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Literacy Support Through Visual Art for English Language Learners

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LITERACY SUPPORT THROUGH VISUAL ART FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract

There are many academic, emotional, and social benefits that Visual arts curriculum has on K-12 students. Among those students, English Language Learners (ELL) have very specific language needs that may prevent them from being able to stay in art class as a result of needing time to receive additional language and literacy support. Research shows the number one hurdle for ELL students to overcome is disengagement. The National Arts Education Association (NAEA) reports that visual arts education can be more beneficial to disengaged students because the arts have the ability to engage students who would otherwise be alienated. ELL students whose standardized test scores fall below a specific mark are removed from Visual Art class and placed into an additional block of reading. The students to whom this takes place with are spending more than 50% of their day in the pullout ELL classroom. If ELL students are receiving less access to the arts because of limited English proficiency and research has shown they benefit from receiving arts classes, how can the visual arts classroom support ELL students with English language proficiency? This thesis will look at the benefits to visual art access and how visual art curriculum can be designed with ELL students in mind.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

English Language Learner (ELL) students whose standardized test scores fall below a specific mark are removed from Visual Art class and placed into an additional block of reading. The students to whom this happen spend more than 50% of their day in the pullout ELL classroom. Researchers Echevarria and Vogt (2010) describe disengagement as the number one hurdle for ELL students to overcome. The National Arts Education Association (NAEA) reports that visual arts education can be more beneficial to disengaged students because the arts have the ability to engage students who would otherwise be alienated. If ELL students are receiving less access to the arts because of limited English proficiency and research has shown they benefit from receiving arts classes, why are ELL students being pulled from arts classes?

Policy Development for Testing English Language Learners

In the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) the states were federally mandated to test the English language proficiency of ELL students. NCLB held states accountable by mandating reporting of adequate yearly progress (AYP) of ELL students. If students did not reach their AYP goals, schools could face being labeled failing and have their funding cut. NCLB left it up to the states to decide what those proficiency levels were and how ELL students were to be assessed.

The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium was formed in 2003 through a United States Department of Education Enhanced Assessment Grant by the states of Wisconsin, Delaware, and Arkansas. WIDA's goals were to develop a standards and assessment system, to plan support for continuing English language development, and to satisfy

legal requirements for assessment and accountability for NCLB. WIDA developed the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs). ACCESS for ELLs is a large scale, high-stakes, standards-based, and criterion-referenced English language proficiency test. It is administered in the US annually by 24 states to more than 840,000 ELL students in K-12 classrooms. It has been adopted by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). It is used by states to fulfill the federal requirement to annually test ELL students until the students reach a level of proficiency (Fox, 2011).

Minnesota is a WIDA Consortium State and as such, monitors the English proficiency of ELL students through mandatory ACCESS testing. The main goal is to monitor the progress of ELL students' academic English. Based on the test scores, students are then placed in tiers: tier 1 (beginning), tier 2 (intermediate), and tier 3 (advanced). On WIDA's website, it states that "The WIDA Consortium is a non-profit cooperative group whose purpose is to develop standards and assessments that meet and exceed the goals of No Child Left Behind . . ." (2015). Under the pressure of NCLB school districts created policies to support the literacy goals created for their ELL students. ELL students removed from Visual Art and placed into an additional block of reading is meant to be a "checks and balances" policy of support for student and school literacy goals. Schools cannot afford to risk being labeled "failing" and have their funding cut, but, is it truly the best option for ELL students?

Significance of the Problem

In 2016 the National Art Education Association, (NAEA), updated the report *Learning in a visual age; the critical importance of visual arts education* from its original publication in 2009. The report stated that since the implementation of NCLB, 16% of districts nationally had reduced time for art and music by an average of 57 minutes a week, or 35% of the instructional time devoted to those subjects. This loss of instructional time has been most concentrated in low performing and high poverty schools. The students affected are the students who are most at risk, including ELL students (p 15). The research also shows ELL students who are able to engage with visual arts education early on create a context for the development of skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing and are motivated to practice. Students who are making and looking at art develop skills in expressing personal ideas and may be shown to benefit language use in other subjects (p 8). Catterall (2009) discovered that just attending an arts rich school compared to an arts poor school significantly improved academic success. ELL students and students of low socioeconomic status (SES) benefited the most from attending arts rich schools. "The arts have a great capacity to engage many students who otherwise would be alienated" (NAEA, 2008, p.8).

Thesis Question

If ELL students are receiving less access to the arts because of limited English proficiency and research has shown they benefit from receiving arts classes, can the visual arts classroom support ELL students with English language proficiency?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for clarification purposes and to aid in the understanding of the research presented.

ACCESS- Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State and is a large scale, high-stakes, standards-based, and criterion-referenced English language proficiency test developed by WIDA.

Arts rich school- middle and high schools that have formal art departments and graduation requirements for art, formal music departments and graduation requirements for music, band or orchestra available, chorus or choir available, drama available, full time art faculty members and full time music faculty members. They are the top decile schools with these attributes in the NELS:88, (p109-110).

Arts poor school- middle and high schools with a limited amount of the attributes listed in the arts rich schools. They are the bottom decile schools in the NELS:88, (p109-110).

LEP- Limited English Proficient. A student who is not fully English language proficient, speaks a language other than English at home, and does not demonstrate English language skills of comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing at a level that would place him/her in a mainstream English only setting.

Most Frequent words- the 2,000 most frequent word families in English, as well as the most frequent academic word families. In research done by Nation, (2006), he posits that 98% of the words in a given text must be from the most frequent word list to be comprehensible by an ELL.

Multimodality- is a theory of communication and social semiotics. It describes communication practices in terms of textual, linguistic, spatial, and visual resources, or modes, used to compose messages.

NAEA- the National Art Education Association and is the leading professional membership organization for visual art teachers. It was founded in 1947 and their mission is to advance visual arts education to fulfill human potential and promote global understanding.

NAEP- the National Assessment of Educational Progress. It is often called the "Nation's Report Card" and is the largest continuing and nationally representative assessment of what our nation's students know and can do in core subjects.

NCLB- the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 signed into law by former Pres. George W. Bush.

NELS:88- the National Educational Longitudinal Survey, a panel study of 25,000 students in American secondary schools originally conducted in 1988. The survey addressed developments for students over the time period between the 8th and 12th grades. Five surveys were given in total, to the same students, in 8th grade, 10th grade, 12th grade, at age 20 and at age 26. Of the original 25,000 students just over 12,000 students completed all five surveys.

RTI- Response To Intervention. It is a multi-tiered instructional delivery model designed to identify at-risk learners early and make adjustments in instruction so students are able to learn critical literacy skills.

SDAIE- Specially designed academic instruction in English. It is a teaching approach for teaching content areas, for example science or social studies, in English to English Language Learners.

SIOP- Sheltered instruction observation protocol. It is a comprehensive system for lesson planning and teaching that focuses on developing and achieving content objectives and language objectives.

WIDA- World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium and formed in 2003 through a United States Department of Education Enhanced Assessment Grant by the states of Wisconsin, Delaware, and Arkansas. WIDA developed the ACCESS test used by 24 states including Minnesota to fulfill the federal mandate to test English language proficiency of English language learner students.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic Visual Art and the NAEA Report

This section will focus on the specific skills that students are able to learn in Visual art classes and the social, academic and emotional impact on ELL students when they are withheld from art. The NAEA wrote a report in 2009 entitled *Learning in a Visual Age; the critical importance of visual arts education*. In 2016 the NAEA updated the report.

