenges they had lesson planning for the different English Proficiency levels simultaneously. One teacher explained that although programming wanted to be helpful in grouping similar English proficiency levels in the same stand-alone ENL class other conflicts would arise. Some students had classes that were not available other periods therefore conflict existed when grouping students who are at various grade levels. For example, the teacher explained that one of the Seniors was taking AP Spanish 8th period therefore she could not take ENL 8th period because AP Spanish was not available another period.

Student 2 expressed that it was hard for the teacher to support her in a question she had pertaining to her ELA class in the ENL class when she was trying to help the beginner level ELLs. Student 3 indicated that she spoke more Spanish than English in the class because the other students did not know as much English as she knew in the stand-alone ENL class. The students made it evident that if the class was more homogenous in English proficiency levels the attention, lessons and conversations in the class would be more supportive in them learning English.

Lack of Adequate Content Area Instruction

Teacher A who was the more experienced teacher believed that the purpose of a stand-alone ENL class was to teach students English and support them in their content area classes. In the class observations, it was recorded that there was only one instance out of the four observations where the lesson was aligned to a specific subject area. Specifically, the instructional objective of the lesson was, “Students will be able to understand the Japanese internment camps that were created in the United States.” She specified differentiation techniques in her lesson plan to have students understand the lesson. One group was asked to look at pictures taken of the Japanese during that time period and write words that describe their feelings. She stated that another group would write a paragraph about the process of attaining the Japanese in the internment camps. Finally, in the lesson plan, she wrote that the advanced level students would write a persuasive essay to the president in closing down the camps and why. These students in the group were asked to imagine themselves living during this time and being a witness of what was occurring.

In one of the classes, the class work displayed essays about countries. Through a short glimpse of the essays displayed, the essays covered history, culture and traditions of the countries. In another class observed, the classroom was covered with sight words all over the walls and lockers. There was a bulletin board that covered biographies of the students and were posted all around.

While teacher B believed that the purpose of a stand-alone ENL class was to become English proficient so that they can be successful in their other classes; all students agreed that the purpose of an ENL class was to teach them English.

Two of the three students said that they believed the ENL class should also help them in the other classes. "I think that my ESL class is supposed to help us do good in our classes by teaching us English and anything else we need."

When the teachers were asked if their stand-alone classes prepared students for their academic content area courses, there were mixed answers. Teacher A said that she understands the importance of preparing students for their content area classes in the ENL class. In a frustrated voice, she said that it was hard to tie her lessons to a particular content area when the students in her class were all at various grade levels.

It was hard to teach them about the Japanese camps in the United States. When some students were not in US history class as of yet. Regardless, I still taught the lesson hoping they might not forget it when they took the class or the US regents. Teacher B, on the other hand, did not believe the importance of incorporating content area curricula into the ENL class. The teacher said that it was more important to focus on English proficiency and that once the students were proficient they would be successful in their content area classes.

I focus more on the phonics, grammar and vocabulary when teaching English to my students. We are given a curriculum to use but there's a lot of flexibility in using it. I am not very confident in teaching other content areas. I wouldn't know what content area or topic to teach them when my students are all at different grade levels. I hope that by learning academic English they can transfer that to their other classes.

Both teachers agreed to some extent that their ENL class could be better with the incorporation of content, a detailed curriculum that is written with content alignment or through the addition on a content teacher in the class.

The students also offered mixed views on whether their ENL class prepared ELL students for academic content classes. Student 1 directly said that the ENL class was a waste of time and that it did not prepare her for her other classes or help her in any way. Student 2 agreed she had learned some content topics in the ENL class but the topics many times were not relevant to what the class they were taking at that particular moment.

I remember learning about living things in my ESL class which was helpful in my Living Environment class but not all the students had the same science class, some students were taking Earth Science.

Student 3 indicated that one day she had asked the teacher for help in a science lesson but the ESL teacher said he was not able to help her. For example, she said the teacher told her, "I do not know the answer and not all the students in class are in Earth Science so it's not fair to go over that." The student admitted and said, "I really think the ESL class

should be more helpful.” She went on to indicate that she felt that she could be taking other classes instead of ESL where she could learn more.

Immersion of Content Area Classes

Students and teachers varied in ways that they believed ELLs could be serviced more effectively. Regardless, all stakeholders interviewed mentioned a type of push-in or integrated ENL service where they felt most benefited students. Teacher A said that when students asked her for help in math or science she was not so comfortable in those subject areas. She went on to say, “I do not deny a student help I try to research the answer but it is very hard to help them when I do not know the content they are asking me.” She continued to indicate that this year, she was assigned to an integrated setting in Algebra. She said that the teacher would share her lesson plans and if she had a question about the topic the content teacher would help her. She admitted to learning with the students in the Algebra class but felt more comfortable helping the students with the language aspect related to Algebra.

I am not a content area teacher but I try to incorporate content material in my lessons that may help them in their classes. I think push-in or push-out services are good in supporting ELLs within their classes. I prefer push-in because I am able to prepare with the subject teacher which helps me understand better the curricula and help them better in their classes.

