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The Impact of Language and High-Stakes Testing Policies on Elementary School English Language Learners in Arizona

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Abstract

This article reports the results of a survey of third-grade teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) in Arizona regarding school language and accountability policies—Proposition 203, which restricts bilingual education and mandates sheltered English Immersion; the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB); and Arizona LEARNS, the state’s high-stakes testing and accountability program. The instrument, consisting of 126 survey questions plus open-ended interview question, was designed to obtain teacher’s views, to ascertain the impact of these polices, and to explore their effectiveness in improving the education of ELL students. The survey was administered via telephone to 40 teacher participants from different urban, rural and reservation schools across the state. Each participant represents the elementary school in their respective school district which has the largest population of ELL students. Analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data reveal that these policies have mostly resulted in confusion in schools throughout the state over what is and is not allowed, and what constitutes quality instruction for ELLs, that there is little evidence that such policies have led



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to improvements in the education of ELL students, and that these policies may be causing more harm than good. Specifically, teachers report they have been given little to no guidance over what constitutes sheltered English immersion, and provide evidence that most ELL students in their schools are receiving mainstream sink-or-swim instruction. In terms of accountability, while the overwhelming majority of teachers support the general principle, they believe that high-stakes tests are inappropriate for ELLs and participants provided evidence that the focus on testing is leading to instruction practices for ELLs which fail to meet their unique linguistic and academic needs. The article concludes with suggestions for needed changes to improve the quality of education for ELLs in Arizona.

Keywords: English language learners; high-stakes testing; accountability; Proposition 203; No Child Left Behind; bilingual education; sheltered English Immersion; Arizona.

El Impacto de el lenguaje de las políticas de examinación de grandes consecuencias en los estudiantes de escuelas primarias que están aprendiendo ingles como segunda lengua en Arizona

Resumen

Este artículo presenta los resultados de una encuesta con profesores que enseñan a estudiantes ELL de tercer grado en Arizona (ELL son estudiantes que están aprendiendo ingles como segundo idioma) en relación a políticas lingüísticas y de rendición de cuentas (accountability) tales como: la proposición 203 (que restringe la educación bilingüe y ordena programas de inmersión lingüística), la ley federal Sin abandonar ningún niño (The No Child Left Behind) de 2001 y la ley del estado de Arizona APRENDE (Learns), que establece un programa de exámenes de grandes consecuencias (high stakes) y de rendición de cuentas (accountability). La encuesta, contenía 126 ítems además de preguntas abiertas hechas en entrevistas, y fue diseñada para obtener las opiniones de los profesores y establecer el impacto de estas políticas y explorar la eficacia de estas para mejorar la educación de los ELL. La encuesta fue administrada telefónicamente a 40 profesores de escuelas urbanas, rurales y de reservaciones indígenas en todo el estado. Cada participante representó a una escuela primaria de un distrito escolar, con una gran cantidad de ELLs. Análisis de los datos, tanto cuantitativos como cualitativos, revela que estas políticas: han causado confusión en las escuelas en todo el estado; particularmente sobre, que se permite o no; que constituye una enseñanza de alta calidad para estos estudiantes; que hay poca evidencia que demuestre que estas políticas hayan mejorado la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de los ELL; y que estas políticas han causado más daño que beneficios. Específicamente, los profesores reportaron que recibieron escasa o ninguna capacitación, que les permitiera entender y aprender los principios de los programas de inmersión lingüística. Los profesores también indicaron que los ELL están recibiendo instrucción general del tipo o “aprendes a nadar o te hundes”. En términos de las políticas de rendición de cuentas (accountability), la mayoría de los profesores apoyaba los fundamentos generales de esas políticas, pero creían que los exámenes de grandes consecuencias no son apropiados para estudiantes ELL. Los profesores dieron evidencias que el énfasis en los exámenes de grandes consecuencias está produciendo prácticas que no

ayudan a satisfacer las necesidades lingüísticas y académicas de los estudiantes ELL. Este artículo concluye con sugerencias para implementar los cambios necesarios para mejorar la enseñanza destinada a los estudiantes ELL.