The digital age that children are growing up in today could be called the visual age. Almost all platforms in the digital age rely on images to capture and hold our attention. Students need to be taught how to be sophisticated "readers" of visual images to differentiate between fact, fiction, and sales pitch. In as early as 1985 Blosser and Roberts showed young children interpret all messages in media as informational regardless of message intent. Students need to be taught how to decode messages in images to understand true message intent. In the Pew Research Center's 2018 survey of American teens 95% reported they had a smartphone or had access to one and 45% reported they were online on a near-constant basis. As these students are posting videos and images of themselves and their friends on YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook it is a safety concern they understand how adults and the world will decode their images and videos. Without being able to decode images students will not be able to create their own images with intended messages.

Lois Hetland and Ellen Winner studied five visual art classrooms in two Boston area schools for one year. They concluded students in art classes learn mental habits that develop better thinking skills not emphasized in other classes. The mental habits they found taught are; observing, envisioning, innovating, and reflecting. These purposefully taught mental habits are

included in the top three levels of Bloom's taxonomy; analyze, evaluate, and create. Arguably "reflecting" goes a step beyond. It requires the student to take a step back from their work and honestly critique it, repeating the cycle of analyze, evaluate and sometimes even create. These mental habits, or higher order thinking skills, develop intelligence, (NAEA, 2008, p.3). These are the skills students need to be successful in the 21st century. People who can carefully observe what is going on, then envision a better future, try multiple innovations and reflect on the results will be successful in today's economy. Thomas L. Friedman (2005) wrote in his book, *The World Is Flat*, "The secret sauce comes from our ability to integrate art, music, and literature with the hard sciences. That's what produces an iPod Revolution or a Google. Integration is the new specialty. That is what we need to prepare our children to be doing." This innovation aspect of visual art teaches students not to accept the world as it is, but to envision new possibilities for a better future and then go out and create them.

Visual art provides connections for students to the human experience. Teaching students about historical and cultural works of art gives students grounding of where they come from. When students learn about art from cultures different from their own it helps provide context about classmates of different cultural backgrounds. Art creates community by helping students to value diverse perspectives and cultures. In today's global society, students need to not only cooperate and work alongside people of diverse and different cultural backgrounds than their own, but students also need to be open minded and value the different perspectives a diverse group of people bring. The emotion and artists' point of view in artworks provides opportunity to teach empathy and commonalities towards others. It provides a personal connection between generations within a culture and among similar human experiences. Teaching students about contemporary artists from different cultures provides examples for students on how to be

innovators; how to borrow what those in the past discovered and how to add on to it or change it to become a new expression or idea. Creating an artwork provides students with a voice. It creates opportunity for students add their experiences, ideas, and stories of the human experience with their community.

There is growing research that shows arts education can be even more beneficial to disengaged students than to engaged students, which provides a direct connection to ELL students. Echevarria and Vogt (2010) discovered disengagement is the number one hurdle ELL students face in achieving academic success. ELL students gaining access to the arts may have huge implications on their academic success. Research shows the arts have an ability to engage students who would otherwise be alienated. The belief is ELL students may be able to connect with visual art on a personal and social level. Once connected with material they can engage and develop connections with peers, teachers and the school community. One engaged ELL students will be motivated to practice speaking, listening, reading and writing in a meaningful context. This may ultimately be shown to benefit language use in other subject areas.

It takes qualified professionals to engage students and who have the ability to deliberately teach the mental habits for students to receive these benefits. More research needs to be done on how students can transfer these skills over to other subject areas so that all visual art teachers can teach bridging skills to students. Across the nation there is inconsistent criteria for becoming a licensed visual art teacher. States need to be consistent with art teacher licensure requirements to ensure all art teachers are providing the quality of art education that develops high student engagement, the mental habits of observing, envisioning, innovating, and reflecting, and bridging skills that result in the higher academic and life success the arts can give.

Visual art is an access class for personal connections, it strips away linguistic barriers, promotes community and values diverse perspectives. There is a need for more research on the specifics of what effective visual art teachers are consistently doing in their lessons to teach the mental habits of observing, envisioning, innovating, and reflecting. It would also be beneficial to gain more research on how students can bridge these mental habits into other subjects. A higher emphasis on the quality of visual art instructors needs to take place to ensure students across the national are receiving the same level of high quality art instruction. Is it worth the time and effort to investigate? Is there any evidence high quality art instruction has a positive impact on students lives beyond high school?

Catterall and the NELS:88

Catterall (2009), analyzed the National Educational Longitudinal Study, (NELS:88), a multi-year study of 25,000 students sponsored by the United States Department of Education. The students were surveyed in eighth grade, tenth grade, twelfth grade, at age twenty, and at age twenty-six. Out of the 25,000 initial students 12,144 completed all five surveys. The surveys asked students specific art related questions as well as sports and general education questions. The surveys also asked students about gender, race, home income, and home language. Catterall asked the questions “do the arts matter, just how, and for whom?” What he discovered was that involvement in the arts significantly improves academic success. Attending an arts rich school compared to an arts poor school gave the most benefit to students of low socioeconomic status and ELLs.

Catterall (2009) defines arts rich schools as middle and high schools that have formal art departments and graduation requirements for art, formal music departments and graduation requirements for music, band or orchestra available, chorus or choir available, drama available, full time art faculty members and full time music faculty members. He defines arts poor schools as middle and high schools with a limited amount of the attributes listed in the arts rich schools. Academically, all students attending arts rich schools compared to all students attending arts poor schools had: a lower high school dropout rate 1.4% compared to 4.8%, reported less boredom in school 42.2% compared to 48.9%, considered volunteering in their community more important 46.6% compared to 33.9%, and scored higher on standardized tests. In eighth grade 66.8% of students attending arts rich schools scored in the top two quartiles on standardized tests compared to 42.7% from arts poor schools. By tenth grade 72.5% of students attending arts rich schools scored in the top two quartiles compared to 45% from arts poor schools. Thus showing the comparative gains increased over time. The pattern held true for students of low socioeconomic (low-SES) backgrounds with even more pronounced gains. In eighth grade 29.5% of low SES students attending arts rich schools scored in the top two quartiles on standardized tests compared to 24.5% low SES students attending arts poor schools. By tenth grade 41.4% of low SES high-arts students scored in the top two quartiles on standardized tests compared to 24.9% low SES arts poor school students (Catterall, 2009, p. 5). A 11.9% increase over time compared to a .5% increase is significant.

Where do ELL students fall in this report? And how did their lives turn out? Out of 12,144 (all students) who completed all five surveys 326 students reported they spoke a language other than English at home or that a language other an English was spoken in their home. All of these students were also low SES students. Of the 326 ELL students, 166 attended an arts rich

school and 160 attended an arts poor school. The following data compares how all students, arts rich ELL, and arts poor ELL students answered the survey questions. The survey asked questions under two main umbrellas. First, higher education, which Catterall calls doing well. Second, community service activities which Catterall calls doing good. In the survey at age twenty; 66.2% of arts rich ELL students reported attending a four year college upon graduation compared to 43.3% of arts poor ELL students and 42.3% of all students. 59% of arts rich ELL students reported they were pursuing a BA at age twenty compared to 39.4% of arts poor ELL students and 35.6% of all students (p.129). In analyzing this data the ELL students in arts rich schools not only faired better academic achievement than their ELL peers in arts poor schools, but were also more academically successful than all students. This held true through age twenty-six. By age twenty-six, 9% of the arts rich ELL students reported earning a masters degree compared to 3.8% of the arts poor ELL students and 3.8% reported by all students. c of the arts rich ELL students reported earning a bachelor's degree compared to 33.1% of the arts poor ELL students and 29.6% reported by all students. 78.3% of the arts rich ELL students reported education has led to a better job compared to 63.7% of the arts poor ELL students and 59.7% reported by all students (p. 131).