Teacher A went on to explain that she was fortunate to speak Spanish like most of her ELL students so it was easier for her to translate the material for them. Teacher A explained that when she had Arabic kids in his class he would work ahead of time to prepare material in their language that would help them understand. She claimed, “I think

it is best for students to have ENL teachers in all their content classes but I am also conscience that there are not so many ELL teachers to go around.” Teacher B was more specific to say that an integrated ENL class was one of the most beneficial services provided to ELL students. Teacher B said that he was not taught how to teach content area material like math and science, he admitted to feeling more comfortable in an integrated setting where he was able to teach students language comprehension strategies to understand the content being taught by the subject teacher. Teacher B expanded to say other ways to help ELL students such as creating sessions either during or after school that would supplement additional support for students in their content areas classes. In order for these studying sessions to be successful he said it was important for the teachers to understand the content material.

“When I teach in an integrated class, I help students understand the material that the content teachers are teaching them. I think having studying sessions where students can attend during or after school where they can get extra help in their classes is a good idea. Students also benefit by having me in their content area classes. They feel relieved when they have someone in the class to help them comprehend the material in their classes.”

Similarly, student 1 believed that she did not find the stand-alone ENL class helpful. Student 1 was very specific to say that she wasted her time having so many of ENL periods. She was specific to indicate that her freshman year she had three periods of stand-alone ENL. Stand-alone ENL periods are assigned by their level of English proficiency, at the time she was probably a beginner or currently known as entering level which is why she was probably programmed for so many stand-alone ENL classes.

“Instead of having so many periods of ENL I would of preferred taking more classes that would have helped me graduate. When the ESL teachers were in class that was helpful.

Student 2 indicated that Saturday courses where the ESL teacher pushed-in to help ELL students was the instructional service which she found the most beneficial. She said that although she understands that the ESL classes were meant to help them she felt like it signaled ELLs out. All the students in the school that entered the ESL class were, “the ELL students,” she indicated that she did not understand the label until months after. Student 3 claimed that ELL students should have some where to go for help in the class and homework. She very openly said, “I liked having an ESL teacher in my class that would help me. When I didn’t have an ENL teacher I would struggle so much crying because it was hard. The other teacher would try to help me but I sometimes couldn’t understand her.”

Although the students interviewed understood that an ENL class was meant to support them in English language proficiency, all three students proposed new ways to better support their needs. The students were explicit to request support in their mainstream courses through either the support of a content and language teacher and less exposure to stand-alone ENL classes that took their time away from mainstream courses.

Quantitative Results

The student sample consisted of 116 ELL students from an urban high school campus in Brooklyn. All ELL students taken as part of the sample were first entry high students from their native country and who had entered by the year 2012. Ninety-nine percent of the ELL student population were Latinos. To explore possible sub-group differences, Latinos were segregated into either from Caribbean countries or not. The vast majority of the sample of ELLs were largely either Caribbean or other. Since all entry level ELL high school students were not freshman, the amount of years within high school was also taken into consideration as a predictor variable.

Tables 1.1 provides descriptive sample, providing general information about the size and characteristics of the study sample.

Table 1.1

Descriptive statistics of the sample

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev
English Proficiency	116	1	4	1.74	.961
Ethnic Background	116	1	4	1.35	.749
Years in School	116	1	4	3.65	.701
Gender	116	0	1	.35	.480
Grad Status	116	0	1	.26	.440
Semester Grade Avg.	116	1.00	4.00	3.0259	.99093

Table 1.2 demonstrates the unequal representation of males and females. Males represented 64.7 of the sample.

Table 1.2

Descriptive Sample of the Gender

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	75	64.7	64.7	64.7
Female	41	35.3	35.3	100
Total	116	100.0	100.0	

The dependent variable in this research was graduation by the expected year, a binary categorical variable. The independent variables were interval variables except for gender which was coded as dummy variables. The interval variables were first year entry level academic average, entry English Proficiency level, gender, Latino American continental background, and years within high school.

The assessment used to measure Entry English proficiency levels were Language Assessment Battery exams, Lab-R (Grace, 2016). Lab-R Exams, currently known as NYSITELL exams, were all given to this sample during the year 2012. Therefore, all ELL students regardless of grade level were given the same NYISTELL exam since all were first entry students during fall semester in the year 2012. In order to determine Fall Semester grade average scores, transcript scores for the Fall semester were obtained.

Variables such as economic status were rejected due to a lack of significant differences in the means. 99.9% of the ELL sample received free lunch and therefore were considered to be in a low income status. First year fall semester grade average was considered as a possible predictor of graduation. Due to the Latino diversity within the school, the Latino background was broken down into Caribbean or other through a study of the demographics of the ELL sample within the school and was considered as a possible predictor of dependent variable.

As the dependent variable, graduation by expected year, is a binary categorical variable, a binary logistical regression analysis was used as the method for this research. The Logistical regression estimates the probability of graduation occurring while controlling for predictor variables.

