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# Effects of Teaching Methods on Achievement of English Language Learners

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Kathy Short

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Walden University  
2018

Abstract

Effects of Teaching Methods on Achievement of English Language Learners

by

Kathy Short

MA, Framingham State University, 2000

BA, Calvary Theological Seminary, 1997

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2018

## Abstract

An American school overseas is concerned with offering equal academic opportunities for the non-native English language learners (ELLs) on campus. It has not been determined if the in-class teaching method or the out-of-class teaching method is more effective. The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a difference in end-of-year achievement between these 2 different methods. Guided by Vygotsky's theory of cognitive social development and Krashen's theory of exposure to language, the research question addressed the difference in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students' achievement test scores between the in-class teaching method and the out-of-class teaching method. The causal comparative study compared the standardized Stanford and Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Proficiency achievement test data from 244 students for 1 year of out-of-class teaching with 3 subsequent years of in-class teaching. The Kruskal-Wallis test indicated a significant difference between the 2 methods ( $H = 7.88$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = .049$ ) only in the 1st year of in-class teaching. As the results are inconclusive, the results of this study were shared with teachers and administrators and a discussion was facilitated about alternatives to the in-class teaching method in order to develop a research-based curriculum that will help ELLs to succeed in the local school.

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## Dedication

To Randy for his encouragement, patience and motivation during the production of this work.

To Mom and Dad for being my first teachers. Thank you for instilling in me the value of education and believing in me for as long as I can remember.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Local Problem**

The expectation of an American school overseas is that the students are taught in English using an American curriculum. “Taught in English” is the catch phrase because the school being studied has an enrollment of less than 10% fluent, first language English speakers (V. Gomes, personal communication, March 16, 2015). In order to achieve academic success and attain a diploma, students in this American school overseas must be presented with opportunities to develop and grow in the English language, while studying and mastering core curriculum subjects that are taught exclusively in English. Students at the American School of Recife (Escola Americana do Recife or EAR) who speak English as a second or third language comprise 90% of the student body. Overseas schools seek ways to develop and guarantee fluency using the best method for providing students with the tools necessary to study and succeed in an English-speaking classroom.

### **Definition of the Problem**

The problem at EAR is low test scores in language arts on end-of-year achievement tests for the elementary school English Language Learners (ELL) students. According to the school profile published on its web page ([www.ear.com.br](http://www.ear.com.br)) this school, located in the Recife, Brazil, metropolitan area of 4 million inhabitants, has an enrollment of 156 students in Grades 1–5. School records in the admissions office show that of these students, 90% are ELLs with 70% of these being from the local, Portuguese-speaking community (V. Gomes, personal communication, March 16, 2015). The other 20% represents a variety of countries from around the world with their respective native

tongues. According to the admissions office the elementary school has a boy-girl ratio of 60:40 (V. Gomes, personal communication, March 16, 2015) and according to statistics in the school psychologist's files, 10-12% of these students have special needs. The majority have dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. (M. Roazzi, personal communication March 16, 2015).

School enrollment fluctuates. Transfer requests are frequent as students enroll and withdraw at random times during the school year according to the demands of parents' employers. School admissions records report 36 students in the elementary school who are learning to speak English as a third language come from Turkey, Portugal, Peru, Mexico, France, Germany, Argentina, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, Israel, and Italy (V. Gomes, personal communication, March 16, 2015). The school's challenge is to provide the most academically appropriate learning environment possible for students who are learning to function academically in the English language. Currently, five teachers support the mainstream language program. These language support teachers are fluent in Portuguese (two), English and/or Portuguese (ESL, English as a Second Language and PSL, Portuguese and Portuguese as a Second Language (three) and one in Spanish (M. Apolinário, personal communication, March 16, 2015). Two of the above mentioned teachers are also bilingual in English.

This American school was started to provide an American education for the children of American missionaries, as noted on the history tab of the school web site (Heise, 2013). The demand from host-country Brazilian students eventually presented the school with the dilemma of a curriculum taught in English to a school body with a

majority of host-country students (Carder, 2008). Being a school accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) from the United States, the American school curriculum program is taught in English for all core and supplemental courses, satisfying the U.S. accreditation requirements through SACS, and fulfilling the requirements for a sound educational program at the school.

The teachers' qualifications, according to the Brazilian director are as follows: Grades 3–5 have degrees in Language Arts (ESL education), experience in teaching English language learners (ELLs) and are bilingual. Two are enrolled in a university as education majors. One bilingual mainstream elementary teacher has a bilingual teacher's assistant to help provide support during instruction time (M. Apolinário, personal communication, March 16, 2015).

There is documented diversity of language and culture in the students' background and this, combined with the expectation of an adequate command of academic English in the classroom, reveals differing levels of English competency (J. Alpes, personal communication, 2015). The problem is that while using the pull-out method of instruction, in which the students leave the mainstream classroom to be taught English individually or in small groups by a teacher trained in ESL (Crawford & Krashen, 2007) the students did not perform within the median U. S. national test score range in language arts on the end of school achievement tests. Believing English competency to be a major contributing factor to success on the achievement scores, a push-in model of instruction for ELLs was implemented at the American school in 2011 (J. Alpes, personal communication, 2015). With the push-in model where ELLs remain in

their regular classroom with ESL teacher support (Zehr, 2008) the expectation was overall higher efficacy in academic English. Although low scores could be attributed to other factors, this study will focus on the measure of English usage as indicated by end-of-school-year testing on language arts.

### **Purpose of the Study**

In an effort to provide a better learning opportunity for its elementary students, the school recently tried the push-in method with its ELL students using mainstream and immersion push-ins with bilingual teachers, teacher assistants, and ESL teachers. The mainstream teacher conducted the bulk of the content instruction with all students in the classroom. The purpose of this study was to provide a research-based comparison of push-in and pull-out ESL methods.

### **Rationale**

The American school overseas sought to base its preferred ESL teaching strategy on the method proven to show greater academic growth among the ELLs in elementary school: pull-out or push-in.

The mission of the American School of Recife (translated and officially named Escola Americana of Recife (EAR) is to provide a global education through an international perspective (Heise, 2013). This is attainable to the degree that students are able to perform with a high level of fluency as shown on end of year achievement tests and competency in an English-speaking environment, the mainstream classroom. The former pull-out ESL program at the American school was taught as an English course similar to those which are marketed at English schools around town and was not

necessarily relevant to academic English used in the classroom, due to its almost exclusive focus on forms of general language and grammar and correct use of language. Based on low language arts year end assessment scores of ELLs over a 3 year period, a push-in ESL program was implemented in 2011 utilizing the mainstream classroom teacher with an ESL assistant in the classroom. This study is designed to be used as an indicator to determine if a significant difference is noted in the between the last year of pull-out methodology grades and the first 3 years of push-in with the only notable difference in instruction being the ESL method of teaching English. Testing scores are not attainable through public channels as the school is a SACS accredited private school overseas.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Academic language*: “decontextualized, cognitively challenging language used in school” and in other formal learning situations (Crawford & Krashen, 2007).

*Bilingual education*: use of a student’s native language in combination with English to accelerate English proficiency (Crawford & Krashen, 2007).

*Mainstream*: a classroom situation “in which instruction is planned for native English speaking students” (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002).

### **Significance of the Study**

For many years at the American school, ELL students were pulled out by ESL teachers to isolated learning stations and given English lessons. These students were pulled out both individually and in small groups for varying amounts of time, ranging

from a few periods per day to exclusive time in the ESL classroom for several months or a whole semester in order to learn to speak, write, and read in English.

In 2011 all ELLs were mainstreamed in the classrooms with a focus on academic English competency by using mostly bilingual classroom teachers trained in ESL techniques. This teacher was teamed with a fulltime bilingual teacher assistant whose purpose was to help those students who did not understand parts of the instruction or class activities. Including the ESL teacher allowed for intervention when a student was having difficulty with instruction or on an assigned task. Implemented by the classroom assistant, 15-minute pull-outs focused directly on maintaining continuity and support regarding specific classroom curriculum and serving to complement the intervention.

The results of this study can help the school determine which ESL program was more effective for its ELL learners, thus contributing to the development of global citizenship and international awareness.

### **Research Question(s) and Hypotheses**

The research question providing a basis for the study: Do intermediate students (Grades 3-5) in an American school improve their English language achievement after implementation of an embedded method of ESL, push-in, compared to the traditional pull-out method?

Hypothesis: A comparison of end of year achievement test scores in language arts for ELL elementary students in Grades 3 through 5 over a 4-year period will show improvement using the push-in method of instruction in ESL.

Null hypothesis: A comparison of end of year achievement test scores for elementary students in Grades 3 through 5 over a 4-year period will show no difference between the students who studied in the push-in method of ESL and the students who studied using the traditional pull-out method. Thus,

$$H_0: m_{2011} = m_{2012} = m_{2013} = m_{2014}$$

where “m” is the median for all students in the year noted by the subscript.