The community service questions could be referred to as citizenship questions. They covered questions about volunteering, voting, and other community participation. In the survey at age twenty; 50.6% of arts rich ELL students reported doing any volunteer work compared to 47.5% of arts poor ELL students and 27.9% of all students. Of considerable difference 22.3% of arts rich ELL students reported volunteering at hospitals compared to 10% of arts poor ELL students and 10.6% of all students. 71.2% of arts rich ELL students reported they were registered to vote compared to 62.5% of arts poor ELL students and 70.2% of all students. 48.8% of arts

rich ELL students reported they voted in the 1992 Presidential election compared to 39.4% of arts poor ELL students and 47.6% of all students (p. 130).

While Catterall's analysis of the NELS:88 data does not explain what students are specifically learning in arts classes or how they are transferring the skills or knowledge they learned in art classes to other subjects or areas of their lives. It does show that having access and being involved in the arts throughout high school gives ELL students a significantly greater chance for success academically and in their lives after school. The goal of public education, NCLB, and State and National standards are "opportunity to promote well-rounded, rigorous, and relevant education to prepare all students for college, career, and citizenship in the 21st century." (Herczog, 2012, p. 89). Catterall's analysis of the NELS:88 data shows the arts are a key piece to doing just that.

Case Study: Using images to teach English

Lee (2012) teaches general education English courses at a technical university in Taiwan. He conducted a case study looking at using multimodality to teach English to Chinese speaking students. The students were the same age as American high school students and were enrolled in vocational oriented programs with hands on education. The students in the school generally do not continue their education after graduation and are usually evaluated as less motivated or lower academic achieving students. During Lee's teaching years he saw a pattern with disengaged students and students with low academic confidence. These students overcame their hurdles when the conventional linguistic mode of meaning making, written text, was combined with alternative modes such as images and sound (p. 56).

Lee's case study (2012) is a close look at two students over a two-year teaching period. Student A came into the class with no confidence in reading or writing in English. Student B came into the class with the belief that English was easy in junior high, but he had no need for it after school so he had no motivation to participate in class or further his learning. The first year Lee taught both students and their classes with only the conventional linguistic mode of reading and writing texts.

In year one, student A, with no confidence, scored well below the mean score of his class both semesters on his exams. His participation in class assignments was low; he completed 9 of 20 literacy circle postings and self evaluated himself at the end of the year as a poor reader and a poor writer. He wrote on his survey "It would be better if I could have a machine helping me translate phrases and idioms." (p. 62-63). Student B, first semester, with no motivation, fell asleep in class once, was frequently late, completed no literacy circle posting and passed the class by scoring well on the final exam. In the second semester, Lee encouraged the students to include images with their literacy circle postings and to write longer postings. Student B completed 6 of the 20 class postings. Student B's first posting was four drawings with a small amount text. Each posting thereafter included more and more text with minimal images.

In year two, the classes completed a series of posting about personal experience with images and text. The students completed one large project; a video using moving images, spoken English, and sound. Student A's participation significantly improved. He completed all postings, his postings were longer, and made more sense. He wrote about an important detail in each image he posted. The images in turn supported his writing. Lee observed in student A's video project, the sequencing of images helped to create a clear format and although there were grammatical errors it was easy to follow and a variety emotions and ideas came through. Lee

postulated a multimodal English learning activity allowed the student to become a confident English learner and take ownership of his writing, (p. 65). Student B also completed all of the assigned postings about personal experiences. Lee noted the tone of voice in student B's writings was confident. Student B's video assignment was voted as one of the top three videos of both classes. Later, student B apologized to Lee that he worked so hard on his video, he did not have time to study for the final exam. However it is worth noting that student B's exam score was 79 and the mean score of the class was 66.

Lee's case study is limited to observations of his English foreign language students, is focused on two students, and is not specific to teaching visual art. However, it has very interesting implications for the improvement of literacy through the application of student use of images. Visual art teachers have an advantage. Visual art class starts with image creation, which has the highest engagement potential with the least amount of risk (Wilhelm, 1995, p.496). Visual art class cannot be only creation, but, needs to have built in lessons for students in speaking, listening, writing and reading about their art, their peers art and exemplars. This provides practice with the literacy skills ELL students need while also maximizing the motivation to do so because they will be personally invested in what they are speaking and writing about. Naming these skills as analyzing, as evaluating, as creating, may be the bridge to connect what they are learning in visual art to other subjects.

Case Study: Building language for ELL students into visual art

One of visual arts indispensable qualities as part of a complete education is its ability to transcend language. Students can have a complete experience appreciating and creating visual art

without regard to their language or literacy skills (Doolittle, 2015, p. 1). Making visual art an exceptional tool for tapping into ELL students prior knowledge and experience. ELL students come to class with complex stories that are most often locked in their first language (p. 3). Art provides opportunity for ELL students to communicate the complexity of their experiences, stories, ideas and feelings without having to rely on their limited English language proficiency. John Doolittle, a secondary visual art teacher in California, purposefully builds reading, writing, listening and speaking into his teaching units in visual art class. He does this because he believes visual art class is not about running a "crafts" room; he believes students "should be invited to communicate their ideas about art using artists' common vocabulary and current understandings of the field" (Doolittle, 2015, p.1). He teaches the literacy skills needed to bridge students between their art experiences and their language skills, thus creating deeper learning in the art classroom.

Doolittle uses four techniques visual art teachers can immediately apply into their own visual art class units; KWL, graphic organizer, visual vocabulary and concept attainment. KWL is an acronym for a three-column chart that students and teachers can use as an assessment of their learning. It starts with the introduction to the topic in the first column "What do I **K**now (about X)." Is used throughout the unit being taught in the second column "What do I Want to know (about X)." And as closure at the end of the unit in the third column "What did I Learn (about X)." Doolittle recommends, depending on English language proficiency, student work can range from drawn pictures, to words, to phrases, to complete sentences or a combination. Teachers can use as a formative assessment in real time to receive feedback on class understanding, what needs re-teaching, and where it is appropriate for extended learning (p. 2).

Graphic organizers, even a single large circle on a piece of paper, take the confusion away from a blank piece of paper. Graphic organizers also provide boundaries for students thoughts and encourage students to expand on ideas through words and drawing (p. 2).

Visual vocabulary takes away intimidation from language acquisition. Doolittle creates vocabulary charts with drawings in place of written definitions. He also recommends leaving a blank space for students own interpretive drawings. Students can self scaffold by tracing or copying the teachers drawing, creating their own drawing, writing a written definition, or doing a combination. By adding the drawing option the task becomes possible for all students to perform regardless of English language proficiency. English language proficiency is increased when vocabulary words are specifically taught. Doolittle does note some words are too abstract to draw and do not belong on a visual vocabulary chart, (p.3).