SPSS software was used for the Binary Logistic Regression Analysis. There were 5 independent variables that were predicted to have an effect on the dependent variable, graduation by the expected year.

Table 1.3
Logistic Regression Coefficients

Variables	B	SE	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
English Proficiency			2.338	.505			
English Proficiency(1)	-.888	1.011	.772	.380	.411	.057	2.985
English Proficiency(2)	-.266	1.036	.066	.798	.767	.101	5.842
English Proficiency(3)	.509	1.361	.140	.708	1.664	.116	23.962
Freshman Average			19.648	.000			
Freshman Average (90-100)	3.130	.923	11.511	.001	22.874	3.750	139.520
Freshman Average (80-89)	.504	.792	.405	.524	1.655	.351	7.813
Freshman Average (65-79)	-1.34	.736	3.302	.069	2.63	.062	1.111
Caribbean Latino	1.506	.641	5.515	.019	4.508	.063	.779
Year in school	-.693	.374	3.425	.064	.500	.240	1.042
Constant	1.680	1.609	1.091	.296	5.367		

Table 1.3 presents the results of the logistic regression analysis based on the dependent variable, graduation by expected year. The table demonstrated a statistically significant result for the predictor Freshman Semester Average (90 and above) with $p = .001$, $p < .01$. The model explained 45.3% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in graduation completed by expected year and correctly classified 85.3% of cases. High average students are more likely to exhibit 22.874 times graduating on time than below average students. The odds of graduating on time is 21.87% higher for high average fall semester ELL students than ELL students who have below average grades their first fall semester in high school.

The table also demonstrated that Caribbean background as a statistically significant predictor with a $p = .019$, $p < .05$. Students who were from a Caribbean background demonstrated that they are more likely to exhibit .222 times graduating on time than ELLs from another Latino background. The Caribbean background reduces the odds of graduating by expected year by 77.8%.

The studies' hypothesis were:

H₁: The ELL's first year entry English Proficiency levels, first year first semester average grade, years in NYC high school, Latino continental region, and gender will predict if students graduate by expected year.

H₂: The ELL's first year entry English Proficiency levels, first year first semester average grade, years in NYC high school, Latino continental region, and gender will not predict if the students graduate by expected year.

Predictors such as gender, English proficiency level and years in high school

demonstrated nonsignificant results. The hypothesis was rejected when stating that ELL's first year entry English Proficiency levels will predict if students graduate by expected year where nonsignificant results were obtained $p > .05$. When viewing semester grade average, the null hypothesis was rejected where it indicated that ELL's first year first semester grade average will not predict if the students graduate by expected year. The null hypothesis was not rejected when stating that the more years that ELLs study in a NYC high school the less likely they are expected to graduate on time where nonsignificant results were obtained $p > .05$. The table also demonstrated that Caribbean background as a statistically significant predictor with a $p = .019$, $p < .05$. Students from a Caribbean background are more likely to exhibit 4.508 times graduating by expected year than ELLs from another Latino background.

CHAPTER 5

Qualitative Analysis

This study was based on grounded theory which guided the process of this field work. The data was systematically gathered and analyzed (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Analyzing the data early in the process helped to guide the study as themes began to arise from the information collected from the interviews, class observations and lesson plans. The initial coding of the data was short hand labeling and defining categories via constant comparison of information. The transcripts from the interviews and field notes were read through their entirety several times to determine possible categories or themes. The topics were coded to identify groups from the units of data to determine any meaningful patterns or themes. In the final stage of coding, a focused coding approach was used. There was an emphasis on analyzing further categories, refining categories color coded and the usage of constant comparison.

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, design and implementation of the research incorporated three techniques: triangulation, peer debriefing and referential adequacy (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study was triangulated through interviews, observations and artifacts. Peer reviews were conducted by two other colleagues where they were asked to review the transcripts. Challenges were discussed, coding and transcripts were reviewed by the peer reviewers as well. The technique of referential adequacy refers to the way data is collected. Data was recorded and transcribed immediately. All hard copies of the artifacts and lesson plans were obtained and held.

The researcher created interview questions informed by the literature review that would best address the research question: What are teacher and student perceptions of a stand-alone ENL class? In order to triangulate the data, I collected interviews, classroom observations and artifacts. Keywords or concepts aligned with the literature were coded to identify topics without the assistance of computer software. The final themes that were evident in the data were lack of adequate content area instruction in the stand-alone ENL class, immersion of ENL and content area teachers and programming issues.

Programming Issues

Programming issues in this study can be defined as the various grade and English proficiency levels in the stand-alone ENL class that were evident in the participant's interviews, observations and lesson plans. Both teachers agreed that an ENL class should support native speakers to gain English proficiency. One of the teachers extended her response to say that an ENL should also support ELL students be successful in their mainstream courses. Both teachers admitted to difficulty and challenges in the class where teaching English was a struggle. Teacher A explained, "it was hard to teach them....when some students were not in US history as of yet...regardless I still taught the lesson hoping they might not forget it." These findings imply the importance for ENL teachers to have a curriculum that incorporates language and content alignment. Teachers that claim not being able to teach language and content simultaneously should be exposed to professional development that will provide teachers the skills needed to prepare ELL students to be successful in all mainstream courses. The school administration should make it their responsibility in surveying teachers at the beginning of the academic school year in order to determine which teachers express challenges in teaching ELLs.