Alternate hypothesis: A comparison of end of year achievement test scores for elementary students in Grades 3–5 over a 4-year period will show a difference in scores between students who studied in the push-in method of ESL and the students who studied using the traditional pull-out method.

$$H_A: m_{2011} = m_{2012} < m_{2013} < m_{2014}$$

where “m” is the median for all students in the year noted by the subscript.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The two methods of teaching ESL both have the goal of the student becoming an independent and fluent speaker of the English language. Vygotsky’s and Krashen’s theories support the ELL methods being studied through an interactive, social-academic environment. Both the push-in method, as a student spends all day in a mainstream classroom situation, using Krashen’s acquisition-learning hypothesis, and the pull-out method, when a teacher focuses on individual learning as a conscious process using Vygotsky’s ZPD, are both samples of intentional learning with the teacher focused on keeping the ELL student one step ahead of his or her competency level (Schutz, R., 2014). In his zone of proximal development (ZPD), Russian psychologist, L. Vygotsky,

puts forth the idea that support is essential in order for students/learners to go beyond their current performance level (1978). With guidance, they gradually take on more responsibility for their own learning while participating jointly in learning activities with their more proficient instructors and colleagues. This interaction through activities is considered a key factor for the ELL in understanding the English language as he seeks to grow in independence and knowledge. ELLs are given learning instruction through production tasks. According to John-Steiner, cognitive development from a Vygotskian point of view joins productive activities through social interaction with the learning process. (1996). John-Steiner explains the theory stating that learning is a simultaneously individual and social process. A learner observes through social participation and then internalizes in order to “construct new knowledge” (p. 197). This pattern is true of young children as well as mature thinkers, as internalization is the basis of the lifelong learning process.

Vygotsky maintained that theory and practice were complementary to one another and that theory should not be viewed as simply an explanation but a way to understand and implement change (Vygotsky, 1997). Vygotsky's theory stresses the importance of communication in the development of language, which in turn stimulates the development of thought processes. The importance of the role of the teacher in terms of second language acquisition is reinforced by the need for communication between the teacher and student (Schutz, 2014).

Five hypotheses make up Krashen's theory of second language acquisition: acquisition learning, monitor, input, natural order and affective filter. (Schutz, 2014).

This study will use the acquisition learning hypothesis, the concept that intentional interaction must occur for comprehension in language learning (Schutz, 2014) and that learning a second language through grammar facts by memorizing usage rules useful in textual forms is less productive for the language learner than acquiring it through purposeful interaction. (Shoebottom, 2009).

### **Summary**

The American School of Recife, an American school overseas, has gone from one method of teaching ESL students to another: from pull-out to push-in. Both types of instruction have pros and cons, depending on the teacher qualifications and the individual student profile. This research studied and compared both methods using the causal-comparative research design and compared end-of-year test scores to determine which method was related to greater student academic success. From the research a professional development opportunity was suggested in order to allow teachers and administration to analyze the results and determine if changes could be made to the current teaching method being used. These changes would be implemented with the goal of higher end-of-year language arts test scores for students in Grades 3-5.

### **Review of the Literature**

To identify prospective, peer-reviewed articles and books, the following databases—ERIC, Sage Publications, Education Source and Google Scholar—were searched for the years 2011-2017 using the following keywords: *push-in*, *pull-out*, *international schools*, *overseas schools*, *ELL teaching methods*, *ESL teaching methods*, *bilingualism*, *ESL pedagogy*, *second language acquisition*, *ELL program models*, *ESL*

*program models, immersion, Vygotsky, Krashen, language policy, and mainstream.* I used the Boolean operators, AND and OR to optimize the results. Abstracts were used to judge an article's relevance to the research question.

This review will serve as a background and overview of the concerns of ESL teaching methods for ELLs. Some pertinent research will be provided on the two methods of ESL teaching that are considered in this research: Push-in and Pull-out methods. Learning theories by Vygotsky and Krashen will be discussed as relevant to using the two methods to non-English speaking students.

Educators attempt to offer diverse opportunities to learn and a variety of teaching methods to ensure that each child receives an equal opportunity to learn. This is a challenge on many levels but when the subject is the very language of academic communication, the challenges are compounded. As schools seek to take advantage of latest research in order to provide each student the best possible educational experience, best practices continue to be reviewed and debated. Academic capacity varies from student to student and learning the English language can be influenced by cultural exposure, previous language experience, as well as special learning needs. Ample opportunity should be afforded students to develop and practice meaningful use of the language (Ranney, 2012).

### **Models of ESL**

Depending on available resources and legislative directives, ELLs (non-English speaking students who learn English simultaneously with academic courses), (Crawford & Krashen, 2007) may be afforded any one or mix of six of the most common program

models (Honigsfeld, 2009). For the causal comparative purposes, I will look at the ESL-English as a Second Language (strategies used to teach non-proficient English speaking students (Crawford & Krashen, 2007) pull-out and push-in program models. Push-in refers to the use of an ESL specialist along with a teacher within the mainstream classroom setting. Pull-out is used when the ESL support is provided by a qualified ESL teacher in an external location. These classes may be all day or for selected periods during the day. Some states, such as New York, are monitoring the amount of time ELLs spend out of the classroom and have made a determined amount of services that ELLs may receive. The ESL specialist may use an individualized, independent curriculum or she may choose to develop a curriculum closely related to that of the mainstream classroom. The determination of how the instruction will be applied must take into consideration the learning standards expected by national, state and local districts (Honigsfeld, 2009).

The U.S. Department of Education does not suggest or demand detailed standards on the evaluation of student proficiency in English other than provide general guidelines as to which students fit into the category of Limited English Proficiency (Linguanti, 1999). Successful use of the program model of choice will be effective as long as the conditions of family, community and administrative support are available, teachers are experienced and well-trained, and quality resources are made available. Only 3 states in the U.S. require preparation of all teachers to include ESL training (Coady, 2011). Fifteen states have no specific ESL related requirements for their teachers.

### **Pull-Out ESL Programs**

Pull-out ESL teachers are often unaware of what is going on in the mainstream class and vice versa. Each has his/her specific curriculum to follow and these are independent of each other. According to Fu, (Fu, 2007) a teacher-research study on collaboration held in Public School 126 in Manhattan, showed how not being aware of the other teacher's curriculum caused each teacher to blame the other for the ELL student's lack of ability to perform well in the other's class. The once a day pull-out is helpful for teaching basic English competency but the result is a gap between the mainstream classroom and the ESL program, leaving the student who is already at a disadvantage feeling even more frustrated. The following summarizes the aforementioned teacher-research project on collaboration, a study which was done with the purpose of observing a yearlong team teaching effort between a Grade 4 mainstream teacher and the school's ESL teacher (Fu, 2007). In the Public School 126 ESL (basically non-English speaking) students were generally placed in the mainstream classroom upon enrollment at the school and given access to one or two periods of pull-out ESL. The ESL teacher and the mainstream teacher did not communicate or plan lessons together and as a result the students were taught two separate and independent educational components.

The result of the teacher-research project on collaboration between the ESL teacher and the classroom teacher showed a significant advance in academic English and literacy which in turn motivated the teachers to spend the extra time necessary to work together for this group of students, proving, in this instance, that teamwork worked to a positive outcome (Fu, 2007).

As team teachers look for strategies to make specialized teaching periods go smoother for the ESL student some choose to use an extension period on the class schedule. This is helpful in keeping the ESL pull-out from interfering with the mainstream classroom schedule and can be used for the entire class. It can be scheduled to allow for continuation of class assignments and enrichment activities, as well as ESL focus lessons without removing the students from core curriculum classes (Canady, 1995).

The ELL pull-out programs of the past were seen as a separate system thus the ELL student was subjected to English learning strategies which were alienated from the mainstream classroom curriculum. For this reason pull-out programs have been referred to as “self-standing ESL instruction” (Honigsfeld, 2009, p. 168). Students did not receive academic or classroom use English or English proficiency needed to be successful learners. An effective program works by aligning the curriculum of the ESL program to the classroom curriculum and allowing the students to use diverse methods of content integration such as visual aids, manipulative objects, along with project based activities and group work (Necochea, 2010).

The ESL pull-out method is used primarily in schools with a diverse number of ELLs from many cultures and languages. In these cases, the ESL teacher is not fluent in the mother tongue of the students and only has the students for random periods each day. The teacher may be based from an ESL resource room where the materials and resources are readily available and students are grouped together from several classrooms (Rennie, 1993).

Brockton High School, a pseudonym, uses an ESL program based on independent content material which is taught parallel to the curriculum of the classroom, with outcomes being speaking, listening, reading, writing and comprehending. This program is referred to as a content-based ESL (Smith, Crogins & Cardoso, 2008). These programs are based on separate ESL teachers and require student pull-outs from the mainstream classroom for from several periods a day up to a day at a time and sometimes for weeks at a time. A student who is continually removed from class misses curriculum content material given during the absence time as well as content relevant vocabulary (Burke, 2009). Pull-out classes and English lessons may not emphasize and use the same academic English being used in the classroom (Christie, 2008).