Introduction

Over the past five years, elementary schools in Arizona have faced the challenge of implementing a number of school reform efforts as mandated by state and federal policies. These policies include (a) the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), (b) Arizona LEARNs, and (c) Proposition 203. During this same period, Arizona schools have experienced rapid growth among students classified as English language learners (ELLs). These policies include specific mandates for ELLs. Current education leaders and other advocates for these policies have claimed that these reform efforts are key to improving the education of ELL students (Horne, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

NCLB requires that ELL students (referred to as limited English proficient (LEP) students in the federal law) be placed in “high quality language instruction educational programs that are based on scientifically based research demonstrating the effectiveness of the programs in increasing (a) English proficiency; and (b) student academic achievement in the core academic subjects” (Title III, Sec. 3115(c)(1)). The law also requires that ELL students be included in each state’s high-stakes standards-based testing program, that they be tested in a “valid and reliable manner,” and provided with “reasonable accommodations.” (Title I, Sec. 1111(b)(3)(C)(ix)(III)). Schools are held accountable for ensuring that ELL students make “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) each year towards the ultimate goal in 2014 when 100% of all students—including ELLs—will be expected to pass their state’s test each year. Schools which fail to ensure that ELLs (or other subgroups of students) make AYP each year face serious sanctions, including state or private takeover of the school. Thus, schools with large numbers of ELL students are under immense pressure to raise test scores each year.

Arizona LEARNs is the state’s high-stakes testing and school accountability program (Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) §15–241). While many of its components were in place prior to NCLB, major changes have been made over the past few years to bring the program into compliance with the federal law. The Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) is the state’s high-stakes tests. Prior to 2005, it was only administered in grades 3, 5, 8 and high school, but new AIMS tests have been added for grades 4, 6, and 7 to comply with the mandates of NCLB. In addition to the labels and sanctions imposed by NCLB, Arizona LEARNs also contains provisions for sanctions and labeling schools based mainly on AIMS test scores. Schools labeled as “underperforming” for two years in a row are deemed as “failing,” and face the potential of state or private takeover if scores do not improve. The emphasis placed on the AIMS test and Arizona LEARNs labels also places educators under immense pressure to raise test scores of ELL students.

Proposition 203,¹ the “English for the Children” initiative passed by voters at the end of 2001, places restrictions on bilingual education programs. The law requires that ELL students be instructed in English-only sheltered (or structured)² English immersion (SEI) classrooms. While the

¹ Proposition 203 has now been incorporated into Arizona state law as Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) §15–751–755.

² In this paper “sheltered” and “structured” English Immersion are used interchangeably, and both are abbreviated as (SEI).

law provides provisions for parents to request waivers for their children to participate in bilingual education programs, the waivers were designed to be intentionally hard to get and easy for schools and districts to deny. Further efforts by current state education leaders (see Horne & Dugan, 2003) have led to even narrower interpretations of the law in recent years, making it nearly impossible for any ELL student under the age of 10 to participate in a bilingual education program. A small number of bilingual programs remain for ELL students in grades 4 and higher, while those few programs remaining in grades K–3 mainly service English-only students and/or former ELL students who have been redesignated as fluent English proficient (Combs, Evans, Fletcher, Parra, & Jiménez, 2005). A small number of Native American language immersion programs have survived, which are attempting to preserve threatened Indian languages and prevent their extinction (Benally & Viri, 2005; McCarty, 2002), however even these programs have come under intense scrutiny of state education officials' attempts to force compliance with Proposition 203 (Donovan, 2004). In addition to its language of instruction requirements, Proposition 203 requires that all ELL students in Grades 2 and higher be tested on a norm-referenced test, in English, without any accommodations. Prior to 2005 the Stanford Achievement Test, 9th Edition (SAT–9) was used for this purpose. Thus, ELL and all other students in Arizona were required to take both the AIMS and SAT–9 tests each year.³ SAT–9 results were also figured into Arizona LEARNS school label formulas, but did not carry as much weight as AIMS test scores.

There has been a great deal of debate in Arizona (Judson & Garcia-Dugan, 2004; Krashen, 2004; Mahoney, Thompson, & MacSwan, 2004, 2005; Wright, 2005a, 2005c) and across the country (Abedi, 2004; Crawford, 2003, 2004; Wiley & Wright, 2004; Wright, 2005b) about the appropriateness and the effectiveness of these policies for ELL students. Policy makers have vigorously defended the policies and claim they are improving education for ELL students (Horne, 2004; Judson & Garcia-Dugan, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Scholars, researchers, and advocates for ELL students have contested these claims and have provided evidence that these policies may be causing more harm than good (Combs et al., 2005; Krashen, 2004; MacSwan, 2004; Mahoney, Thompson, & MacSwan, 2004, 2005; Wiley & Wright, 2004; Wright, 2004, 2005b, 2005c; Wright & Pu, 2005). Largely absent from this debate are the voices of classroom teachers who have been given the charge to implement these policies at the classroom level. The lack of teacher voices in this debate is troubling, as it is the classroom teachers who, (a) have first hand knowledge and experience of how these policies are being implemented and how they are influencing the education of ELL students, and (b) know best the very students these policies claim to be benefiting. Often times, when individual teachers speak out, their views are dismissed, or policymakers may simply claim the teachers' views and classroom experiences are not representative of other teachers and schools throughout the state.