Subsequently, administration could arrange for teachers to take targeted professional development that would prepare them to support English language learners based on the challenges that the teachers express. For example, teacher A described the challenges of aligning her lesson to content area topic when her students were from various grade levels. Teacher B when on speak about the various English proficiency levels in the class. Teacher B was observed teaching the students pronouns although there were students who were at a higher English proficiency. The students at a more advanced level were off task. The students appeared to be bored, one student in the same group had his head down throughout the whole lesson. One student exclaimed to the teacher, “Can we do something else, we know that already.” In the interviews, one teacher said that that challenges of teaching English proficiency with such extensive range of English proficiency levels were also affecting the classroom management in his class. The teacher said, “My ELL students tend to be well behaved but when they do not feel engaged in the lesson, they are bored, off task and noisy.” These challenges that the teachers express such as being able to engage students and differentiation techniques should be part of a sequence of targeted professional developments that the school administration could provide by surveying teachers at the beginning of the school year in order to understand their challenges.

One of the teachers said that he spoke to programming in regards to grouping students together in an ENL class according to their English proficiency levels. The teacher claimed that administration and programming was willing to group the students but when doing so they would be pulled out of other classes that were not available another period, therefore too many conflicts would arise when changing student

programs. The students claimed that there were students in the class that did not have the same general education classes as them. One student said that she felt like ENL was a waste of time. She emphasized by saying, “Nothing I learned in my ESL class helped me in my other classes.” According to Carhill et. al (2008) speaking social English was predictive of most likely gaining English proficiency. In the classroom observations only once was there a social conversation in English among the group taking place in the ENL class. This is significant because it is evident that students are not being immersed into the English language because they are not required to speak English in the class. Students tend to learn social English within a few months but academic English may take years (Carhill et al, 2008). One student explained that although she enjoyed having students that were in the “same struggle” that she spoke more Spanish than English in the class.

On the other hand, a student claimed the teacher did not have enough time to help her because she was too busy assisting the students that did not speak Spanish at all. According to review of literature, De Jong & Harper (2005) claim that a “good class” teaches language proficiency and content area simultaneously. Although both teachers had mixed meanings of the purpose of an ENL stand-alone class, both agreed to support students gain English proficiency. Through the findings, it was evident that all the teachers and students wanted to learn in the ENL class, the class roster had mixed English proficiency levels and grade levels which was evident through the data that it created challenges for all stakeholders. Astin’s theoretical framework on the Input-Environment-Output model, allows us to expand on the findings. The ELL students all share the fact that they are non-native speakers of the English language which is the input in Astin’s theoretical framework. The environment is what they are exposed to. The students and

teachers express that when there are so many different types of English proficiency levels in the stand-alone class, it is harder for the ENL teacher to create a targeted lesson for those who are struggling at the beginner level or with those that need to learn how to write an essay. The output in this model is that students are not successful in their mainstream courses and are not graduating on time.

Lack of Adequate Instruction in the Stand-Alone ENL Class

Another significant finding was the participants' belief in the lack of adequate content area instruction in the stand-alone ENL class. According Lee (2012), stand-alone ENL courses excluded ELL students from taking content area classes. The researchers also indicate that many teachers believe that students are not ready for content area classes until they learn English. Classroom observations did not demonstrate class work showcased on the walls or on bulletin boards connected to a specific subject area class. All the students agreed that their ENL class was not helping them pass their mainstream classes. One teacher said that she tried to to connect her lessons to content topics but that it was hard choosing a topic when all her students were in different grades and consequently in different classes. One teacher explained that there was so much flexibility in the curriculum they followed in allowing them to choose when and how to teacher a certain unit. For example, the teacher explained, "We are given a curriculum to use but there a lot of flexibility in using it. I am not very confident in teaching other content areas. I don't know what content area topic to teach them when my students are in different grades. According to Menken (2010), only 41% of English Language Learners pass the English Language Arts (ELA) regents in New York. Callahan et. al (2009) says that ELL students are not prepared for college work once they graduate.

Through the data collected it was evident that the participants did not effectively align ENL curricula with mainstream courses. Teachers and students felt ELL students should be more supported in their mainstream courses but it was not occurring effectively in the ENL course. If it is hard for teachers to have a curriculum that is content aligned for stand-alone ENL classes, then students should only be programmed for integrated ENL classes. Students are taken away from credited courses which they need to graduate. Exposing students to only integrated ENL classes during school hours will allow students to take the content courses they need in order to graduate, receive language support in the content class and have students graduate on time. Stand-alone ENL classes can be provided after-school hours where it does not take away time from the student receiving the courses they need to graduate.