Concept attainment is showing visual examples, good and bad, of student work of what is being asked of students to do. Showing good examples of successful student work builds willingness, enthusiasm and provides an attainable goal. Showing bad examples helps students to understand expectations and provides clear boundaries or what something is and what something is not (p. 3). It prevents confusion and stops students from spending time on doing the wrong thing. Doolittle provides an example unit he developed and taught on storyboarding that fulfills not only visual art standards but also five common core English language arts standards. He shows it is possible to teach literacy to ELL students within visual art class and argues it is not only possible, but, necessary to reach the deeper learning that is possible through the visual arts.

The State of English Language Learners in the United States

Brouillette, Grove and Hinga (2015) reported that English language learners now represent one in nine students in the United States and one in four students in California. Yet in 2009 more than two-thirds of American teachers reported they had received less than one day of training or no training in the past three years specific to supporting ELL students in their classrooms. Brouillette and Hinga refer to Menken (2010), and point out that ELL students have not benefited from the promises of NCLB and are continuing to perform 20-50 percentage points below native English speakers nationally. Young ELL students have unique learning needs as they are not only learning English, but are also developing proficiency in their home languages. ELL students need frequent opportunity to talk with native English speakers, including teachers and peers, in structured academic environments. They need to be able to receive accurate feedback and the development of oral English proficiency is essential to reading development.

With the promises of NCLB, the implementation of WIDA and ACCESS testing, the creation of the SDAIE and SIOP models, and school district policies created to monitor the progress of ELL students, why are ELL students continuing to perform 20-50 percentage points below native English speakers nationally?

One reason may be language inequity. When NCLB was signed into law in 2001, the Bilingual Education Act was terminated, an act that recognized language as a source of inequity in schools. NCLB changed testing mandating at the state, school and student level. ELL students were mandated to take an English language proficiency test and *the same* academic content tests as their native English-speaking peers. This poses great challenges for ELL students. "Testing research is conclusive that a content-area test administered to an ELL in English is unlikely to render a true portrait of what the student knows and is able to do, because language impacts the

results," (Menken, 2010, p 123). One way to examine linguistic complexity of a test and to see how language can affect testing results for an ELL student is to look at the test's word frequency; how often the words in the text are used in the English language. Nation (2006) identified the 2,000 most frequent word families in English and the most frequent academic words. His research postulated that 98% of the words in a text need to be from the most frequent words in English to be comprehensible to an ELL.

Abedi (2004) demonstrated the significant impact of linguistically complex tests on ELL test scores. A cohort of approximately 14,000 ELL students was followed for seven semesters starting fall semester of 9th grade in 1996 and continuing through fall semester of 12 grade in 1999. All students started classified as LEP (limited English proficient) in both reading and math. As students tested English proficient they became classified as FEP (fluent English proficient). The median test scores of the LEP students were then compared to the median test scores of the FEP students. Reading table 2.1 below, the median percentile score, in the fall of 1996 for ELL (LEP) students, was 12. In the fall no students were considered FEP. That spring, the median score for the LEP students remained the same, 12, while the median score for students who tested FEP rose to 21. The difference between these two groups peeks substantially in grade 12, fall of 1999, when the median score for LEP students in reading is 7 and the median score for FEP students is 18, more than double. Though not quite as different, significant median scores were also seen between the LEP and FEP students' median math scores as well. The math scores changed slightly each year, however showed consistent advantage for the FEP students. In grade 9, fall of 1996, all students were classified LEP and scored a median percentage score of 21 on the Math SAT 9. No students were classified FEP. In the spring of 1997, the LEP students scored and median percentage score of 20. The students tested FEP scored a median percentage

32. This difference remained consistent over the next 5 semesters. In grade 12, fall of 1999 the LEP students again scored a median percentage of 20 while the FEP students scored a median percentage of 31. Abedi concludes this data strongly suggests that language proficiency is a strong determiner of test performance.

Table 2.1
Grade 9 Fall 1996 LEP Cohort SAT 9 Percentile Rank Medians

	Reading SAT 9 (n)		Math SAT 9 (n)	
	LEP	**FEP**	**LEP**	**FEP**
Grade 9, fall 1996	12 (13,989)	NA (0)	21 (14,151)	NA (0)
Grade 9, spring 1997	12 (13,255)	21 (659)	20 (13,402)	32 (674)
Grade 10, fall 1997	8 (8,300)	15 (1,313)	21 (8,456)	30 (1,324)
Grade 10, spring 1998	8 (7,549)	14 (1,987)	19 (7,694)	28 (2,009)
Grade 11, fall 1998	6 (5,435)	13 (2,447)	19 (5,523)	26 (2,463)
Grade 11, spring 1999	7 (4,701)	19 (3,217)	20 (4,807)	30 (3,242)
Grade 12, fall 1999	7 (3,809)	18 (3,685)	20 (3,885)	31 (3,712)

Note: NA = not applicable
Source: Abedi, J., (2004), The no child left behind act and English language learners: Assessment and accountability issues. *Educational Researcher, 33*(1), 4-14.

Adebi (2004) demonstrated that for ELL students, being LEP or FEP, greatly changes a students success in school testing. Nation (2006) went on to show ELL students need 98% of the text to be from the most frequent word families to be successful in testing. Menken (2010) concludes that the low test scores of ELL students simply show us they are ELL students. More questions need to be researched. Why, out of the 13,989 LEP students who completed the reading exam in 9th grade did only 3,685 achieve FEP by 12th grade? After four years in the education system only 26% of the students were fluent in English? Why, out of the 13,989 LEP

students in 9th grade did only 7,494 students complete the reading test in 12th grade? Did only 54% of the ELL students in this cohort complete high school? What happened to the other 6,495 students? Below are two state case studies; New York and Arizona. Each case study will look at that state's specific testing mandates or programs designed for ELL students.

Case Study: New York

New York, with the passage of NCLB, met the new testing mandates by requiring all high school students to pass a set of statewide Regents exams in order to receive a high school diploma. Exams that were originally designed to evaluate college readiness for native English speakers. The Regents exams became two layers of accountability: used to evaluate individuals' performance and used to evaluate schools under the yearly progress requirements of NCLB (Menken, 2010).

A careful examination of the linguistic complexity of the Regents reading comprehension exam show only 71.11% of the words were from the frequent word families. On the math exam only 77.90% of the words were from the most frequent word families. Menken points out that "although research indicates that linguistic modification could help reduce the language barriers of tests for ELLs, most states . . . rely on linguistically complex exams for high stakes decision making in the era of NCLB." (2010, p.124). ELL's score on average 20-50 points below native speakers, but, that does not mean they are not learning. It simply indicates they are ELL. Nation's (2006) research postulated that 98% of the words in a text need to be from the most frequent words in English to be comprehensible to an ELL.

Table 2.2 breaks down the percentage of words in the English Regents, session one, Part B Reading Comprehension Passage and the Math A Regents exam. It shows 81.79% of the

words in the Reading exam and 83.58% of the words in the Math Exam are from the most frequent word families.

Table 2.2

Word Frequency of January 2009 English Regents, Session One, Part B–Reading Comprehension Passage			Word Frequency in Entire January 2009 Math A Regents Exam		
	Word Families	**Percent**		**Word Families**	**Percent**
Most frequent 1–1000 words	251	71.11%	Most frequent 1–1000 words	144	77.90%
Most frequent 1001–2000 words	58	10.68%	Most frequent 1001–2000 words	24	5.68%
Word on the Academic Word List	47	7.09%	Word on the Academic Word List	23	6.42%
Off-list words	?	11.03%	Off-list words	?	9.38%
	356+?	100%		191+?	100%

Source: Menken, K., (2010). NCLB and English language learners: challenges and consequences. *Theory Into Practice, 49*(2), 121-128. doi:10.1080/00405841003626619

There are two negative consequences of the Regent exit exams in New York that affect ELL students. The first is graduation rate. New York shows a steady increase of graduation rate for all students and a steady decrease for ELL students. See Figure 2.3. The second is drop-out rate. ELL students currently have the largest dropout rate. Prior to the mandatory Regent exit exam, the drop-out rate was 21% for ELL students and 16% for non-ELL students. In the years since, the drop-out rate for ELL students has increased eight percentage points to 29% while the drop-out rate has only increased one percentage point, to 17%, for non-ELL students (Menken, 2010).