This study fills this important gap by conducting a telephone survey and interviews with a representative sample of experienced teachers of ELL students from those elementary schools and districts across the state with the largest ELL student populations. In this study the focus is on teachers of ELL students in the 3rd grade; this decision is based on the following rationale: (a) 3rd grade is one of the primary grades most affected by Proposition 203, given that the majority of bilingual programs in the state were in K–3, and current waiver provisions for students 10 and older

³ In 2005, Arizona began using the AIMS-Dual Purpose Assessment (AIMS-DPA) which combined norm-referenced testing with the standards-based AIMS test (a criterion-referenced test). While this combined test meets the requirements of both NCLB and Proposition 203 in grades 3–8, the state had adopted a separate norm-referenced test, the Terra-Nova, to test ELLs in grades 2 and 9 as required by Proposition 203.

were clearly designed to prevent bilingual programs in grades 3 and below; (b) both Arizona LEARNs and NCLB mandate that high-stakes testing begins in 3rd grade, and (c) prior to 2005, as elementary students were only tested in grades 3 and 5, test scores of 3rd grade students had a major impact on their school's label under both Arizona LEARNs and NCLB. In short, 3rd grade is the lowest grade level to be affected at the highest level by all three policies.

The survey instrument and interview protocol utilized in this study were designed to answer the following research questions: (a) What are the views of experienced 3rd grade teachers of ELL students on state and federal language and high-stakes testing policies? (b) How have these policies affected the teaching and learning of ELL students in their classrooms, schools, and districts? (c) How effective are these policies in meeting the language and educational needs of ELL students?

Collectively, these teachers provide the best indication to date of how these policies are actually being implemented, and what their impact has actually been on ELL students, their classrooms, teachers, and schools. The teachers' views and experiences go well beyond questionable test score data, statistics, and school labels.

The methodology utilized in this study is described in the next section, followed by a report of the findings. The next section provides deeper analysis and draws major conclusions which are supported by the data. The final section offers a series of recommendations related to the study's findings.

Methods

While ELL students are found in the majority of districts and schools throughout the state of Arizona, the focus of this study is on ELL impacted schools, defined here as schools with 30 or more 3rd grade ELL students. In these schools, there are enough ELL students to fill one or more classrooms, and thus these schools were more likely to have had the kinds of programs and services affected by current policies. In addition, 30 is the minimum group size established by the state for reporting a LEP subgroup in NCLB accountability formulas (Wright, 2005a). Finally, in these schools it is easier to find experienced teachers with certification in working with ELL students, who are both attuned to the educational and linguistic needs of ELL students, and who are familiar with state and federal policies affecting ELL students.

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has not (to date) publicly reported data on the number of students classified as ELL student in each school. However, test score reports for the ELL subgroup indicate the number of ELLs tested on each subtest of the AIMS. Using this data, school districts which tested 30 or more ELL 3rd grade students on the 2004 AIMS Math subtest were identified. Next, the school in each of these districts which tested the largest number of 3rd grade ELLs on the 2004 AIMS Math subtest was identified. Those schools testing less than 30 ELLs were excluded. Using this criterion, a total of 59 schools were identified for participation.

A database was created for the 59 schools which included the name of the district and school, county, type (rural, urban, or reservation), school address, phone number, principal name, school demographic data, and school achievement data (Arizona LEARNs Labels, NCLB AYP Designations, and AIMS test scores for ELL students in 2003 and 2004). This information was obtained from the Arizona Department of Education website, the *greatschools.net* website, and websites for individual school districts and schools.

Letters were mailed to the principals of each school in September 2004 describing the study, and asking the principal to recommend one of their 3rd grade teachers who was experienced and who had a large number of ELLs in her or his classroom. The letter assured anonymity for the school and participating teacher, and indicated that we would be calling to obtain the principal's

recommendation. Out of the 59 schools identified, 44 principals were eventually contacted and agreed to participate and recommended one of their teachers. Of the remaining 15 schools, only one principal directly refused to participate. The other 14 simply did not return our repeated calls.