Immersion of ENL and Content Area Teachers

Another significant finding in the study was the participants' belief that the immersion of ENL and content area teachers in the mainstream courses was an effective way of supporting ELLs. The teachers agreed in having a content area teacher and an ENL teacher in the same class for various reasons. One teacher who reiterated not being prepared and comfortable in teaching content classes explained that when in the classroom with the teacher he would support the student with language comprehension while the other teacher would answer content area questions. Teachers who are not comfortable teaching content should be provided targeted professional development in supporting the teacher. A curriculum may be provided to the ENL teachers that incorporate content units but either way the teachers should still be provided professional development that helps them in the implementation of the curriculum.

One teacher said that in the integrated ENL class, he also learned the content in the class and discussed the lessons of the class with the content teacher prior to the class lesson which helped him be more supportive in the class. Therefore, when programming the content and language teacher for the integrated ENL class, both teachers should receive targeted professional development so that they both feel comfortable in the implementation of content and language in the lessons.

The other teacher suggested a push-in model to support students understand content and the language simultaneously. She also suggested creating studying sessions during and or after school where a content teacher would be available to help them. All three of the students agreed that they found that an ENL teacher in their mainstream courses was helpful. One student claimed, "I use to take some classes on Saturday and the ESL teacher would come around and help us that was good. I did not like the ESL classes because it was like signaling us, "those are the ELL students." The student explained that everyone knew that the students who were in that particular classroom were ELLs. One student said that in her freshman year she took three periods of ENL where she would have preferred to take credit classes that would help her graduate. Indicating that ELL students sometimes do not graduate by expect year because of stand-alone ENL courses which take students time away from receiving credits from their content courses. Callahan et. al (2009) indicated that although students in ESL classes kept students in school because students found other students alike it did not support students in the mainstream courses. Currently, the push-in model of an ENL teacher in a core content area is called Integrated ENL. All participants agreed to the model being

effective in supporting ELLs understand the content. Students are earning credits to graduate and receiving language and content support.

Researchers claim that teachers need to realize that limited English proficiency does not indicate that ELLs are limited in their academic skills or capacity to learn the content. Hirschfield (2004) & Menken and Antunez (2001), recognized that teachers own attitudes and assumptions affected students in the classroom. If mainstream teachers did not feel prepared to teach ELLs or felt that ELLs students could not learn the content because they did not know English that affected the success of learning in the class. All participants in this study agreed that an integrated ENL course was most effective in supporting ELL students and the ENL teachers. One teacher explained that he is the language expert and that the other teacher was the content expert therefore together they could meet the various needs of the ELL students. In the student interviews, all students explained a push-in model was the most helpful service in teaching them content and English. Programming issues came up in the stand-alone ENL class where various grade level and English proficiency levels were programmed in the same course. All participants agreed that the range in levels either in grades or English proficiency produced various challenges in the class. Finally, the concrete amount of lessons aligned to content classes was inconsistent. Teachers admitted to struggling with aligned lessons to subject area topics due to the lack of expertise in the content, various grades in the class or due to the lack curriculum that included both areas.

Limitations of Qualitative Results

The researcher attempted to limit the amount of biases and maintain the trustworthiness of the study although there were uncontrollable limitations to the study. The amount of participants in the sample is small and limited. If access to a larger sample would be possible it could improve the study, although current data did support the emerging themes. Participant criteria were another limitation. The students were all females, they were at different grade levels, two being seniors in 12th grade and one being a junior in the 11th grade. The teachers also ranged in levels of experience. One female teacher had more than 15 years of experience with ELL students where the other teacher had only six years of experience. Therefore, there was a limitation of prior experience with participants. A threat to statistical conclusion validity is that ELL teacher perceptions does not prove causal relationship between perceptions and teacher practice. Because the teachers perceived that ELL students where in the stand-alone ENL class to learn English proficiency to support ELLs in their content areas it does not prove that it will be relevant in his or her lessons. Due to new DOE state regulations, ELL teachers are requiring constant ENL teacher instructional professional development. At the school, there had been constant professional development provided to teachers pertaining to ELL instruction strategies. Therefore, results may not be generalizable across districts that have not received comparable levels of ELL professional development.

Quantitative Analysis

The purpose of this study was to investigate significant predictors that would indicate graduation status on track for English Language Learners. Policymakers and practitioners are constantly focusing on the need to improve learning outcomes for ELLs. Within schools, certain early interventions need to occur in order to target ELLs who are prone to fail or drop out. This quantitative phase was conducted to decipher significant predictors that might indicate students' graduation on time or vice versa. Logistic Regression Analysis was used to determine predictors of students graduating on time.

The findings indicate that in general, first semester grade averages are high predictors of whether a student is most likely to graduate on time. Graduating on time was the dependent variable which was determined by whether the student graduated by expected year. For example, a newly admitted sophomore is expected to graduate in three academic years; a newly admitted senior is expected to graduate in one year. Other possible variables such as Latino Caribbean background, English Proficiency level, gender, years in school resulted in non-significant findings. Therefore, first semester average was shown to be high predictors regardless of Latino background, years spent in high school or the ELL's entry English Proficiency level.