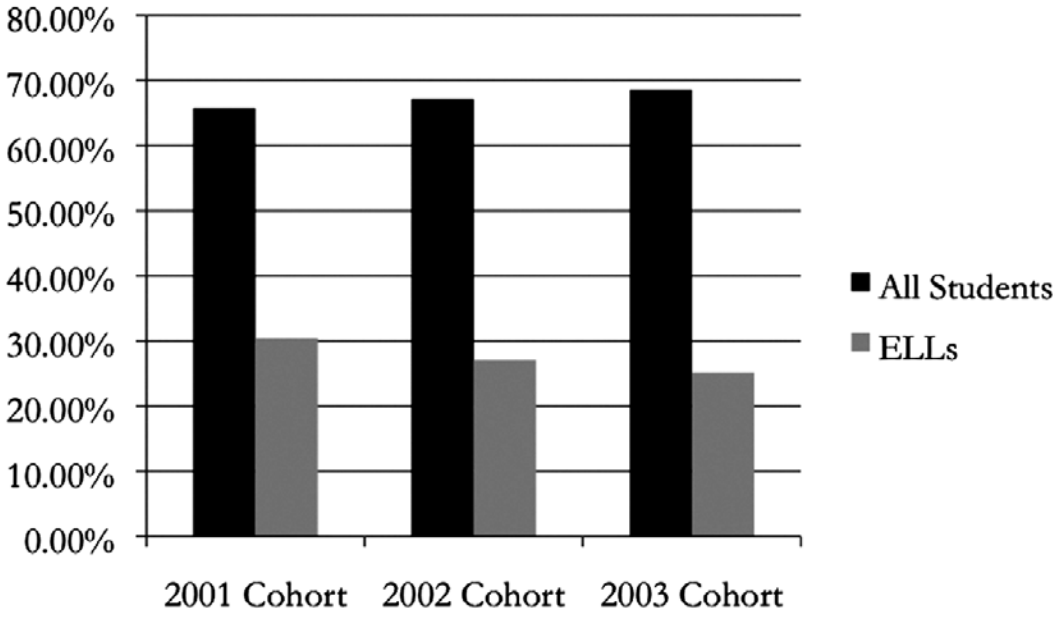

Figure 2.3. New York State ELL 4-year graduation rate, cohorts 2001–2003. Source: New York State Department of Education (2008b).

One benefit for ELL students has been the increased awareness of these students. However, the testing and accountability mandates have resulted in negative consequences that outweigh this benefit, including schools serving ELL students as disproportionately labeled failing schools. This has even caused some principals to not accept ELL students in order to keep school test score averages up. Once ELL students are in school they are more likely to be "taught to the test" at the expense of teaching methods proven effective in meeting the needs of the student. ELL teachers have less time for assignments other than test preparation (Menken, 2010). The New York case study is an example of the language inequity that exists for ELL students on standardized tests. Visual art teachers need to recognize their role in teaching language and literacy to all students with emphasis on ELL students.

Case Study: Arizona

In 2000 the state of Arizona mandated the Structured English Immersion (SEI) model be used in all public and charter school districts. SEI requires ELL students to be grouped based on their English proficiency level and requires a specific number of minutes for each component of language instruction daily. In practice this is the four-hour ELD (English language development) model. ELL students are grouped with other ELL students who have tested at the same English proficiency level. They spend a minimum of four hours per day in a pullout English immersion setting for the first year they are identified as ELL. Exiting the four-hour block is achieved only through mastery of English at the students' grade level as determined by the state's English proficiency test.

Arizona's Dept. of Education website, (http://www.azed.gov/english-language-learners/compliance/sei/), under their research summary and bibliography for the SEI model, listed in support of the SEI model Saunders, Foorman, and Carlson's 2006 study of kindergarten students in ELD programs and non-ELD programs in both English immersion schools and bilingual schools in New Mexico and California. Their data showed classrooms with separate ELD blocks had higher percentages of instructional time devoted to oral language and literacy skills in both program types. The authors note of the teachers they observed, the teachers who implemented a separate ELD block tended to be more efficient and focused on their use of time in both the English immersion and bilingual programs. It was unclear if the separate ELD block created more efficiency or if it was an indicator of more efficient teachers. The teachers tended to concentrate more on oral language skills during the ELD block and English reading skills in the reading/language arts block. The authors concluded there was some evidence in support of the separate ELD block. The effect sizes ranged from 13% to 27% increase for higher English

oral composite scores, higher word identification scores, and higher letter sound scores. They suggest the content of the ELD block needs more analysis, (Saunders, Foorman, Carlson, 2006).

Garcia, Lawton and Diniz de Figueiredo, 2010, conclude that after 10 years the four-hour ELD model has not benefited ELL students as intended. Test scores in reading and math have not brought the achievement gap closer. Increasing numbers of ELL students have been placed into Special education. Mandated instruction of ELL students in pullout classrooms for 80% of the class day increases isolation. At the same time the students are given no opportunities to develop their native language and cultural knowledge. Older students, spending this much time during their day learning English, are excluded from classes such as science and social studies, thus reducing their chance of graduation. It is also suggested that meeting the needs of these ELL students is greatly reduced when teacher preparation is taken into account. Before SEI, ESL (English as a second language) and BLE (Bilingual) teachers had been required to take 24-27 units, about 360-405 hours of preparation in order to teach ELL students. Under SEI all teachers became teachers of ELL students and were required to take only 6 units, or 90 hours, of preparation to be qualified to teach ELL students. They are receiving approximately 10% of the preparation time previously considered necessary, (Garcia, Lawton, Diniz de Figueiredo, 2010).

In Garcia, Lawton, and Diniz de Figueiredo's analysis of the progress of Arizona's ELL (or LEP) students testing proficient in mathematics and reading they compare the data to two cities/states that did not place restrictive legislation on ELL instruction and had vastly different school funding. Utah was chosen because it is among the lowest funding states per pupil in the nation. The District of Columbia was chosen because it is one of the highest funding states per pupil in the nation. Table 2.4, below, shows the percentage of ELL students meeting state/district proficiency standards from 2003-2009. While Arizona's department of Education boasts an

overall 2.6% increase, looking at the numbers in mathematics Arizona ELL students are barely hanging on from 33.2% of the students meeting proficiency in 2005 to 33.1% of the students meeting proficiency in 2009. Utah, although not able to claim a reduction in its achievement gap is at a mean percentage of 49.3%. Significantly higher than Arizona. The District of Columbia, with statistics starting in 2006, started with a lower percentage of students meeting proficiency at 26.8%. However, it achieved a steady increase to 53.0% of ELL students meeting proficiency in 2009. Close analysis of the proficiency percentages in reading show where Arizona pulls the 2.6% increase from. The earliest statistics from 2005 show 22.9% proficiency and was compared to 25.5% in 2009. If we look at Utah's percent of ELL students achieving proficiency in the same way, Utah reports 53.3% in 2003 and reports 53.1% in 2009. Although Utah cannot profess an increase, the state is achieving proficiency with more than twice the percentage of students than Arizona. The District of Columbia reports 26.8% in 2006 with an increase to 53.0% in 2009. A total increase of 26.2