Letters were sent in November 2004 to recommended teachers at their school addresses, providing information about the study, indicating that their principal had recommended them for participation, and letting them know we would be calling to set up a time for the telephone survey. The letter also assured teachers of their anonymity, indicated that their participation was voluntary, and informed them that they could choose to withdraw at any time. Through repeated phone calls and messages, 40 out of the 44 recommended teachers agreed to participate. Of the four recommended teachers who did not participate, none directly refused. In two of the cases, the recommended teachers were out on maternity or sick leave by the time we tried to contact them. The other two simply proved too difficult to contact by phone.

Teachers were contacted and telephone survey interviews were administered between November 2004 and May 2005. Surveys were administered personally by the two authors of this study. The survey instrument (available at <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v14n13/v14n13appendix.pdf>) contained both selected response and open-ended interview questions, and each survey interview took between 30 and 60 minutes to complete, with the average interview lasting about 45 minutes. Most of the interviews were digitally audio recorded (with each teacher's permission). The audio recordings enabled the creation of transcriptions of teacher's responses to open-ended questions, and also of any comments or clarifications made in response to specific survey items. Indeed, the teachers proved to be very passionate about the issues raised in the survey, and few found themselves content to simply choose one of the selected response items and move on without first providing some details on why they selected each response. For many of the teachers, the selected-response survey questions motivated in-depth discussions through the open-ended questions posed at the end of the survey. These qualitative data provided invaluable insights which allowed us to explore at greater depth the quantitative data captured through the selected-response survey items. In the analysis of findings below, evidence from both the quantitative and qualitative data will be interwoven.

Confidentiality

As indicated above, the names of districts, schools, principals, and participating teachers are kept anonymous. The importance of and need for this condition for participation became evident during phone conversations with principals and interviews with the teachers. Several teachers and principals reported being under intense scrutiny from Arizona Department of Education (ADE) officials and the ADE Proposition 203 monitors who visit their schools to ensure compliance. Many teachers also sought assurance that their specific answers and comments would not get their school or district in trouble, or be shared with their immediate supervisors. Teachers frequently made comments such as "I shouldn't be telling you this, but ...," "This is anonymous, right?" and "You're not going to share this with my principal, are you?" We are grateful for the trust the teachers placed in us as they provided what we have no reason to doubt are honest answers. We have taken the necessary precautions to present the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data in a manner so that no answer or comment can be traced back to a single district, school, or teacher.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument (available at <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v14n13/v14n13appendix.pdf>) was developed by the first author specifically for this study. The design and use of the instrument as a telephone survey was informed by the work of Salant and Dillman (1994). The content of the survey is informed by previous work conducted by the first author on federal and state language and assessment policies (Wright, 2002, 2004, 2005a, 2005c), over 100 hours of observations in ELL impacted elementary schools in Arizona, informal conversations with current Arizona classroom teachers, and the first author's own experience as a former teacher of elementary school ELL students in California. The initial draft of the survey underwent several revisions following reviews by colleagues at Arizona State University and the University of Texas, San Antonio (see Acknowledgments), and following the results of and comments made by classroom teachers and others who participated in the pilot testing of the instrument. An oral script was added to ensure consistency in administration by the two authors. Before the survey was officially administered, the authors practiced administering the survey to each other over the phone, and additional minor revisions were made to the instrument.

The survey instrument contains the following 11 sections: (1) Background information on the teacher's current class, including total number of students and number classified as ELLs, and the official designation (bilingual, sheltered English immersion, mainstream, or other) of the classroom; (2) Views on Proposition 203; (3) Effects of Proposition 203 on their school's instructional programs for ELL students; (4) Views on high stakes testing for ELLs; (5) Effects of high stakes testing on content areas taught to ELLs; (6) Effects of high stakes testing on classroom instruction/practices for ELL students; (7) Behaviors ELL student exhibit while taking high stakes tests; (8) Accommodations provided for ELL students when taking the test; (9) Impact of school labels; (10) Background information on the participant's teaching experience and certification; and (11) Open-ended interview questions. In total, the survey contains 126 questions, not counting the open-ended questions (some questions were skipped depending on answers to previous questions).