The findings in which high school GPA result in high predictors of graduation is consistent with the findings of Hanson and Schmeiser (2012) and Gwynne et al. (2012). Both researchers have found that early predictors such as grade point average are early warning indicators of whether a student will graduate expectedly. Gwynne et al. researches early indicators specifically in the ELL population. Findings have demonstrated that grade averages are high indicators for the ELL population.

Furthermore, Gwynne et al. found that regular attendance and those ELLs who are on track by the end of the ninth grade have resulted in high predictors of graduation. The CR-Part 154, the New York State ELL Policy, mandates students to stand-alone ENL classes solely based on the student's English proficiency level. If English proficiency levels is not a significant predictor of ELL graduation completion, then it should not be the only eligibility requirement for their specific classes. In order to mandate students to stand-alone ENL classes other variables should be considered such as grade point averages from middle school or high school first semester grade averages. Further research needs to be conducted with a larger sample, but the idea of using only English proficiency levels in order to mandate programming of students for specific classes should be considered.

The findings table also demonstrated that Caribbean background as a statistically significant predictor with for a ELL student graduating by expected year. Students from a Caribbean background are more likely to exhibit 4.508 times graduating by expected year than ELLs from another Latino background. Further research needs to be conducted in whether to study whether an ethnic majority population of a school has a significant relationship with the same ELL ethnic background graduating by expected year.

One purpose of this quantitative phase was to determine the importance of early interventions by deciphering predictors of graduation for newcomer ELLs that would validate the importance of the results of the qualitative phase. Through early indicators of failure or drop out, administration and school policy makers can set up and target ELLs in order to create interventions that will alter or deviate students from ultimately dropping out of school and supporting ELLs with academic success.

Limitations of Quantitative Results

A limitation to this study is selection bias and power. I have purposely chosen a sample that were Latino English Language Learners who had entered in 2012 throughout the campus. All three schools belong to the same campus and therefore their school demographics is the same. Therefore, the sample is limited in generalizability exclusively for English language learners who live in New York city and are of Latino racial makeup. The sample chosen in the study is not representative of the target population. A more diverse population of English Language Learners would have fulfilled the target population. Furthermore, the sample size was small and resulted in low statistical power, which subsequently affected the findings.

The history among a lapse of four years for incoming freshman can affect the outcome. Through a time of four years, social issues, family tragedies, environmental issues can occur which can affect the student fulfilling graduation by the expected year. Similarly, a threat to the statistical conclusion validity of the study is that random irrelevancies in the experimental factors can occur since data has been obtained from events that have occurred already.

The analyses used to examine the data also affected the validity of the statistical conclusions of this study. There were violated assumptions of the statistical test since there were unequal number of groups in the sample. For example, the number of males exceeded by far the number of females in the ELL sample.

Summary

The results of the qualitative analysis revealed that generally teachers and students perceive that there are programming issues in the stand-alone ENL class that intrude with effective instruction. For example, the participants explained that having a wide range of English proficiencies create difficulty in adhering to students' language needs in the class. The analysis also revealed the lack of a consistent integration of content material in the ENL class. Furthermore, participants viewed the integration of an ENL teacher and the content area teacher as the most beneficial class setting for ELL students. According to Howard (2017), having ELL students who were all at the same level, such as struggling readers, allowed to provided instructional strategies such as collaboration which allowed students to advance in their reading abilities. In the quantitative analysis, the significant findings indicated that ninth grade first semester grades were the most predictive of ELL graduation. The quantitative results support the urgency for the programming of ELLs to be set up effectively as early as their freshman year. These results are consistent with the theoretical framework in which this study was based on. This study was based on was Astin's Input-Environment- Output (I-E-O) model (Astin, 1993). According to Astin, inputs refer to personal qualities in which the students enter the educational arena with. According to the qualitative data, the students entered the stand-alone ENL class with various grade and English proficiency levels. Environment refers to everything that happens to a student during an educational program that might influence the outcomes being studied (Astin, 1993). The qualitative data revealed that students were not exposed to content material consistently in the stand-alone ENL class. Lastly, outputs in this study were the participants' belief that a push-in

model or integrated ENL class in the content area would be most beneficial in supporting a student to learn the content and language simultaneously. The quantitative data added credibility to the qualitative results indicating that the environmental factors considered in the Astin's framework are important to supporting output which in this case is ELL academic success. Therefore, this indicates that the language and content teacher should teach in an Integrated ENL setting where they are being supported by targeted professional development. There should be a curriculum for the integrated ENL class that has an alignment of content with language support for the class. Teachers should receive targeted professional development in supporting them in the implementation of the curriculum and that allows both language and content teacher to feel comfortable in teaching language and content simultaneously.