Conversational fluency is less demanding than academic language, which poses unique and diverse challenges for the ELL student. According to Lucas, Villegas & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2011, a person may learn a second language and be able to converse fluently in social conversations in as little as 2 years. Speaking socially is practiced and attained in a relaxed atmosphere and learning can be easily reinforced through television shows, movies and music. Learning Academic English in a second language with competence comparable to a native English speaker of the same age can take 5 to seven years (Cummins, 2009). The terminology and context of vocabulary in an academic setting is demanding and critical to the understanding of concepts and skills. Comprehension is measured through assessments and evaluations. The confusion becomes evident when a student shows enough fluency to dialog in conversation and educators assume that this ability transfers to the academic language. A teacher trained in

ESL techniques will be able to offer valuable support to the ELL student who appears to have language competency by speaking fluent English conversationally but does not have sufficient ability to perform academic tasks successfully. Language learning cannot occur independently from academic learning and each must supplement the other (Lucas et al., 2011).

### **Mainstreaming or Push-In Method for ELLs**

Many times the reasons for mainstreaming ELLs are due to budgetary concerns (staffing and resource materials) and the rapid rise in numbers of ELL students instead of as a best practice, student based option. The concern then arises with relation to the qualification of the mainstream teachers. Research shows that most teachers lack a foundation in ELL teaching and practice and as such have difficulty in setting objectives for the students (Jong, 2013).

As a response to an increasing number of non-English speaking students one school began a co-teaching model for ESL in which ESL teachers are integrated in the mainstream curriculum. After a time of experience, despite the complexities of co-teaching, the teachers preferred it to the traditional pull-out model used by most schools in the district. The author makes mention of little research available with regard to co-teaching and ESL, most research on co-teaching is with reference to special education (Pappamihel, 2012).

In a study done on an international school program it was noted that the student body represented 40 nationalities with the majority being ESLs. It was revealed that the actual application of ELL techniques was done by the ESL teacher while mainstream

teachers were required to include differentiation for ELLs in the planning of their lessons. Some of the concerns of mainstreaming are with regard to assessment. Should standards be the same as students who speak English as a first language? How does the teacher meet needs of all language levels in the classroom without simplifying for ESL students? However, even with these questions and doubts the general consensus is that push in is more effective assuring that students do not miss content material while being pulled out (Neal, 2013).

Greene asserts that immersion in the mainstream classroom gives the ELL student a chance to fully participate in the lessons and interact in group-work with his peers, as supported through Vygotsky's theory. It then follows that this immersion with the mainstream class taught in English provides the students with an opportunity to learn English in context as well academic content while interacting with their native English speaking colleagues (Greene, 2012).

When considering research based best practices with regard to the push-in method to mainstream the ESL teachers and administrators should contemplate the necessity of challenging the native English speakers in the class while attending to the needs of the ELL students. Sheltered instruction is a unique program, which can be used in the mainstream combined student classes or independently in ELL settings. Key components of the program are: cooperative learning activities in a group setting, a "focus on academic language as well as key content vocabulary", use of ELL first language as a connector for comprehension, hands-on activities, demonstrations, modeling; clear use of teaching strategies. These are techniques that are routinely used by good teachers and

therefore it makes sense that some teachers may be using the strategy without realizing it. Speaking slowly, using visual cues and allowing use of a student's L1 when appropriate are ways to lessen the students' anxiety in the English-speaking classroom. Lesson planning should include background experiences as well as cultural and religious practices in order to build on what the students bring to class with them (Hansen-Thomas, 2008). Harvey notes that ESL administrators cite the necessity of better trained mainstream teachers with regard to meeting the demands of the ELLs in the mainstream classroom, including cultural awareness, second language abilities, and English proficiency standards and evaluation (Harvey, 2012).

In order for collaboration to not be perceived as simply an extra person in the classroom, there is a need for teachers to purposefully give up the idea of a hierarchy in the classroom and work together as co-teachers with a common focus on curriculum application. This involves the teachers being able to avoid a competitive attitude and tendencies to take control as they learn to work with perspective and consideration (Davison, 2008).

Both Massachusetts and New York City Schools have done away with their ESL programs, one for best practices reasons and the other because of external pressure (Menken & Solorza, 2012). The Question 2 initiative in the state of Massachusetts has removed, by law, the benefit of all bilingual education services for ELL instruction and replaced it by placing all ELLs in an English language classroom environment (Smith, Coggins, & Cardoso, 2008). New York City Schools have also eliminated bilingual (ESL)

education programs due to testing scores and bilingual program determination (Menken & Solorza, 2012).

An elementary school in the research shows a model of a general education teacher who has experience teaching ELLs. The primary focus is that the majority of an ELL student's day is spent learning alongside his English-speaking classmates (English, 2009). Options are cited such as when appropriate more advanced ELL students may lend support to newer students especially when they share a common first language (L1). This study supports the use of ESL to be reflective of the intense English instruction using content from the general education classes in order to provide support for their immersion in the mainstream classroom. Although students are assigned to a mainstream classroom for the majority of the day they also receive special support from ESL support teachers from the Language Lab in supplemental pull-out groups or within the classroom. One researcher reports that neglecting to give the ELL student the opportunity to study curriculum at his grade level is setting him up to fail, provided the teacher is prepared and motivated to provide the necessary adjustments in classroom instruction necessary to accommodate him (Knudsen, 2009).

The curriculum of any mainstream classroom can be adapted to build on the foundations of literacy for the ELL learner, as the literacy has to be in place for academic learning to occur (Burke, 2009). As the global number of ELLs rises, most published curriculum programs have reference guides alongside the suggested lesson plans for teachers with regard to suggested differentiations for the ELLs which can be applied in the mainstream classroom. Subjects essential to the ELL are the ones that contribute to

the development of critical thinking skills both analytical and lateral and necessary to assure future academic success (Burke, 2009).

Some ways a teacher who is trained in ESL techniques might choose to contribute to the affirmation of the ELL's L1, (the ELL mother tongue, or first language) in the mainstream classroom include (a) provision of library texts in the L1, (b) accept answers in a students' L1 and/or (c) allow social conversations in the students' L1 that not only provides an opportunity to validate the student's native language but also legitimizes it (Craighead, 2007). Some research suggests that students with near-native fluency translate teaching materials between L1 and the second language (L2). This provides opportunities for the near-native students to develop language acquisition as well as provides more time for the teacher to implement other strategies (Lucas, et al., 2008). For instance, a fluent L2 (second language speaker) could translate teaching aids such as a vocabulary word wall (vocabulary words posted on the wall) as an exercise and as a benefit for those who need it in the classroom. In older grades a fluent L2 might translate words in a teaching power point presentation in order to provide connectors for the struggling L2s. While the L2 student is practicing language skills through translation the teacher might focus on students who are not as proficient using strategies that are targeted toward social interaction and which focus on deriving meaning from the activity as opposed to those whose outcome is a rote learning or simple memorization exercise (Lucas,et al., 2008). These are examples of ways an ELL student is allowed to improve his fluency while participating in activities directly related to his academic studies within the mainstream classroom. A method used by teachers when including ELLs in the

mainstream classroom is to limit or prohibit the use of the student's L1. Sometimes this approach is used by a teacher who simply has no background or knowledge of the foreign language. If the teacher is bilingual the use of the student's L1 on a limited basis, principally for clarifying or comparing academic tendencies, can provide a rich connection for the student between the two languages (Horst, 2010).

Classroom teachers trained to use ESL techniques could also take advantage of team teaching in order to avoid having to apply the material in all subjects, thus working with a reduced number of lesson plans and by providing a unified infrastructure within the learning environment. Concentration ideally would be focused on grading for content understanding with some attention to the language aptitude depending on the evaluator scale utilized by the instructor.

According to Missouri law, ELLs must be evaluated based on their understanding of subject material through the use of documented modification and intervention tools. They may not be held back in a grade or class due to low test scores reflected on English assessment tests (Badji, 2011). This is an example of differentiation for the student who does not have the English fluency to be assessed or evaluated on subject matter the same way as a student who has English as his L1 or a degree of English which would permit the same test with the same expectation of understanding in the mainstream classroom. Traditional mainstream classroom teachers may not be prepared to implement a differentiated test for the ELL student.

As such, they are unequipped to receive and train assistants to provide support to the students in their immersion classroom (Vacca-Rizopoulos & Nicoletti, 2009).

Professional development is indicated for teachers who do not have ESL training or ESL teaching certificates in order to give them an opportunity to understand the learning processes of the ELL (Craighead, 2007). One goal of professional development is to equip the teachers to apply a comprehensive assessment designed to demonstrate what the ELL has internalized.

Professional development for the teacher in an inclusive classroom should also ensure that the teacher is empathetic to a student who has little or no grasp of the English language in order to implement techniques of tolerance and understanding. A teacher's grasp of a realistic expectation from the ELL student(s) will transmit to the L1 students in the class and their acceptance of their struggling peers will contribute in a positive way toward the ELL students' adaptation and grasp of the English language (Han, 2010). When evaluating the mainstreaming of ELL students the teachers' perspectives should be weighed carefully. If a teacher feels she has little or no control over or experience with differentiation and accountability in the inclusive classroom of the mixed English speaking and second language learners, she may have a tendency to in effect give up and begin exacting low accountability from her students and underestimate her abilities in the classroom (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010).