Table 2.4
Percentage of ELL students meeting state/district proficiency standards, 2003-2009

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Mathematics							
Arizona[1]	----	----	33.2	29.1	30.6	33.2	33.1
Utah	51.8	47.3	51.3	52.6	51.6	48.4	41.8[3]
District of Columbia[2]	----	----	----	26.8	33.9	43.1	53.0
Reading							
Arizona	----	----	22.9	18.5	22.0	23.1	25.5
Utah	53.3	49.4	51.1	54.7	55.4	50.4	53.1
District of Columbia	----	----	----	31.4	33.6	38.8	44.7

[1] Significant changes to Arizona's proficiency standards were made after the 2003-2004 AIMS administration.
[2] During the 2005-2006 school year, the District of Columbia began testing with the DC-CAS.
[3] Significant changes were made to Utah's math proficiency standards in 2009

Source: Garcia, E. E., Lawton, K., Diniz de Figueiredo, E. H., (2010), *The education of English language learners in Arizona: A legacy of persisting achievement gaps in a restrictive language policy climate.* Los Angeles, CA: Civil Rights Project

Arizona's restrictive policies that pull ELL students from art classes, science and social studies classes in Arizona, has not resulted with literacy and math benefits for ELL students. Looking at the states test scores, Garcia, Lawton, and Diniz de Figueiredo (2010) conclude Arizona consistently underperforms. The policies have not created a significant decrease in achievement gaps and in comparison to other states/cities with less restrictive instruction policies, and high or low spending per student, Arizona's achievement gaps are significantly greater.

Dr. Herczog's Vision for ELL Students

In California, where ELL students represent 1 in 4, Herczog (2012) posed the question "What's our objective" for ELL students? Herczog proclaimed it is our moral and civic duty to serve our ELL students. She described the common core state standards in California, written

under NCLB, as "an opportunity to promote well-rounded, rigorous, and relevant education to prepare all students for college, career, and citizenship in the 21st century" (p. 89). However, she goes on to describe the common core state standards for English language arts and math as fewer and less clear than in the past. To help school districts implement the standards, the California Curriculum Commission developed a curriculum, instruction and assessment system to do both of the following: focus on integrating 21st century skills and promote higher order thinking skills and interdisciplinary approaches. As these initiatives move forward, Herczog warns it is imperative to support all learners as we are a nation of immigrants and the success of our ELL students is paramount to the success of our nation. The NAEP reported in 2005 that half of elementary ELL students and three quarters of middle school ELL students scored below the basic level of reading and math. Numerous studies have also shown that within the last 10 years the curriculum has been narrowed for ELL students with severe neglect of social studies, science, health, and art education. ELL students cannot access subject matter when their English language skills are weak. When they cannot access subject matter "they will not succeed in attaining the vision we have for all students." (Herczog, 2012, p.90).

The central premise of NCLB that focusing solely on student outcomes of standardized test scores will lead to improved schooling has not worked for ELL students. The gap remains wide between ELL students and native English speakers. Using scores from tests in English to evaluate ELL students and their schools does not work. They assume falsely that these tests provide an accurate picture of what students know and what schools are achieving. As Herczog warns educators are not succeeding in attaining the vision for all students. NCLB policies were never intended to push ELL students further behind. Since the policies of NCLB did not work for

ELL students what are the main challenges ELL students are facing that are preventing them from achieving their full academic potential? What was NCLB up against?

ELL Students and Disengagement

According to Echevarria and Vogt (2010) disengagement is the number one hurdle for ELL students to overcome. The question to ask is, why do ELL students disengage with learning? There are five main reasons ELL students disengage with learning. *Lack of success in class.* General education classroom teachers are not consistently and systematically using effective instructional practices for ELL students. ELL students are not able to understand the material and have given up on trying. (Please see the next section for effective instructional practices). *Lack of positive relationships.* Many ELL students experience loneliness and isolation and have a hard time forming close relationships. Classroom teachers can combat this by creating class settings that encourage interaction, use teams in instructional settings, and provide opportunities to interact with peers in non-threatening, engaging, meaningful discussion on interesting topics. *Awareness of disrespect toward one's culture or ethnicity.* Research has shown positive relationships between teacher and student is a critical factor in student success. Teachers often interpret this by displaying culturally diverse class decorations or holding cultural events. However, students report teachers who show respect talk to their students respectfully, they answer their student's questions, they help students when they need it and they call their students by their name. *Perception of threats.* Research has shown students perceptions about violence, real or imagined, directly impacts academic achievement. In very hostile school environments students are less likely to connect to peers, teachers and staff. This contributes to the feeling of isolation. The threat can be on the commute to school, on the school grounds or in

the classroom. Supportive learning environments in the classroom can reduce the effects of threats outside the classroom. Strong teacher/student relationships can provide sanctuary for the student. *Perception that class assignments or tasks are irrelevant.* Many students, not just ELLs, disengage from the classroom when what they are doing feels irrelevant to their lives. Teaching methods that add to this feeling are over use of pencil and paper worksheets, assignments with confusing directions, content that is difficult to understand, and lessons that do not make connections with what the students already know. Students need lessons that purposefully connect to their lives and experiences, that provide opportunities to grapple with difficult concepts, engage in authentic discussion with their peers, involve hands on tasks and are based on rich material.

Echevarria and Vogt (2010) discovered ELL students need to be engaged 90-100% of the time during class instruction to make academic progress. Are their teaching models, visual art teachers can follow, to provide the literacy needs of ELL students without putting them at risk of disengagement?

SDAIE VS. SIOP & RTI

At first glance it can be difficult to distinguish between SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English) and SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol). Both are specially designed instructional models for teaching ELL students. However, they are both designed with different teaching outcomes in mind. SDAIE is founded on the belief that the purpose of language is understanding messages; grammar, spelling, and punctuation are secondary to the primary purpose. SDAIE techniques are designed to make content messages understandable between the student and teacher. The SDAIE model believes that when content is

understandable and meaningful students cannot help but learn language. SIOP is founded on the belief that high literacy skills are the key to academic success for ELL students. Specific literacy and language skills are built into every lesson. While SDAIE and SIOP are two different schools of thought on how to teach ELL students, RTI is a model of monitoring the need for and appropriate level of intervention. It was designed to work alongside SIOP.

SDAIE

Genzuk (2011, p. 8) defines SDAIE "as the teaching of grade level subject matter in English specifically designed for speakers of other languages." The goal is to make core curriculum, at the grade level, comprehensible, meaningful and challenging to ELL students whose English proficiency is at the intermediate level. SDAIE instruction is not for all ELL students. The state of California recommended SDAIE as appropriate for students who have met the following criteria; A threshold English language proficiency (including mastery at specified levels of reading, writing, and oral skills)-intermediate and above, primary language literacy, and appropriate academic content background – different subjects by age/grade.

SDAIE instruction is the bridge between primary language instruction and placement in mainstream English. It is important that SDAIE teachers have the ability and knowledge to create relevancy with the core curriculum and make it comprehensible to their ELL students. Traditional teaching methods are not sufficient (Genzuk, 2011).