The next theoretical framework that this mixed methods study was based on is the existing achievement gap among the English Language Learners who are one of the subgroups that have the lowest graduation rate in US public schools (NCES, 2014). Both ELL students and ENL teachers reveal that they enjoy and find that ENL courses are the most beneficial to ENL students where ELL students learn both language and content material. De Jong & Harper (2005) explain that a "good class" teaches language and class content simultaneously. The implications for future practice are to increase the amount of exposure students have to ENL teachers in their content courses, also called an integrated ENL setting as soon as they enter high school. According to Thomas (2008), through the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), teachers should implement instructional techniques that meet the linguistic needs of the ELL population in their classes. Thomas (2008) continues to say that the way to meet the needs of ELLs is

through teaching language and content together. According to the quantitative analysis, high school ELL students need to be supported as soon as their freshman year. The students' success in their freshman year most likely motivates them to continue their studies. Therefore, it is important to properly program them in courses that are the most conducive to a proper education that suits the educational and language needs as soon as their freshman year. Therefore, the CR-Part 154 ELL policy should allow the school administration the choice of providing stand-alone ENL classes only after-school hours. Having integrated ENL courses that allow students the language support while learning the content is the most conducive support for an ELL high school student. A high school ELL student can gain their subject area class credits and graduate on time while learning English Proficiency. Gwynne et. al (2009) indicated that ninth grade averages were better predictors of ELL student graduation than language proficiency.

Schools need to be open to change and be flexible in willing to add or tweak programs according to the demographics of their school. Schools need to be reflective of the challenges that teachers and students face in a particular classroom. Although schools have to abide by specific policies they can voice their opinion to policy makers and those that affect policy. For example, if the amount of stand-alone ENL periods is hindering students from taking the content courses they need to graduate on time or is not supporting their language proficiency then policy needs to be changed.

Recommendations for Further Research

This mixed method study would have gained further insight with a larger sample size. This study should also be expanded to other large cities such as Los Angeles and Chicago where the the populations of English Language Learners continue to increase. The perceptions of teachers in cities where there is a large number of ELLs would offer greater credibility to the inconsistent benefits that secondary stand-alone ENL courses offer. Teachers in other cities who practice integrated ENL and stand-alone ENL should provide more credibility and insight to the services that benefit the students the most.

The quantitative phase of future research can extend to include the age of ELL students on arrival and length of residency in the United States as s possible predictor of graduation as supported by research conducted by Wassell et al. (2010). Advisory or early interventions that target SWDs and ELLs can improve the overall high school graduation rate city and nationwide. This will help school leaders and policy makers create preparation or intervention programs designed to support students in coursework in order to ensure graduation on track for these subgroups. This current study helps school leaders and policy makers understand the importance of integrated ENL classrooms, creating targeted professional development for the language and content teachers and the creation of curriculums for the integrated ENL classes that include the language and content implementation in the unit lessons. Furthermore, school leaders should take into consideration revising the ELL policy where the mandated amount of minutes for ELL services is solely based on English proficiency levels. School policy makers should take other variables into consideration when mandating ELLs to specific ELL services.

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Appendix A

Consent Form for Participants



Researcher: Lilibeth Bernal

Consent to participate in a Research Study

You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about the policy of English Language Learners and its effect in the graduation rate of their respective population. This study will be conducted by Lilibeth Bernal, Department of Education, St John's University. The study will be conducted as part of her doctoral dissertation. Her faculty sponsor is Barbara Cozza, Department of Education, St. John's University.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Take part in two interviews concerning the academic policies of programming English Language Learners at the high school level. Your interviews will be audio-taped. You may review these tapes and request that all or any portion of the tapes be destroyed. Participation in this study will involve approximately 45 minutes for each of the two interviews. The interviews will be held two weeks apart.

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research beyond those of everyday life.

Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator understand the effectiveness of the current policy affecting the instruction of English Language Learners.

Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by keeping consent forms separate from data to make sure that the subject's name and identity will not become known or linked with any information they have provided.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. For interviews, questionnaires or surveys, you have the right to skip or not answer any questions if you prefer not to answer.

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Lilibeth Bernal at 917-642-8107, Lilibeth.bernal11@my.stjohns.edu, or the faculty sponsor, Barbara Cozza at 718-990-1569, cozzab@stjohns.edu, St. John's University, 8000 Utopia Pkwy, Jamaica, NY 11432.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Human Subject's Review Board, St John's University, 718-990-1440.

_____ Yes, I give the investigator permission to have me participate in the study. The researcher can use quotes from the interview but will not reveal any information to identify me.

_____ No, I will not participate in the study.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Agreement to Participate

Subject's Signature

Date

Appendix B

Parental Consent Form



Researcher: Lilibeth Bernal

Parental Consent to participate in a Research Study

Your child has been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about the policy of English Language Learners and its effect in the graduation rate of their respective population. This study will be conducted by Lilibeth Bernal, Department of Education, St John's University. The study will be conducted as part of her doctoral dissertation. Her faculty sponsor is Barbara Cozza, Department of Education, St. John's University.