### **Implications**

The results of this study may potentially be applied to the local problem of low end of year achievement test scores in language arts by clarifying which, if either, of the two methods used by the school suggests a higher level of achievement when teaching ELLs. If one method shows higher scores it could then be considered the model for the

school to adopt for the ESL program. As English competency is critical for an ELL success in an American school classroom, methodology should be used in its most effective manner. In order to adopt the preferred method teachers would need to be trained to implement the program effectively in the classroom and be provided with teaching tools such as an ELL literacy curriculum model provided through professional development.

### **Summary**

Through the study of various models of push-in and pull-out methods of teaching ELLs it has been determined that while a variety of types have proven effective there are also some that have shown more challenges than others. This review gives an opportunity to compare models and gauge their potential effectiveness in the American school overseas setting.

At the American school most ESL students are kept in the mainstream classroom, putting into effect the push-in model. The classroom teacher, an ESL trained, bilingual educator is paired with a teacher assistant who is also bilingual and has experience with teaching ESL. This assistant provides attention to the students who need support during the curriculum instruction and students may also receive special help with written assignments and tests. There are situations when an ESL student with special needs will be pulled out for specific study guides.

Several years ago the pull-out method was used exclusively for the ELL student at the American school. In that situation, students left the classroom at random times during the day for isolated ESL instruction.

It is important to follow up with this study by comparing test scores from the American School of Recife to determine which of the two methods of study was the most effective for elementary ELL students in Grades 3-5.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Research Design and Approach**

The purpose of the study is to compare the results of end-of-year language arts tests on students in Grades 3-5. In order to do that a causal-comparative *ex post facto* method of research was chosen. This section will include topics of population and sample, instrumentation and materials, data organization and analysis and results.

The causal-comparative approach is a form of quantitative *ex post facto* research. It analyzes a dependent variable to see if a change has occurred due to the influence of an independent variable. The independent variable is based on a previous occurrence which cannot be changed, controlled or manipulated (Lodico, 2010). The study is based on archival data for which permission must be attained. This data will be analyzed by using the Kruskal-Wallis nonparametric test (Laerd Statistics, 2017), the parallel of a one-way ANOVA, to compare the median scores of more than one population. Box plots for all students each year will be run to check for similar distributions. The Mann-Whitney test, comparable to multiple comparison tests with ANOVA, will be used to determine which years are different from other years. This will enable an evaluation of the interaction of grade level with instruction. It will be used to measure a possible significant difference between test scores of two groups of students. A null hypothesis will be accepted or rejected.

The causal-comparative research design will be used to compare end-of-year achievement test scores between two groups of bilingual elementary students over a period of 4 years. One group was taught using the push-in method of ESL

teaching/learning and the other group experienced the pull-out model of ESL. The instrumentation and materials section of the paper describes how test scores were collected and compared to measure the students' academic progress.

This causal-comparative study is between a pull-out ESL program and a push-in ESL program, both of which have been used in an international school setting. The causal comparative research is a study based on differing experiences of two groups. The independent factor is represented by the past experiences (Lodico, 2010). The research design is nonexperimental, based on past ESL experiences of two groups. These experiences will supply the independent variable. A comparison will be made of the scores for the last year of pull-out with the following 3 years of push-in using an analysis of medians. The expectation is that the last year of push-in will be higher than the previous two when the program was being initiated.

The Kruskal-Wallis nonparametric test parallels the one-way ANOVA and compares the medians of more than two populations. As a pretest requirement, a box plot is run by year for all students to check for similar distributions. The Wilcoxon-rank sum test (also known as Mann-Whitney test), will determine which years are the same and which are different, a step comparable to the multiple comparison ANOVA.

The study design used a comparison of Stanford Achievement test scores in language arts for Grades 3-5 in 2011—the last year the pull-out ESL method was used for teaching ELLs to the NWEA MAP test scores in language arts for Grades 3-5 in 2012-14, 3 years after the push- in instructional model of teaching ESL was implemented.

This is a repeated measures research method when the same participants participate in all conditions of an experiment.

### **Population and Sample**

The estimation tool G\*Power3 created by Faul, Erdfelder, Lang and Buchner (2007) yields an estimated sample size for 2 or 4 predictors. When an anticipated moderate-to-large effect size of .50 or .30 was chosen, with a level of .05, and power value of .8, a sample size of 147 was acceptable.

The total sample of 147 is the result of the following calculation: for a moderate effect size of .3,  $\alpha = .05$ , power = .8 and number of groups (years) = 4,  $N = 128$ , adding 15% = 147. (Laerd, 2017)

All end-of-school year achievement test scores in language arts from students in Grades 3 through 5 at an American school overseas will be used to conduct this study. Purposive population technique will be used to select students who were in Grades 3-5 at the American school and those students comprised the population. All student language arts scores will be used.

The American school is located in northeast Brazil. The elementary school has 156 students and registers 90% English Language Learners, with 70% of these being from the local Portuguese speaking community. The other 20% represents a variety of countries from around the world with their respective native tongues. The elementary school has a boy to girl ratio of 60:40 and according to the school psychologist 10-12% of these students are special needs with a majority being dyslexia and Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnoses.

The local study provides results specific to the American school and as such does not allow for generalized interpretation.

### **Instrumentation and Materials**

The school used the Stanford Achievement Test as a year-end assessment until 2012. Satisfactory psychometric coefficients for validity and reliability of this test were reported in the Stanford test manual, 10<sup>th</sup> edition (Harcourt, 2003). This assessment was given to Grades 1-11 in order to evaluate academic growth from year to year and to drive instructional practice. The Stanford test provides evaluation in total language, along with other academic areas.

In 2012 the assessment of choice became the MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) online test of academic achievement. This test was adopted for its convenience and reliability as an online test with results available within 24 hours. It measures academic growth as well as provides an individualized profile of what the student already knows and what he is ready to learn. Both of these tests are given in the English language to all students by the classroom teachers and proctors trained by the school guidance counselor

### **Data Organization**

Data will be organized in an excel file under four columns: student file number (sequential organization), years 2010 and 2012-14 grade (3-5) and percentile rank from each student's language arts test result The research question: Do intermediate (Grades 3-5) students in an American school improve English language achievement after implementation of an embedded method of ESL compared to the traditional pull-out

method? The variables are the dependent variable: the achievement tests Stanford and NWEA MAP and the independent variable: the ELL students in Grades 3 through 5 at the American School.

The data collected were the language scores from the Stanford and NWEA MAP tests for the years 2012-2014. The Stanford test is an assessment of academic achievement. Scaled scores, national and local percentile ranks and stanines, grade equivalents and individual scores are provided and will be relevant for this study. The content is aligned to state and national standards. The tests given in 2010 were the paper and pencil option. The procedure used was early morning blocks of time dedicated to testing during the testing window. A proctor other than the classroom teacher was present in each classroom. Scores are in the school master server.

The NWEA MAP test is a personalized academic achievement test given online. National and local percentile ranks and stanines are provided along with individualized scores. These scores are accessible through the NWEA MAP site in a cloud through the principal of the elementary school who has the authority to access them. These tests were administered in 2013-15 during a testing block in a computer lab, one class at a time. Each student opens his profile on the computer and follows the directions. The MAP test adjusts itself depending on the student response to the multiple choice question. If it is correct the program gives a more challenging question. If the answer is incorrect the program gives a similar question worded differently, and so on. When the student completes the test he raises his hand and the teacher or proctor uploads the data. A proctor was present in the lab with the classroom teacher.

Intervention was used as allowed by the NWEA MAP test for purposes of reading the test aloud to students who have IEPs calling for this intervention. Otherwise students were allowed unlimited time to complete their work independently as stipulated by both the Stanford and the MAP tests.

### **Assumptions, Limitations, Scope and Delimitations**

#### **Assumptions**

It is assumed for the purposes of this study that the achievement tests used by the school are reliable and that they were applied strictly according to instructions as evidenced by the use of proctors. The researcher assumed that the data received by the school was accurate and complete because it came through the testing center and all data expected from the tests were forthcoming. The researcher assumed that the teachers were competent both in English as well in applying the push-in and pull-out methods of teaching ELLs in light of the hiring policies regarding teacher qualifications. The researcher assumed that each classroom had a comparable mix of English competency on the grounds that school records reflect a consistent class profile with regard to English proficiency.

#### **Limitations**

There are various models of teaching ESL. This study is limited to the two ESL teaching models used by the school: push-in and pull-out. Although the school teaches ESL in all academic levels this study is limited to Grades 3 through 5, as the students' reading skills and comprehension should be developed by this age. The study is a non-experimental ex post facto design based on past ELL students' test scores. Hence, there is

a possibility of unknown factors which may have influenced the results and as such the difference in test scores can possibly be considered the cause of a change in teaching methodology.

### **Delimitations**

Because the study is limited to Grades 3 through 5 the results may not apply to older students in higher grades who may have had more prior knowledge or other language learning experiences before their ESL study at the school.