Data Analysis

Each participant's responses were recorded on a separate hardcopy of the survey instrument, which were reviewed at the conclusion of the survey interview to ensure that each response was clearly marked. The responses for each survey question were entered into SPSS (a statistical analysis software program) and subsequently checked for accuracy. Once all data were entered, the results and other analyses for each question were computed using SPSS.

For the qualitative data, transcriptions were made of responses to open-ended questions, and any comments, clarifications, or explanations made by the teachers when answering survey questions which added information beyond their selected response. Transcripts for each recorded interview were imported into Nvivo 2.0, a qualitative data analysis software program, and coded for analysis. Codes were based on the question numbers of the question to which the participant was expounding upon, and also on the themes which emerged from the open-ended questions. Information from the school database containing demographic and achievement data was also imported into Nvivo as attributes for each of the respective participants, facilitating easy access to important information used to verify teacher comments, and to place them within appropriate contexts. The sophisticated organizational and search features of Nvivo aided further deeper analysis as answers were sought to specific questions, as evidence was searched for to either confirm or

disconfirm working assertions/conclusions, and to explore whether or not there were any different patterns emerging for urban, rural, and reservation schools.

Analyses of the data were informed by Salant and Dillman (1994) for the survey data, Erickson (1986) and Miles and Huberman (1994) for the qualitative data, and also by Greene and Caracelli's work on mixed-method studies (Greene, 2001; Greene & Caracelli, 1997a, 1997b).

Representativeness of Sample

While this is a survey of just 40 teachers, it is important to point out that these teachers represent 11 out of Arizona's 15 counties (see Figure 1), provided direct instruction to 878 ELL students in the 2004–2005 school year, and represent 68% of all the school districts throughout the state which tested 30 or more 3rd grade ELL students in 2004. Furthermore, the 40 school districts represented by these teachers provided instruction to 11,513 (74%) of the 15,619 3rd grade ELLs tested on the AIMS 2004 Math subtests. Thus, these 40 teachers' reports on what is happening within their districts and schools as a result of the policies described above provides a comprehensive view of the impact of these policies on 3rd grade ELLs across the state of Arizona.

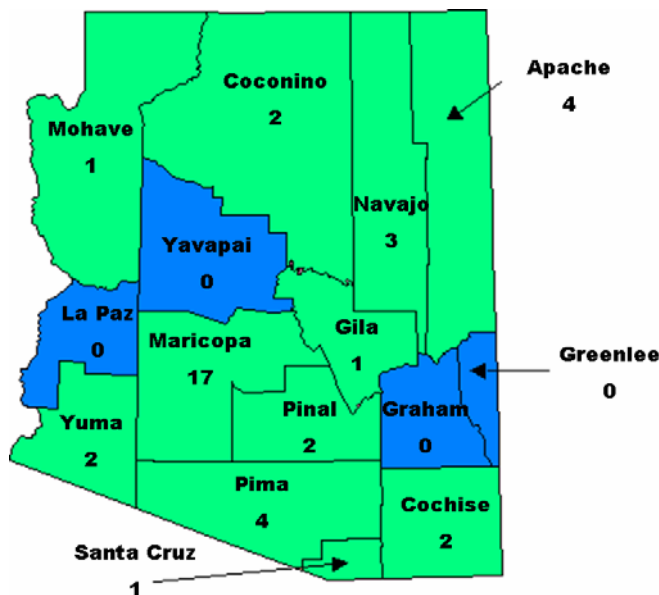


Figure 1
Number of Teachers Surveyed by County⁴

In expressing their own personal views and classrooms practices, however, these teachers only represent themselves. Opinions among teachers vary, and classroom practices can vary widely from teacher to teacher. Nonetheless, as each of these educators teach in the school in their district with the largest ELL student population, and are faced with the same set of challenges posed by the three policies, we believe that their views are representative of experienced teachers of ELL students throughout the state.

⁴ Mario Castro of the Language Policy Research Unit of the Educational Policy Studies Laboratory at Arizona State University provided the template used to create this figure.

Findings

For each section that follows, survey results will be presented for relevant and specific survey questions, along with extracts from the qualitative data which provide further depth and explanations to survey results. In the findings section below, “teachers” refers specifically to the 40 third-grade teachers of ELL students who participated in this survey.

Overview of Participants, Classroom Types, and ELL Passing Rates on the AIMS Test

The participants in this study are experienced teachers who work in a variety of school types (see Table 1). Of the 40 teacher participants, 31 (over 75%) have more than five years teaching experience, 11 of which have more than ten years experience. More than half (24) have been teaching at their current schools for at least the past five years. Twenty teach in an urban setting, 11 are from rural areas, and the remaining 9 teach at reservation schools.⁵ All nine reservation teachers have been teaching for at least five years; seven of the eleven rural teachers, and 15 of the 20 urban teachers, have been teaching for at least five years.