If you agree to be in this study, your child will be asked to do the following:

Take part in two interviews concerning the academic policies of programming English Language Learners at the high school level. Your interviews will be audio-taped. You may review these tapes and request that all or any portion of the tapes be destroyed. Participation in this study will involve approximately 45 minutes for each of the two interviews. The interviews will be held two weeks apart.

There are no known risks associated with your child's participation in this research beyond those of everyday life.

Although your child will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator understand the effectiveness of the current policy affecting the instruction of English Language Learners.

Confidentiality of your child's research records will be strictly maintained by keeping consent forms separate from data to make sure that the subject's name and identity will not become known or linked with any information they have provided.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. For interviews, questionnaires or surveys, you have the right to skip or not answer any questions if you prefer not to answer.

If there is anything about the study or about your child's participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Lilibeth Bernal at 917-642-8107, Lilibeth.bernal11@my.stjohns.edu, or the faculty sponsor, Barbara Cozza at 718-990-1569, cozzab@stjohns.edu, St. John's University, 8000 Utopia Pkwy, Jamaica, NY 11432.

For questions about your child's rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Human Subject's Review Board, St John's University, 718-990-1440.

_____ Yes, I give the investigator permission to have my child participate in the study. The researcher can use quotes from the interview but will not reveal any information to identify me.

_____ No, I will not allow my child to participate in the study.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Agreement to Participate

Subject's Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

Appendix C

Field Notes Form

Field Note Format

Date: _____

Field Notes for (Site) _____

General Notes

Date/Time	Field Notes	General Notes

Appendix D

Teacher Interview Questions

L: How long have you been working as an ENL teacher?

L: How do you provide services for ELL students? ENL stand-alone classrooms, Bilingual classrooms, or in an integrated setting? What do you believe is the purpose of an ENL stand-alone classroom?

L: How effective do you feel an ENL –standalone class is in students learning English? Is there a setting/service that you prefer in contrast to the other and why?

L: Do you feel that stand-alone ENL classes prepare ELL students for academic content in their mainstream classrooms?

L: Do you have any input on how ELL services can be improved in supporting students in their academic content areas and gaining English proficiency?

Appendix E

Student Interview Questions

L: How long have you been an ENL student that you know of?

L: How many classes do you have with your ENL Teacher? What do you think is the purpose of an ENL stand-alone class?

L: How effective do you feel your stand-alone ENL/ESL classes have been in helping you learn English?

L: How effective do you think stand-alone ENL/ESL classes were in teaching you subject area material/content?

L: Do you feel that there are better ways that you could have learned English and gained support in learning academic content in high school, if yes which ways?

Appendix F

Conversion Chart for NYSESLAT Scores

ATTACHMENT F (NYSUT, 2015)

NYSESLAT 2012 SCALE SCORE RANGES FOR DETERMINING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

To determine a student's overall performance level, match the student's scale scores for Listening & Speaking and Reading & Writing to the scale score ranges for Listening & Speaking and Reading & Writing on this chart.

- To move from one performance level to the next, the student must score within the range of the higher performance level in **both** the Listening & Speaking and Reading & Writing components.

- Students who have moved in only one combination of modalities remain at the lower performance level.
- To move from any performance level (beginning, intermediate, or advanced) to the English proficient level, the

student must score at the proficient level in **both** the Listening & Speaking and Reading & Writing components.

Grade	BEGINNING		INTERMEDIATE		ADVANCED		PROFICIENT	
	Listening & Speaking	Reading & Writing						
K	510 and below	536 and below	511-572	537-581	573-615	582-608	616 and above	609 and above
1	519 and below	558 and below	520-581	559-608	582-648	609-654	649 and above	655 and above
2	542 and below	570 and below	543-601	571-622	602-660	623-662	661 and above	663 and above
3	554 and below	579 and below	555-610	580-629	611-674	630-678	675 and above	679 and above
4	566 and below	588 and below	567-620	589-641	621-683	642-690	684 and above	691 and above
5	578 and below	619 and below	579-630	620-659	631-685	660-703	686 and above	704 and above
6	586 and below	622 and below	587-638	623-667	639-695	668-709	696 and above	710 and above
7	596 and below	628 and below	597-650	629-673	651-702	674-709	703 and above	710 and above
8	604 and below	631 and below	605-660	632-681	661-702	682-709	703 and above	710 and above
9	622 and below	642 and below	623-677	643-697	678-714	698-725	715 and above	726 and above
10	627 and below	645 and below	628-685	646-701	686-720	702-731	721 and above	732 and above
11	634 and below	648 and below	635-693	649-710	694-727	711-738	728 and above	739 and above
12	639 and below	651 and below	640-703	652-714	704-727	715-738	728 and above	739 and above

Vita

Name	<i>Lilibeth Bernal</i>
Baccalaureate Degree	<i>Bachelor of Business Administration, Bernard Baruch College City University, New York City Major: Finance and Investments</i>
Date Graduated	<i>December, 2009</i>
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Date Graduated	<i>June, 2015</i>