During the period of pull-out methodology students were not left in the mainstream classroom exclusively, although the pull-out methods varied in time and method depending on the ESL teacher.

The push-in methodology used qualified ESL assistants in the mainstream classroom who at times pulled the students out for a short 15 minute period for material review or clarification of classroom content.

### **Participants' Rights**

The data collection was begun after receiving IRB approval (No. 06-07-17-0294673). Following required procedure by Walden University's IRB and the local school in the study all precaution was taken to protect the participants' privacy. To guarantee confidentiality the required electronic data for independent research was transcribed by the IT department of the school and any identifying information from the files was deleted or coded. The IRB data was collected by the elementary school principal and passed to the researcher electronically with all names removed. All data

were deleted from the researcher's computer at the completion of the project and all printed data were shredded

### **Data Analysis Results**

The research question is “Do intermediate students (Grades 3-5) in an American school improve English language achievement after implementation of an embedded method of ESL compared to the traditional pull-out method?” Data were collected through archival records of end of year test scores following IRB approval and permission from the American School. Parent permission was not necessary as data retrieved was anonymous.

From the information collected an excel file was developed with four columns, ID #, % test score, gender and grade. Similarities between gender and grade were determined through descriptive analysis screening Chi-square statistic (SPSS v 24, 2016). This analysis determined if there was more of one gender in a group than others or if there was more than one grade in a group. Differences in either case would indicate that data could be skewed, thus possibly influencing the outcome by means other than the teaching method. See Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

*Group\*Gender Crosstabulation*

Group		Gender	Gender	Total
		F	M	
Pull10	Count	24	27	51
	% within Group	47.1%	52.9%	100.0%
Push13	Count	31	34	65
	% within Group	47.7%	52.3%	100.0%
Push14	Count	26	28	54
	% within Group	48.1%	51.9%	100.0%
Push15	Count	32	42	74
	% within Group	43.2%	56.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	113	131	244
	% within Group	46.3%	53.7%	100.0%

*Note.* Test statistics showed no relation between Group and Gender:  $X^2 = .415$ , 3,  $p = .937$ . The Chi-square indicates the percentages are similar across groups. Thus, the percentages of males and females for each year are similar.

In Table 2 (below) it is noted that the percentages of students in each of the 3 grades across the four groups were different,  $X^2 = 15.824$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p = .015$ . Specifically, Years 13 and 14 had different percentages of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. The Chi-square here indicated percentage of students in Grades 4 and 5 are opposite in Push13 and Push14. So, for Push13 there are more 5<sup>th</sup> graders than in Push14. Only Push14 looks different from the other years and any comparison with Push14 with other years may be different partly because of skewed age.

Table 2

*Group\*Gender Crosstabulation*

Group		Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Total
Pull10	Count	14	15	22	51
	% within group	27.5%	29.4%	43.1%	100.0%
Push13	count	25	12	28	65
	% within group	38.9%	18.5%	43.1%	100.0%
Push14	count	21	24	9	54
	% within group	38.9%	44.4%	16.7%	100.0%
Push15	count	24	26	24	74
	% within group	32.4%	35.1%	32.4%	100.0%
Total	count	84	77	83	244
	% within group	34.4%	31.6%	34.0%	100.0%

Table 3

*Tests of Normality*

Group	Kolmogorov-Stan Ach	Statistic	Smirnov <i>df</i>	Sig.	Shapiro-Statistic	Wilk <i>df</i>	Sig.
Pull10	.141		51	.013	.943	51	.017
Push13	.106		65	.067	.941	65	.004
Push14	.096		54	.200*	.970	54	.197
Push15	.113		74	.019	.928	74	.000

Non-parametric statistics are necessary with non-normal data. The Tests of Normality were used to determine whether or not the achievement data for the four groups were bell-shaped in their frequency distribution (Fields, 2009). To confirm the use of non-parametric test further screening of the data was done. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov

(K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk statistics revealed non-normality of achievement scores among years 2010, 2013, and 2015. Frequency distributions and Q-Q Plots of the groups' data visually confirmed the non-normality of the achievement data. Frequency distributions did not reveal bell-shaped data; Q-Q Plots showed observed plotted points not overlapping the predicted straight line, necessary to illustrate normality. The data were anticipated to violate some of the assumptions underlying parametric statistics. Non-parametric tests make fewer assumptions about the type of data used for analysis (Fields). Hence, non-parametric tests were appropriate to evaluate the research hypothesis. The tests were based on ranking the scores of the dependent variable. The lowest score was assigned a rank of one, the next highest score a two, etc. Thus, higher ranks indicated greater achievement. The analysis was done on the ranks, not the data directly.

The hypothesis test summary using the independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis Test showed a .05 asymptotic significance level. The null hypothesis stating that the distribution of standard achievement is the same across categories of the group was rejected.

Once the appropriateness of the proposed non-parametric test was confirmed, the Kruskal-Wallis (K-W) test was used (SPSS, 24, 2016). It is the non-parametric counterpart to the one-way, independent analysis of variance test (Field, 2009).

Student achievement was significantly different across the four years of reading methods. The Kruskal-Wallis test statistic  $H (7.88 (N = 244), df = 3, p = .049)$  permitted rejection of the hypothesis of equal medians for the four years of achievement. This suggested that the teaching methods were not similarly successful. To determine which

years Pull-out or Push-in method was more effective a follow up was completed.

Multiple, paired comparisons were performed to determine if one or more of the Push-in-year methods were better than the Pullout-year method (SPSS, 24, 2016). To avoid increasing Type I error a Bonferroni correction was applied by dividing the critical value by the number of comparisons. In this case  $p < .05$  is divided by 6 or  $< .009$ .

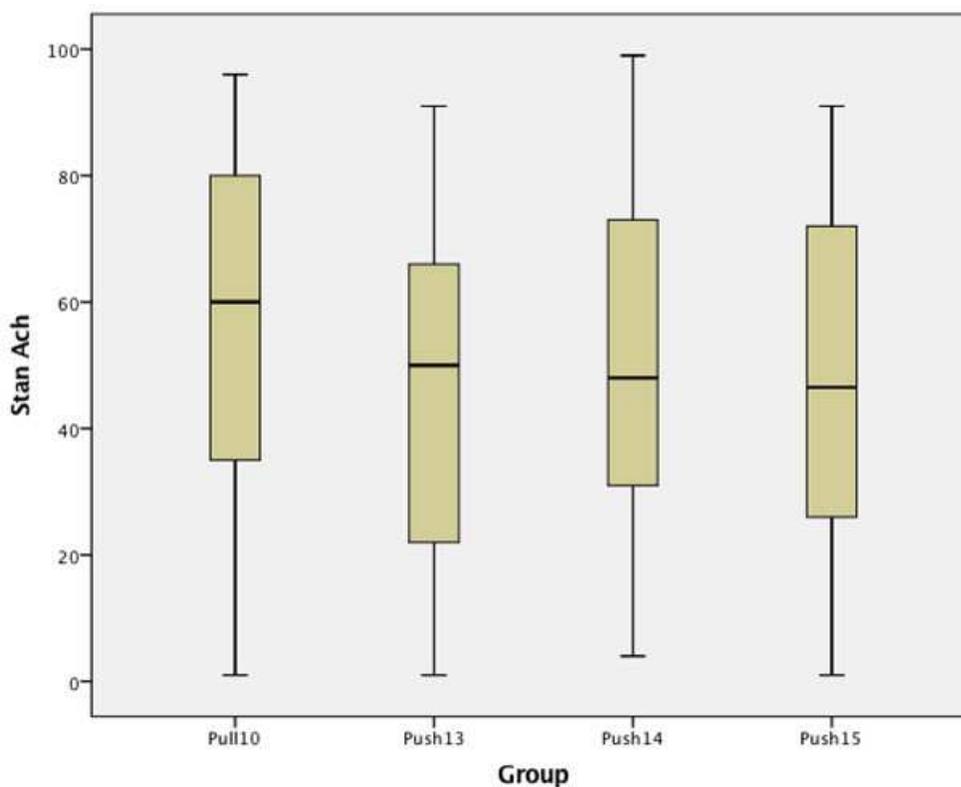
Table 4

*SPSS Test of Null Hypothesis*

Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Std.Error	Std.Test Stat	Adj.Sig.*
Push13-Push15	-5.988	11.996	-.499	1.000
Push13-Push14	-11.408	12.993	-.878	1.000
Push13-Pull10	35.098	13.200	2.659	.047
Push15-Push14	5.421	12.630	.429	1.000
Push15-Pull10	29.111	12.842	2.267	.140
Push14-Pull10	23.690	13.779	1.719	.513

\*Bonferroni adjustment

Unexpectedly, the rejection of the hypothesis was due to the Pull-out 2010 scores being larger than any of the 3 push-in years. Table 5 contains the six possible comparisons. The Pull10 and Push13 difference was statistically significant. The Pull10 and Push15 approached significance. Thus, the Pull-out method in 2010 was better than the Push-in method of 2013 and slightly better than the Push-in method of 2015. Table 5 illustrates the differences between the Groups. The highest rank is Pull10; the lowest rank is Push13.