Table 1

Teacher Participants' School Type and # of Years of Teaching Experience

| School Type | 1–4 Years | 5–9 Years | 10+ Years | Total |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Urban | 5 | 12 | 3 | 20 |
| Rural | 4 | 4 | 3 | 11 |
| Reservation | 0 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>9</i> | <i>20</i> | <i>11</i> | <i>40</i> |

Not only are most of the teachers in the sample experienced, but nearly 75% (29) have earned a full endorsement to work with English Learners (ESL or Bilingual Endorsement, or both) and three have at least a provisional endorsement (see Table 2). Of the remaining eight (20%) teachers, six are currently enrolled in coursework to earn an ESL Endorsement.

⁵ One of the reservation schools is actually just outside the reservation border, but is counted here as a reservation school given the fact that it has over 90% Native American students.

Table 2
Teacher Certification for ELL Student Instruction

| Endorsement | N | % |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Full Bilingual | 5 | 13 |
| Full ESL | 22 | 55 |
| Both Full Bilingual and Full ESL | 2 | 5 |
| Provisional ESL | 3 | 8 |
| Currently Enrolled in ESL Endorsement Coursework | 6 | 15 |
| Not enrolled in ESL Coursework | 2 | 5 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>40</i> | <i>100</i> |

Current state policy resulting from Proposition 203 mandates that ELL students be placed in a structured English immersion (SEI) classroom (unless they have waivers for bilingual education), however, teachers reported that large numbers of ELLs in their schools are placed in “mainstream” classrooms and many of the teachers even identified their own classrooms as “mainstream” (see Table 3). While 19 teachers (48%) reported that most students in their schools are placed in SEI classrooms, 18 (45%) reported most are placed in mainstream classrooms. In terms of the teachers’ own classroom designations 19 (48%) described their classrooms as SEI, while 14 (35%) teachers described their current classrooms as mainstream. Five (13%) identified their classrooms as bilingual, with three describing their bilingual classrooms as dual-immersion, one as transitional bilingual, and one as a Native American language immersion classroom. The remaining two (5%) described their classrooms as “other,” one of these being a pull-out ESL classroom.

Table 3
Teacher Participants’ Classroom Designations, and Placement of ELLs (Number (%) of teachers reporting)

| Classroom Designation | Teacher Participants’ Classroom Designation | At Participants’ Schools, Most ELLs are Placed in ... |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Mainstream | 14 (35%) | 18 (45%) |
| Sheltered English Immersion | 19 (48%) | 19 (48%) |
| Bilingual | 5 (13%) | 1 (3%) |
| Other/Not Sure | 2 (5%) | 2 (5%) |

Of the five bilingual classroom teachers, two have a full Bilingual Endorsement, two have a full ESL Endorsement, and one has a provisional ESL Endorsement. Of the 33 classrooms that are designated as SEI or mainstream, a little more than 30% of the teachers in those classrooms (10) do not possess the full ESL endorsement. Two of these teachers, however, have earned at least a provisional ESL Endorsement.

Passing Rates on the AIMS Test. The average passing rates of ELL students on the Math, Reading, and Writing AIMS test from 2003 and 2004 for the ELL impacted elementary schools participating in this study are shown in Figure 2 (scores for five of the 40 schools were not available for both years). Average passing rates were calculated by combining the percentage of ELLs in each selected school deemed as “meeting” or “exceeding” state standards for each subtest.

As shown in Figure 2, the majority of ELLs (70% or higher) failed the AIMS Reading and Math tests in both 2003 and 2004. For Math, the average pass rate for ELLs declined in 2004 from

30% to 27% percent, while in Reading there was no change with only 30% of ELLs passing in both years. In Writing, however, the pass rate increased dramatically from 41% to 58%.