SDAIE is built around research that has shown the primary language can help with the development of the second language. Content learned in the primary language does not need to be re-learned in the second language. Students need only to acquire the vocabulary to describe it. There are three key implementations to make SDAIE instruction successful. First: students need

access to content area materials and resources in their primary language. Second: primary language instructional support personnel need to be available to provide a direct connection to the content. Third: to be most successful students should be grouped by linguistic and academic needs (Genzuk, 2011). Providing background knowledge in the students' primary language is also recommended before starting a new lesson. The techniques used in SDAIE lessons are all designed around making content comprehensible.

The SDAIE method will only work in specific classrooms and/or schools. ELL students must be English proficient at the intermediate level and teachers must be able to provide students with content in their primary language. This method will work with upper grades where students have had time to develop English, have the ability to read and write in the primary language, the ELL population speaks the same language and the language is accessible for the teacher to access materials in. This is not the reality for many teachers. The full time visual art teacher will teach anywhere between 150 to 200 students each day. Many schools, though they may have a larger enrollment by one subculture may have students enrolled whose families represent twenty or more different languages at home. The visual art teacher will teach all these students. The ELL students themselves will be at all different levels of understanding and speaking English. Some will be intermediate, some will know conversational English but no academic English, others will know no more than a few words and will be dependent on demonstrations, visuals and be reading facial expressions and body language.

SIOP

> Young students are entering kindergarten without the pre-literacy skills and experiences schools expect them to have. Older English learners have often been passed from grade to grade without achieving basic literacy skills or are recent immigrants who do not speak the language of instruction. For older adolescents, there is a "literacy crisis", (Echevarria, Vogt, 2010, p.8).

The SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) Model was first developed by Echevarria, Vogt and Short in 1995 and has since been continually researched and refined. In 2015, the fifth edition of their book, *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model* was published. "The SIOP Model is an instructional framework for organizing classroom instruction in meaningful and effective ways *for English language learners*," (Echevarria, Vogt, 2010, p.8). Herczog describes the SIOP Model as providing comprehensive systems for lesson planning and teaching that focuses on developing and achieving both content and language objectives, (2012). There are eight basic components that include thirty features to create effective instruction for English language learners. The components and features are created around six principles of instruction that nurture engagement for ELL students.

Engagement is important for all students, but, critical for the success of ELL students. "For English (language) learners to make academic progress, the expectation is that they must be highly engaged 90-100% of the time during each lesson", (Echevarria, Vogt, 2010, p. 9). The first principle is: *Provide many opportunities for English (language) learners to develop oral language competency through interaction with others*. Research has shown oral language skills

impact all aspects of academic achievement and is vital to not just students' speaking development but also reading, writing, and listening skills.

The second principle is: *Explicitly link English (language) learners background knowledge and experiences to lesson content and past learning*. It is necessary to tap into students' prior knowledge in order for them to make connections and remember new concepts and experiences. Doing this also allows the teacher to learn what students already know about a topic and to identify gaps or misinformation in a topic.

The third principle: *Provide explicit and contextualized vocabulary instruction to English (language) learners*. Research shows ELL students learn higher numbers of words through explicit instruction than through exposure alone. Vocabulary words taught need to include content, process, and function words. Definitions need to be in student friendly terms. The words need to be embedded in meaningful contexts. The students need multiple opportunities for exposure and practice through reading, writing, listening and speaking. Be purposeful when selecting words to teach. More is not always better!

The fourth principle: *Each lesson you teach to English (language) learners must be meaningful, comprehensible, and accessible*. Carefully scaffold lessons for ELL students to ensure they understand all parts of the lesson. Scaffolds may include visual aids and supplementary materials, modeling, previews and reviews, hands on discovery activities, and speaking slowly and deliberately with clear vocabulary and diction.

The fifth principle: *Stimulate English (language) learners' thinking and provide meaningful activities for students to demonstrate their learning*. ELL students may have a limited vocabulary to express their thinking, however, they still have the ability to think. It is critical that teachers "plan for a range of questions and tasks that promote strategic, critical

thinking", (2010, p. 11). Students also need to be taught how to use learning strategies. The sixth and final principle is: *Assess English (language) learners frequently, before, during, and after lessons, and plan purposefully, based on the assessment data*. ELL students need richer and more extensive teaching procedures than those recommended in core curriculum programs. ELL students need specific, frequent feedback on academics and behavior to understand what they are doing well on and where they can improve.

The SIOP method will work for all classrooms and/or schools as it is designed for all ELL students. However, teachers will need specific training in how to use the SIOP method. They will need continued training as new research is discovered and the method is refined. Many visual art teachers will need support modifying their curriculum to include these literacy needs. Most visual art teachers consider limited time with students as their number one hurdle. Visual art teachers have class periods ranging from 25 minutes to 60 minutes in length and may see students ranging from one day per week for a whole to year to everyday for nine weeks. Most visual art teachers consider only teaching content vocabulary words and have not built teaching process and function words into lesson plans.

RTI

RTI (Response to intervention) is a three-tiered instructional delivery model designed to identify at risk learners early and make adjustments to instruction so students do not miss critical literacy skills. As Echevarria and Vogt (2010) discovered, ELL students need to be engaged 90-100% of the time during class instruction to make academic progress. Coupled with the need for richer, more extensive teaching procedures and the multiple reasons ELL students struggle with disengagement there is no wonder as to why ELL students have long struggled in school. Many

well-meaning general education teachers have unintentionally developed low expectations for ELL students academic performance, or have assumed academic difficulties are related to language acquisition and have given extended time but waited too long before giving appropriate academic support. In the past, one of the only options available to ELL students not making adequate academic progress was to be referred to special education services. In response, school districts have created well-meaning time restrictions before ELL students could be referred for special education services. RTI was founded on the following two beliefs to combat all of the above issues: all children can learn when provided with appropriate, effective instruction, and most academic difficulties can be prevented with early identification of need followed by immediate intervention. What makes RTI unique is its focus on instructional practices in the classroom and not the learner. It provides structure for monitoring progress, adjusting instruction, and providing intervention (Echevarria, Hasbrouck, 2009).

In tier one the general education classroom teacher instructs all students using best practices for meeting the academic and language needs of the ELL students in the class. “For English (language) learners, this instruction is made comprehensible by having clear learning objectives and using a variety of techniques, such as presenting material visually, providing sufficient repetition, and offering opportunities to practice new learning”, (Echevarria, Hasbrouck, 2009, p.2).

Tier two is for students who struggle with key skills that are of critical importance for literacy success. This is usually 20-30% of students. “Tier two interventions are specific, research-validated practices that develop specific skills needed for overall literacy development”, (Echevarria, Vogt, 2010, p. 13). Tier two is meant to be short-term instruction designed to teach

a specific skill(s) the student lacks which is preventing academic success with Tier 1 instruction and once mastered can move back to Tier 1, (Echevarria, Hasbrouck, 2009).

The small amount of students, typically 5-10%, who do not respond to tier two interventions, move to tier three interventions an even more intensive level of support which may include special education services. A key point to remember with ELL students and special education is that students cannot have a learning disability in English and but not in their home language (Echevarria, Vogt, 2010). Tier three may be supplemental, or, in cases where the student is performing far below grade level, tier three may be provided in place of the general classroom instruction. Tier three instruction should take place in very small groups with even more specific skills focus than tier two (Echevarria, Hasbrouck, 2009).