*Figure 1.* Kruskal-Wallis test: A box and whisker plot of four years of student achievement according to type of instruction.

### Conclusion

The conclusion of the data research is that the pull-out method of teaching ESL showed higher results on end of year language arts assessments for Grades 3-5 than the push-in method. Comparisons were made through grade levels and gender, which reflected no noticeable difference based on the years in question. This finding disproves the hypothesis and null hypothesis and proves the alternate hypothesis: A comparison of end of year achievement test scores for elementary students in Grades 3-5 over a four year period will show a difference in scores between students who studied in the push-in method of ESL and the students who studied using the traditional pull-out method.

## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

The students at the American School of Recife are expected to be able to follow an American curriculum program in core subjects in English. They are given an assessment at the end of every school year and the results in language arts reflect their proficiency. The research reflected higher scores when the pull-out method of teaching ESL was used. Based on this information, the project chosen was professional development. The goal of the project is to review the results of the research with the mainstream and ESL teachers as well as the school administration. Based on the results, the teachers will then be presented with the opportunity to develop a strategy for implementing a pull-out program for teaching ESL into the school day.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the professional development is to provide a dedicated time for elementary Grade 3-5 teachers, elementary ESL teachers, and administration to concentrate on the research findings. By understanding the importance of the results they can then work out how to incorporate the findings into new and improved research-based methods that will benefit the ESL students.

### **Components of Professional Development**

The professional development will be held during 3 days of in-service training in January 2018, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. A presenter will also serve as a facilitator. The formats will include pre- and postevaluations, question-and-answer periods, planning and

revisions of curricula, and a presentation on modifying physical space needs (if necessary).

### **Goals**

The purpose of the professional development project is to inform teachers and administration about the results of the research so that they could understand the two methods of teaching ESL and their implications for student learning. The goal is to use this time for teachers and administration to process the research and, together, to develop a plan to implement a pull-out method of teaching ESL. The teamwork will assure teacher buy-in of the project as they will have a sense of pride and ownership of the project. The learning outcomes occur as mainstream and ESL teachers will be made aware of, and agree with, the potential benefit of using the pull-out method of teaching ESL. Implementing a schedule using the pull-out method will necessitate restructuring the daily class periods and impact curriculum. The audience is targeted at administration and teachers. The PD activities will include preevaluation, power point slides leading to question-and-answer periods, and group work to give each attendee an opportunity to contribute to discussion and planning. The results of group work will be presented and their ideas, presented on poster paper on the wall. Groups will develop a summative plan of evaluation and, by putting ideas together, will make a final evaluation plan to be used at the end of semester. The completed project is found in Appendix A.

### **Rationale**

This study was purposely done within the school so that the results are reflective of the school's reality as opposed to a broader study that might or might not be specific to

the American school. Professional development was chosen in order to explain the study, results and potential benefit for the American school to the stakeholders (teachers and administration).

Professional development was chosen as the project genre due to its potential impact on teacher buy-in. The results of the research showed significantly better end of year language arts test scores when a pull-out method of teaching ESL was being used. Scores from Grades 3-5 were analyzed for years 2010 (last year of pull-out ESL teaching method-Pull10) and 2013-2015 (push-in ESL teaching method-Push13, Push14 and Push15). The Pull10 and Push13 difference was shown to be statistically significant. The Pull10 and Push15 approached significance. Thus, the Pull-out method in 2010 was better than the Push-in method of 2013 and slightly better than the Push-in method of 2015. The highest rank is Pull10; the lowest rank is Push13.

In order to use this information to drive student performance some modifications will need to be made to the ESL teaching program. Studies show that it is difficult to implement a curriculum or program change when teachers are not convinced that the change is validated (Berliner & Glass, 2015). In order to guarantee teacher buy-in, the stakeholders would ideally be presented with the results of the research and be given an opportunity to question and study it in context with the current applied teaching methods. Through group sessions the teachers can discuss possible ways to better the ESL teaching methods and begin to work together on implementation ideas. The professional development will allow them 3 days to process the research results through group discussions and question and answer sessions. These opportunities will allow the

stakeholders to implement a viable plan to use the pull-out method of teaching ESL at the American school. By working as a group the stakeholders will develop a sense of ownership of the pull-out teaching method plan and be supportive of its implementation.

### **Review of the Literature**

This study was purposely designed to provide a research based information with regard to the most effective method of teaching language arts to ESL students at the American school. There have been many studies and much research done on the best method for teaching ESL in the USA and across the world. However, when it comes to teaching students there is no “one size fits all”. What works well in one learning situation may be destined to fail in another. (Berliner and Glass, 2015)

Professional development genre was chosen in order to explain the study, results and potential benefit for the American school to the stakeholders (teachers and administration) and due to its potential impact on teacher buy-in. Teacher buy-in provides a basis for positive support within the leadership of school systems making it easier to implement changes (Willis & Templeton, 2017). Professional development opportunities provide training, allowing teachers to process and make changes based on new practices and research, thus giving the teachers confidence and experience and assuring their support of suggested changes (Garwood, Harris & Tomick, 2017). Lack of teacher buy-in is considered one of the greatest challenges to modifying classroom practices along with lack of adequate team teacher planning and turnover rates among teachers (Christ & Wang, 2013). This is an important consideration since significant change cannot be made

without the support of the teachers and as such is considered critical in the early stages of implementing a change of policy or methodology (Neumann, 2013).

The influence of teacher buy-in is reflective of the capacity of organization with regard to adding new programs or making changes in existing ones. Professional development factors in the importance of teacher buy-in and provides the groundwork for training (Anyon, Nicotera & Veeh, 2016). For school improvement to be successful teacher buy-in is a necessity. They must see the need for change and have the desire to see it implemented (Neumann, 2013). Until recently the role of a teacher (teacher buy-in) was not considered to be of importance in the change process (Lukacs, 2015) but now it is considered to be imperative (Razzak, 2016). Studies show that it is difficult to implement a curriculum or program change when teachers are not convinced that the change is validated (Berliner & Glass, 2015).

Teacher buy-in is the main factor in school policy change. If the teachers are not convinced the program will work or is for the best they have the power to doom the change. This means that teachers need to be involved from the beginning which can be difficult especially if they are not give time to process the change and develop ways to apply it to what is already working for them or practical change. (Neumann, 2013). The most efficient way to assure this is to introduce the data in a professional development and purposefully attempt to remove any negative bias toward the change.

For the results of the research to be used to their fullest potential professional development was the method chosen based on its qualities of being a “long-term and ongoing process” aimed at teacher development (Lumpur, 2016). The professional

development is a genre that can easily be extended as new situations occur as well as providing a support system for the teachers. Professional development contributes positively in keeping teachers up to date on current educational policies and reforms. (Razak, Kaur, Halili & Ramlan, 2016).

It is the responsibility of school principals and leaders to take charge of teacher capacitation through professional development by showing them diverse instructional methods and teaching materials. (Çelik & Kasapoglu, 2014). It is pertinent to discuss teacher buy-in as it is difficult to attain initially and at the same time one of the most important factors when it comes to implementing a program change (Yoon, 2016). Yoon contends that principals who use more data based research have greater success with teacher buy-in for their school reform programs than those who use less. She also states that teacher buy-in is a greatly impacted by support from the school administration.

Berliner and Glass (2015) present three considerations that they believe will help lead to successful initiation of school programs: (1) teacher buy-in, (2) implement one program at a time and (3) ensure formative and summative assessments.

By using professional development (PD) as the genre to present the project there is the opportunity to take advantage of the shift in PD practice from individual, solitary learning through workshops and presentations to working collectively in groups. When teachers work together as teams to develop their own tailor-made curriculum specifically designed for their students they have participated in the most powerful professional development (Dufour, Dufour & Eaker, 2008).

One obstacle noted as contributing negatively to teacher buy-in and the implementing of a new program through professional development is the presenter's choice of language and whether it is motivating or alienating to the teachers (Wood, Turner, Civil & Eli, 2016). This would be a consideration when choosing a speaker for the professional development. A facilitator should ideally be chosen based on his history of speaking ability and presentation along with his knowledge and experience of the material.

Even though professional development may be used as the method of choice to present research and provide opportunity for application of research to the development of pull-out ESL teaching method, it has been suggested that proper training is necessary in order to ensure that the feedback is implemented with sufficient training (See, Gorard & Siddiqui, 2016). This gives the potential of continuing professional development opportunities once the curriculum has been modified in order to provide a chance to clear up any possible obstacles with regard to the curriculum modification.

The review of literature was conducted through Walden Home Library (Education Source, ERIC and EBSCOhost) and Google Scholar as well as research books. Among the search terms used were ESL, teacher buy-in, program change, implement, innovation, program evaluation, professional development, ELL. By using the date limitation of 2012-2017 the sources of relevant material were limited. This is a possible indication that research findings in this area are developing and the relevance of the subject is an important contribution.