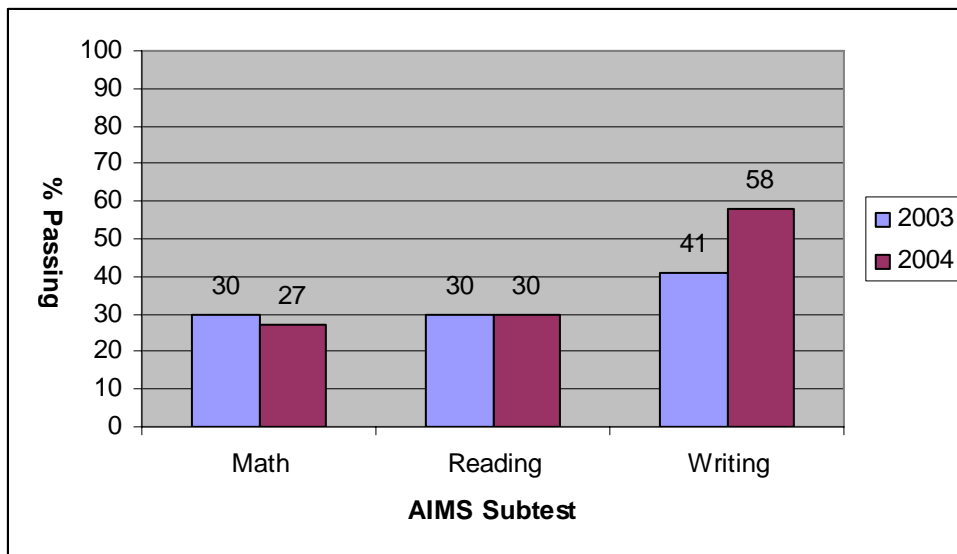


Figure 2
Comparison of AIMS ELL Average Pass Rates in Selected ELL Impacted Elementary Schools, 2003–2004 (n=35)

These scores for the selected schools in this study are comparable to statewide ELL student pass rates on the AIMS. Wright and Pu (2005) found that between 2003 and 2004 passing rates for ELLs on the AIMS declined from 34% to 32% on the math test, declined from 36% to 33% on the Reading test, and increased from 44% to 59% on the Writing test. As noted by Wright and Pu, the dramatic increase in ELL passing rates on the Writing test is highly unusual given that writing is typically the most difficult of the four traditional language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) for ELL students to master. Furthermore, they found this to be unusual as this increase was even greater than the increase in passing rates on the Writing tests for students in the “ALL” student category, and stood in stark contrast to declining pass rates on other AIMS subtest, and also to declining scores on all SAT–9 subtests during the same testing years. Wright and Pu speculated that increases in the passing rate of ELLs on the Writing test had little to do with improvement in instruction and student ability, and were likely the result of changes in the Writing test itself. The teachers in this study provided evidence that this is indeed the case.

When asked about the dramatic increases in Writing test pass rates for ELLs, teachers expressed that they too were surprised with the test results. One teacher commented, “We don’t understand, I don’t know why it is.” Another commented:

That surprised me too... I have no clue! Just from personal experience, I could not figure that out. They can’t read, how are they going to write? I don’t know. I have no clue how that happened.

Yet another teacher commented:

I don’t know, and I hope they’re not expecting us to have the same gains this year! ... Even us, we were surprised because we were struggling so much to teach the curriculum.

While some teachers did note that writing has been a major focus area—at the expense of non-tested content areas (see below)—teachers did not describe any major differences (or improvements) in their writing instruction between 2003 and 2004. A few teachers, however,

pointed out that there were changes in the 2004 AIMS Writing test. As one teacher explained, “it wasn’t as rigid as it was the year before.”

Views on Proposition 203

Teachers were nearly unanimous in their views related to learning English and the maintenance of students’ primary home languages (see Table 4). No teacher disagreed with the statement that ELL students need to learn English to succeed in this country. In addition, they did not support the view that ELLs should learn English at the expense of losing their native languages. All teachers disagreed with the statement that ELL students should abandon their home language and speak only English. There was no opposition to the idea that ELLs should be fully bilingual in both English and their home language. The majority of teachers (78%) agreed or strongly agreed that schools should help students become proficient in both English and their home language. Furthermore, there was overwhelming support for bilingual education, with 95% (all but 2 teachers) agreeing (33%) or strongly agreeing (63%) that when properly implemented, bilingual education programs are effective in helping ELLs learn English and achieve academic success. The other two teachers did not necessarily disagree with this statement, but rather, chose to remain neutral (see Table 4).