RTI is a checks and balances system for teachers and schools designed for the success of ELL students. It holds teachers accountable by requiring them to reflect on their own teaching methods asking themselves "Am I consistently using best practices for meeting the academic and language needs of the ELL students in my class?" When the teacher has made appropriate changes needed in the classroom, and ELL students need more strategic instruction, schools with RTI set in place are ready to give the support the ELL students and classroom teachers need. The school does not have to worry about ELL students being over represented in special education, does not have to create arbitrary time restrictions before ELL students can be referred for special education services, and teachers will know when to give appropriate academic support. RTI, when used with research based effective teaching methods for ELL students, like those used in SIOP, helps identify at risk learners early and make adjustments to instruction so students do not miss critical literacy skills.

If the SIOP and RTI methods are used consistently and effectively in all visual art classes could additional literacy support be achieved in the visual art classroom without jeopardizing ELL student school engagement and guaranteeing access to practice the higher order of thinking skills while giving a better chance for overall school and life success?

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Case Study: Jessie's Story

I student taught sixth grade visual art in a small, Minnesota, suburban school district. The sixth grade was part of the middle school program. The middle school and high school were housed in two different wings of the same building sharing the cafeteria, gyms and auditorium. The student body was made up of 74% white/Caucasian students and 26% minority students. Male students represented 48% and female students represented 52% of the student body. Low SES students represented 20% of the student body and ELL students represented 8% of the student body. One student in particular, "Jessie", I found I couldn't stop thinking about. Jessie had good conversational English and limited academic English. She excelled in the art room. She could follow teaching through visuals and demonstrations. The other girls admired her work. I noticed she did not speak much to them, but, I could see the pride in her face when they showed their admiration. Between the third and fourth week of school after the ACCESS test results came back, she was pulled from art and placed in an additional block of reading. Shortly after, a peer of mine teaching in the ELL classroom approached me and said she was worried about Jessie. Art was Jessie's favorite class. It had been the class that gave Jessie a personal connection to school and in which her non-ELL peers admired her work. My mind continually started asking questions. How much will Jessie benefit from an additional block of reading? How much will she lose from being pulled out of art? Will Jessie still be able to feel a positive connection to school? Will she be able to continue to make a positive connection with her peers and society? Will she see value in her abilities? How will this affect her overall education and connection with school? Is there something we could have been doing in the art classroom to support Jessie's English language proficiency needs? After completing the research for this thesis I conclude

there is something we could have done in the visual art classroom. Modify lesson plans with the SIOP method, monitor ELL students for additional support needs with RTI, carefully build in listening, speaking, reading and writing in each art unit meeting appropriate English language arts standards to provide practice to ELL students when they are most motivated, and partner with ELL teachers and administrators to monitor literacy progress.

Limitations in the Research

Catterall's careful analysis of the NELS:88 proved involvement in the arts significantly improved ELL students academic and overall life success. The NAEA's research begins to show how the arts are able to engage students who would otherwise be alienated from the school community. This presents a promising solution for ELL students struggling with disengagement. The case studies show success in specific classrooms motivating unengaged students to engage and practice English literacy skills using student created images. As such, the arts are a schools best resource to build community and engage ELL students. More research is needed to pinpoint exactly what effective visual art teachers do in their lessons to engage students. Research is needed to discover what the arts teach that gives students benefits in other academic and social areas. Research is needed on what specific bridging skills are being taught, and how, by effective visual art teachers. This research then needs to be included as part of teacher education programs. Research is needed to discover what percentage of time visual art teachers should provide in practicing listening, speaking, reading and writing to show literacy improvement and how to balance literacy skills with creating visual art to achieve maximum motivation to practice literacy without losing student engagement. If too much time is spent on literacy skills students will not feel like they are in a visual art class and may lose engagement. More research is needed

to discover how many arts classes ELL students need to maintain engagement and show the benefits from the arts in other academic and social areas of their lives. Research is needed to discover if there is a difference in outcome for students who are highly engaged in one field of study in the arts compared to students who have some engagement in many fields of art.

Summary and Research Conclusions

ELL students represent one in nine students; eleven percent of the United States overall student population (Brouillette, Grove and Hinga, 2015). It is vital to our countries future to ensure these students are given every tool to become successful adults. As a nation built by immigrants, all connected with the same dream, it is our moral responsibility to provide ELL students with the same educational opportunities as native English speakers. The policies surrounding NCLB have not worked for ELL students. ELL students have become alienated, have consistently scored 20-50 points lower on standardized test scores than native English speakers, have dropped out of high school in increasingly higher percentages, have increasingly lost access to the arts and received minimal practice in the higher order thinking skills. It is no wonder ELL students have become disengaged; the number one, research proved, hurdle to academic success for ELL students. It is time to try a different tactic.

The NAEA's report confirms there are specific skills students learn in the visual art classroom not taught in other subjects. ELL students pulled from visual arts classes may not be taught these skills. Of main concern are the mental habits of observing, envisioning, innovating, and reflecting. These mental habits, specifically taught in the visual art classroom, as observed by Hetland and Winner, are not emphasized elsewhere is school.

In the digital age we live in students are familiar with looking at images, however, they still need to be taught how to "read" message intent in images. Students can mistake all images as informational. Without knowing how to decode message intent in images students are unable to "read" messages and unable to create their own intended messages in images. Students may even create images with unintended message content. Decoding images as fact, fiction or sales pitch and creating ones own images with intent are increasingly important skills in the digital age where almost all platforms use images to capture and hold the publics, and students, attention.

Catterall's analysis of the NELS:88 show that access and participation in the arts are a key piece to overall students success. Having access and being involved in arts rich middle and high schools gives ELL students a significantly greater chance for success academically and in their lives after school. The benefit was shown to increase over time and held true for low SES students. The ELL students who attended arts rich schools had higher overall standardized test scores, higher graduation rates, were more likely to attend college, were more likely to receive a bachelors and masters degree, were more likely to report their education led to a better job and/or more pay, volunteered in their community in higher numbers, and voted in public elections in higher numbers. These are the goals for all students; to become educated, working, involved members of their communities.

Schools and school districts need to be told the importance of the arts in a students complete education. The importance of the arts will need to be recognized to ensure all students and especially ELL students have access to the arts. Administrators need to be confident visual art teachers in their schools and districts are providing ELL students with practice in speaking, listening, reading and writing about art. In 2009 more than two-thirds of American teachers reported they had received less than one day of training or no training in the past three years

specific to supporting ELL students in their classrooms (Brouillette, Grove and Hinga, 2015). Visual art teachers need training in SIOP and RTI methods. They need regular support from coaches, and/or administrators to successfully modify their visual art lesson plans with the SIOP method and when to build speaking, listening, reading, and writing into art lessons to minimize risk and maximize motivation for ELL students.

Visual art class may be the bridge ELL students need to feel a sense of connection with school and to share their personal, complex, unique story without being limited by language. It may be their motivation, without too much risk, to practice English language skills. Visual art teachers cannot turn a blind eye to this. Visual art teachers must, as Doolittle argues, provide students with the opportunity for deeper learning. Visual art teachers must provide practice in listening, reading, speaking and writing about art. Visual art teachers must be grass roots initiators, demanding their students practice these skills in their classes.

The case studies show success in teaching English literacy using student created visual images that promote engagement and personal investment in an English foreign language class and as deeper learning strategy in a visual art class. An interesting research study would be to create an interdisciplinary, co-taught, block of English and visual art for English language learners by both a visual art and an English language arts or ELL teacher. Then track the literacy progress of the students over an extended period of time and compare the progress to ELL students with tradition separate English language arts and visual art classes.

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