### **Project Description**

The professional development project will be based on research data gathered from the school's archival records. This will be presented to teachers and administration during a 3 day professional development session. Resources will include a suitable meeting room with a data show projector for the power point presentation, space for the group to divide into small groups at tables, water and coffee accessible during the sessions with a more substantial morning and afternoon coffee break, poster paper and markers for group activities, hand-outs with relevant information and pencils and paper for notetaking.

Potential barriers could include resistance to presentation involving change by the teachers (ask them to remember that this is research evidence at their school and ask them to keep an open mind about the possibility of helping the students through the information), power outage (frequent in Brazil) (move to outside and have the information printed to be able to present without slides), and projector failure (have the information printed to be able to present without slides).

The presenter will both present and explain the research findings and facilitate pre and post evaluations and the groups. The teachers and administration will listen to the report, fill out evaluations, work in groups to apply the research findings toward developing a new method or curriculum for pull-out ESL students and present their suggestions to the whole group.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

The project will use a summative evaluation and will measure whether or not the goal of successful implementation of a viable method of pull-out ESL is being accomplished. The objectives which should be met at the end of the first implementation semester are as follows: (1) Teacher awareness of value of pull-out method of teaching ESL students, (2) Teacher interest in method change, (3) Continual monitoring of student achievement. Teacher awareness of the value of the project will be gained through the steps of the professional development project. As they become aware they will become interested in making an ESL teaching method curriculum change. In order to assess the effectiveness of the new program the teachers will need to monitor student achievement periodically. This will serve as a guide to improve and tweak the program.

The summative evaluation will help the administration and teachers focused on the program change as the expected outcomes are clear and measurable. The key stakeholders are the children, parents, teachers, administration and school board. The teachers will be the key to the success of the program as their enthusiasm and buy-in for the program will be transparent for the whole school to observe.

### **Project Implications**

Possible social change implications are as follows: (1) The administration will be alert to better oversee the program implementation. By having gone through the research evaluation and having worked together with the teachers the administration will be sensitive to the effort being put forth by the teachers to guarantee a smooth transition. The administration will be aware of possible challenges and therefore be able to

contribute with support when necessary. (2) The teachers will feel valued that they are included in the method change and have been consulted for input. Teacher ownership of the ESL pull-out method of teaching will provide a sense of wanting to make it work and because it was their idea they will be more like to make necessary modifications when necessary. (3) Administration and teachers will see the value of putting in evaluation for the new program. Due to the research study results the stakeholders will be able to see that over a span of years the end of year language arts scores using the push-in method of teaching ESL were falling. Because no one was using an evaluation of the ESL teaching method the students were falling behind in English competency. By using an evaluation of the program there will be a ready result and necessary changes can be made.

This project will be important to the local stakeholders with regard to its value for changing the method of teaching ESL to elementary students with the expectation of higher language arts achievement scores. Beyond changing instruction the project may also contribute positively to the school community by teaching it to use research data to make relevant decisions, understanding the buy-in issue when starting new programs and the essential nature of professional development.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Effective knowledge and use of the English language is imperative to the academic success of the ESL student in an American school overseas because all core curriculum courses are taught in English using American text books. This final section will present the strengths and limitations of the project, recommendations for alternative approaches, the importance of the work, project development and evaluation, and the implications for future research.

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

The professional development project gives the teachers and administration an opportunity to review the research that was done at their school and gives them a chance to plan and implement an effective pull-out method of teaching ESL students. The strengths include the use of three consecutive in-service teacher workshop days for the presentation and training. The fact that the teachers work together with the administration means that many doubts and questions about the new method are addressed and resolved jointly at the time of development. This avoids possible stress factors when the method is actually implemented in the academic program. Sharing results of group assignments gives a chance for all members to be heard. As a result, the teachers and administrators feel that they contributed to the change in the overall method. All of these reasons assure teacher buy-in for the change in method of teaching ESL.

A possible limitation is insufficient time to properly plan the ESL pull-out method of teaching for the next semester. This could be solved by continuing some professional

development opportunities on monthly half-days for the first few months in order for the administration to give sufficient support to the teachers during the transition.

The former elementary school principal, Kathy Short, could facilitate the professional development. This would be a positive contribution because she is known to most of the teachers and administration. However, there could also be benefit to using professionals from outside the school community to lead the continuing professional development. These professionals would bring to the discussions new and different background knowledge and experiences.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

Technology is advancing and bringing the world to us. This professional development project was designed as an in-service opportunity during predetermined teacher training days. All teachers and administration are required to attend.

However, another option would be a chance to present this professional development opportunity as an online experience. The teachers could use the modality of online discussions with a facilitator to participate in the question-and-answer sections of the professional development. With this type of presentation, the course could be longer, giving teachers and administrators a chance to internalize the information.

### **Scholarship**

Specific to the research and development of the project, this project-based research has provided many challenges in my academic journey. I have learned to choose the search terms necessary to access a broad range of pertinent information. The challenges were in the form of having limited access to literature due to my overseas

residency and as a result I depended heavily on online sources. Although the archival data retrieval should have been uncomplicated I ran into multiple unexpected roadblocks. I learned the importance of archival data and of record keeping the hard way. This challenged me to use resources I would not have considered beforehand in order to access the data needed for the project. I discovered the value of research when my data analysis revealed an unexpected result. I had been so certain the results would validate my hypothesis and then the answer turned out to be the alternative hypothesis. I accomplished the practice of being able to read texts and lay them aside as I put the messages into my own words, always giving credit to the original author. This also reflected in the practice of eliminating unnecessary words.

It has been a satisfactory learning and growing experience and I am more appreciative of taking time to research rather than assume a position on conflicting opinions. This result is not something that would have come naturally without having had the practice of doing my own research.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

There is a need for evaluation to measure the success of a program or teaching method. The American school had used two contrasting methods of teaching ESL over a 5 year period. It was the purpose of this research to determine which method was better in achieving higher test scores on end of year assessment tests in students in Grades 3-5. When the results were contrary to the hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis was adopted a necessity became obvious. The teaching program should be changed and professional development was chosen as being the genre most likely to assure teacher

buy-in and thus a successful and smooth change to push-out method of teaching ESL in Grades 3-5.

The evaluation of the program was established in order to determine if the goal of a successful transition was being accomplished. Initial teacher buy-in is essential to the accomplishment of the objectives and whether or not they being met.

### **Leadership and Change**

I am currently retired as the elementary principal of the American school. The ESL program has always intrigued and puzzled me. I feel I have grown in my knowledge and capability of being able to lead the teachers and administration to take advantage of a research based project that uses their own school as a reference. Along the years changes have been made with regard to methods of teaching the ESL students and efforts made to determine which method is more effective. The result of the research has made it clear which method should be adopted. The change to the pull-out method will be a smooth one if the teachers are united in their understanding and work together to insure student success.

### **Reflection on Importance of the Work**

The research was a chance to contribute to the achievement of ESL students at the American school by using their own test scores to determine the method that motivated them in the learning of English. I personally have always wanted to know just what worked best but could never determine how to get that information. Most all research I found was from other countries or the USA. This answer, even though it was not what I expected, was an answer, a way to purposefully guide the instruction through making a

curriculum change. Although change is not easy for most people it becomes more tolerable when research supplies the answer. Coming from the school's own archival data makes the response even more important.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

Positive social change is envisioned beginning with the elementary students, Grades 3-5 through the changing method of teaching ESL. The student success through higher end of year assessment test scores in language arts will instill a sense of pride and confidence in the parents as they will see the results of a positive change in the ESL program. Teachers will feel as if they are offering the ESL students classes that are beneficial and confirmed by enhanced performance in the mainstream classroom and on end of year assessment tests. Policy or curriculum changes will be accepted by the key stakeholders as proficiency is shown by the students in ESL.

Future research could be initiated on the level of effective continuing professional development considering the importance of teacher buy-in when launching a new program and using research data to make administrative decisions that have an impact on curriculum. As research data is recognized as contributing significantly to meaningful and usable results the school will begin to value and store data more efficiently than in the past. Practitioner research and ongoing evaluation of programs should be valued to encourage buy-in. All too often new programs and/or curricula are implemented with no real data-driven plan to evaluate. Or they are implemented based upon data collection from other sites provided by the commercial developers. "Does it work in our school?"

should be a canon and comfort with the use of evaluation procedures is essential. Using this as a foundation provides a basis for work as an independent consultant.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher buy-in is of utmost importance as schools expand and modify programs. One of the most effective ways of assuring teacher buy-in purposeful in nature, as teachers are informed and allowed to work through the program in question is professional development. Professional development is designed to give teachers and administration the opportunity to internalize the new program in question and produce a viable plan of action for its implementation. To facilitate teacher buy-in one program at a time should be introduced with summative and formative assessments giving the chance to evaluate progress. These assessments give an opportunity to modify the program based on assessment results.

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## Appendix A: The Project

### **Professional Development/Research Based ESL Method for Student Learning**

A professional development opportunity will be offered during mid-year in-service training on January 8-10, 2018, and consist of research presentation, pre and post evaluations, group work to determine a course of action based on research findings and presentations of the results. The purpose is to use this time to create a non-threatening environment for teachers and administrators to process the research and develop a mutually acceptable plan of action to implement a pull-out method of teaching English to ESL students. When the groups are divided there should be a mix of teachers, teacher assistants and administrators in each group.

The target audience is the teachers and teacher assistants for elementary Grades 3-5 and the administration of the elementary school. The teachers include the mainstream classroom teachers and the language lab teachers.

### **Project Outcomes**

Professional development project outcomes are:

1. to assure teacher buy-in while developing a viable pull-out teaching method for ESL students
2. to provide the administration with information to validate a program change

### **Learning Objectives**

The learning objectives are:

1. The participants will be able to understand the potential benefit of using the pull-out method of teaching ESL through the learning sessions

2. The participants will be able to identify strategies that contribute to an effective pull-out method of teaching ESL.
3. The participants will contribute jointly to develop a pull-out method of teaching ESL.
4. The participants will value the program and its potential to provide a positive learning environment for the ESL students.

### **Program Preparation**

1. The date will be confirmed with the administration, coordination (availability of the Library), cafeteria (availability for snack and lunch).
2. The professional development will be posted on the school calendar and website. Notices will be distributed in anticipation of holiday break with dates and times confirmed as well as the participants.
3. In advance the facilitator will prepare a folder for note taking, pencils, blank paper, etc. for each participant.
4. The facilitator will contact the event support person and the guest speaker(s) to confirm participation.
5. The facilitator will prepare power point presentations ahead of time and pass them to the event support person.
6. The facilitator will prepare handouts with a summary of the points noted on the power point presentations.
7. The event support will confirm break and lunch menus with the cafeteria.
8. The facilitator will make opening and closing remarks.

Day 1: January 8, 2018

Time	Objective	Activity	Outcome	Materials
9:00		Registration/Icebreaker		Library Lobby Event support Participants Facilitator
9:15		Welcome/ Pre-Evaluation Questions		Library Pre-Eval forms Pencils
9:30		Power Point 1 Background Knowledge & Research findings		Data show projector Data show screen Handouts
10:00	Break		x	Cafeteria
10:30		Discussion in Groups- Rationale of research Findings Posters		Poster paper Markers
11:15		Presentation and defense of posters		Masking tape
12:15	LUNCH		x	Cafeteria
1:00		“Techniques for Teaching ESL” Part 1 Guest Speaker, ABA (Association Brazil-America)		Data show projector Speaker
2:00		“My Experience” Participants share an ESL teaching experience related to teaching method Questions & Answers		Participants

Additional notes on daily schedule:

Day 1: January 8, 2018

*Pre-evaluation: (paper and pencil)*

*What are your thoughts on the current ESL teaching method?*

(1) *Do you think it is adequate for the students at EAR?*

(2) *Can you suggest some revisions that might benefit the student outcomes on assessment?*

(3) *What method of assessment should be used?*

The pre-evaluation and post-evaluation replies will be calculated and put into graph form by the event support to be presented to the group.

Group Time: Discuss and list some reasons why the pull-out method of teaching ESL showed higher end of year test scores in language arts with focus being the method used.

Be prepared to defend your reasons. Use poster paper and markers.

Presentation of group replies using poster paper and markers. Hang results on the wall.

“My Experience” is an opportunity for participants to take turns describing an experience using push-in or pull-out method of teaching ESL students.

Day 2: January 9, 2018

Time	Objective	Activity	Outcome	Materials
9:00		Opening & Icebreaker		Library Event support Facilitator
9:20	OBJECTIVE # 2	Power Point 2 Pull-out vs. Push-in Method of Teaching ESL/Rationale of Testing Scores		Data show projector Facilitator
10:00	Break		x	Cafeteria
10:30	OBJECTIVE # 3	Discussion in Groups Possible reasons for high Pull-out test score results Posters		Poster board Markers
11:00		Presentation and defense of posters		Masking tape
11:45	OBJECTIVE # 2	Power Point 3 Adopting the pull-out method of teaching ESL		
12:15	LUNCH		x	Cafeteria
1:00	OBJECTIVE # 2	“Techniques for Teaching ESL” Part 2 Guest Speaker, ABA (Association Brazil-America)		Data show Projector Speaker
2:00	OBJECTIVE # 3	“My Experience” Participants share an ESL teaching experience related to teaching method		Participants

Additional notes on daily schedule:

Group Time: Discuss and suggest possible reasons why push-in method of teaching ESL showed lower end of year test scores in language arts with focus being on the teaching method used. Be prepared to defend your reasons. Use poster paper and markers to present your thoughts.

“My Experience” is an opportunity for participants to take turns describing an experience using push-in or pull-out method of teaching ESL students.

Day 3: January 10, 2018

Time	Objective	Activity	Outcome	Material
9:00		Opening & Icebreaker		Library Facilitator Event support
9:20	OBJECTIVE # 4	Power Point 4 Measuring Student Achievement & Summative evaluation plan		Data show projector Facilitator
10	Break	x	x	Cafeteria
	OBJECTIVE # 3	Discussion in Groups Measuring Student Achievement + Summative evaluation plan Posters		Poster board Markers
11:15		Presentation and defense of posters Questions & Answers		Masking tape Event support Facilitator
12:15	LUNCH	x	x	Cafeteria
1:00	OBJECTIVE # 3	Discussion in Groups Using ideas presented prepare a sample to change ESL teaching method to pull-out + evaluation plan		Poster board Markers
2:00	OBJECTIVE # 4	Post-evaluations Presentations, vote on viable plan Closing remarks with post-eval comments		Post-evaluation Handouts Facilitator Event support

Additional notes on daily schedule:

*Post-evaluation: (paper and pencil)*

*What are your thoughts on the suggested pull-out ESL teaching method?*

*(1) Do you think it is adequate for the students at EAR?*

*(2) Can you suggest some revisions that might benefit the student with regard to outcomes on assessment?*

*(3) What methods of assessment should be used?*

The pre-evaluation and post-evaluation replies will be calculated and put into graph form by the event support to be presented to the group.

Discussions will be moderated by the facilitator.

Posters from group work will be collected and put on the walls by the event support at the end of the presentations.

Last Group Time: Focusing on the desired outcome of ESL teaching method change each group should discuss effective ways to measure student achievement in order to modify the methodology if it seems lacking. Develop a summative evaluation plan to determine whether the following goals have been met at the end of the semester: (1) Teachers value pull-out method of teaching ESL students (2) Teachers are interested in the method change and (3) Monitoring student achievement over the semester.

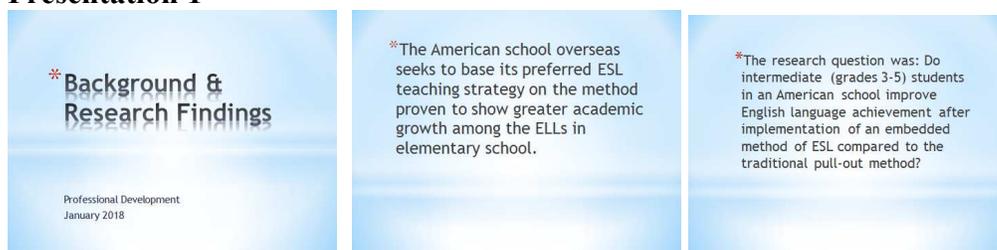
Present results on poster paper using markers.

Presentation of student assessment and summative evaluation plans

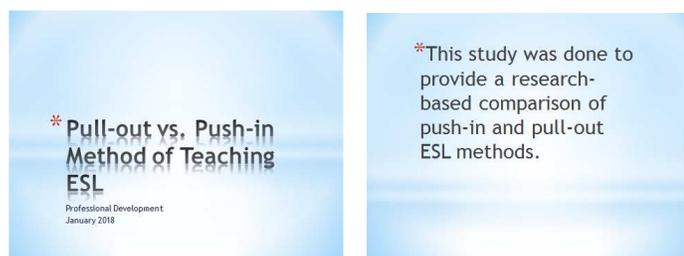
Hang posters on the wall.

### Sample Power Point Slides

#### Presentation 1



#### Presentation 2



\*Push-in is an approach of teaching English to students who do not speak the language fluently by leaving them in the mainstream classroom where English is the teaching language utilizing ESL teacher support.

\*Pull-out is a second teaching method studied in which the students leave the mainstream classroom to be taught English individually or in small groups by a teacher trained in ESL.

### Presentation 3

#### \* Adopting the pull-out method of teaching ESL

Professional Development  
January 2018

\*Pull-out is used when the ESL support is provided by a qualified ESL teacher in an external location. These classes may be all day or for selected periods during the day.

\*The result of a teacher-research project on collaboration between the ESL teacher and the classroom teacher showed a significant advance in academic English and literacy.

### Presentation 4

#### \* Measuring Student Achievement & Summative evaluation plan

Professional Development  
January 2018

\*Should standards be the same as students who speak English as a first language?  
\*How does the teacher meet needs of all language levels in the classroom without simplifying for ESL students?

\*Concentration ideally would be focused on grading for content understanding with some attention to the language aptitude depending on the evaluator scale utilized by the instructor.