Table 4

Teacher Views on English, Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

| Statement | Agree/ Strongly Agree | | Neutral | Disagree/ Strongly Disagree | |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------|---------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| | Agree | Strongly Agree | | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| ELLs need to learn English to succeed in this country. | 95% | 3% | 5% | 0% | 0% |
| | (38) | (2) | (2) | (0) | (0) |
| ELLs should abandon their home language and speak only English | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% | 0% |
| | (0) | (0) | (0) | (40) | (0) |
| ELL students should become fully bilingual in both English and their home language | 98% | 2% | 3% | 0% | 0% |
| | (39) | (1) | (1) | (0) | (0) |
| Schools should help students become proficient in both English and their home language | 78% | 13% | 13% | 10% | 0% |
| | (31) | (5) | (5) | (4) | (0) |
| When properly implemented, bilingual education programs are effective in helping ELL students learn English and achieve academic success | 95% | 3% | 5% | 0% | 0% |
| | (38) | (4) | (4) | (0) | (0) |

Teachers’ views on Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) were more mixed (see Table 5). Only 30% agreed (23%) or strongly agreed (8%) that SEI is a better model for ELLs than bilingual education, while 40% disagreed (25%) or strongly disagreed (15%) with this view; twelve teachers (30%) chose to remain neutral. Part of this ambivalence may stem from the fact that many teachers are not even sure what SEI is, as will be discussed below. However, with regards to Proposition 203, which required the SEI approach, only 4 teachers (10%) agreed (and none strongly agreed) that Proposition 203 has resulted in more effective programs for ELL students, while 70% disagreed (40%) or strongly disagreed (30%) with this statement. Moreover, 73% of teachers felt that Proposition 203 is too restrictive in terms of approaches schools can take to help ELL students learn English.

Table 5
Teacher Views on Proposition 203 and Sheltered English Immersion

| Statement | Agree/ Strongly Agree | Neutral | Disagree/ Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Sheltered English Immersion is a better model for ELLs than bilingual education | 30% (12) | 30% (12) |
| Proposition 203 has resulted in more effective programs for ELL students | 10% (4) | 13% (5) | 70% (28) |
| Proposition 203 is too restrictive in terms of approaches schools can take to help ELL students learn English | 73% (29) | 15% (6) | 8% (3) |

In summary, the overwhelming majority of teachers agree that English is essential, that students should be fully bilingual, that schools should help them become so, that bilingual education can be an effective means to helping students learn English and achieve academic success, and that Proposition 203 is too restrictive and has resulted in less effective programs for ELL students. Support for the SEI model is very weak.

Views on High Stakes Testing

Teachers were also nearly unanimous on their views of high stakes testing with ELL students (see Table 6). No teachers were opposed to schools being held accountable for ELL student learning, but 78% disagreed (25%) or strongly disagreed (53%) that high stakes tests are appropriate for holding ELLs, their teachers, and schools accountable. Furthermore, 90% of teachers disagreed (30%) or strongly disagreed (60%) that high-stakes tests provide accurate measures of ELL students' academic achievement. Nearly all teachers questioned the fairness of giving a high-stakes test in English to students who were not yet fluent in the language, particularly those newly arrived to the United States. One teacher commented:

I just think the language on the test is very hard for ELL students to accurately show what they've learned or what they know. [It's] quite obvious why certain schools are considered performing and everything when all the students can understand all the language. When you have a student who just came from Mexico the year before or somewhere else, just learning the language is very difficult for them. I don't think that's fair.

Another teacher commented on one of his recently-arrived students, and asked, "How in the hell is this kid who just came from Russia this year going to meet the Arizona standards in third grade?" One teacher commented on how this policy is unfair to both the students and the teachers:

Like, my newcomers from Mexico, when you make them sit there for 2½ hours looking at a test that they have no idea what it even says, and then their stats are put in with the school's or my class's, or anything else, I don't think it's fair to them, or to the teacher, or to that poor kid. They don't even know what it says.

The following comment from one of the teachers illustrates how teachers are not opposed to accountability, but recognize that ELL students simply need time to learn English before being tested in that language:

Table 6
Teacher Views on High-Stakes Tests and ELLs

| Statement | Agree/ Strongly Agree | Neutral | Disagree/ Strongly Disagree |
|--|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Schools should be held accountable for ELL student learning | 90% (36) | 10% (4) |
| High stakes tests are appropriate for holding ELLs, their teachers and their schools accountable | 5% (2) | 18% (7) | 78% (31) |
| High-stakes tests provide accurate measures of ELL students' academic achievement | 5% (2) | 5% (2) | 90% (36) |

These kids have to be able to function in an ever changing society, and so we as teachers, we have to be accountable to an extent. But yet, they have to realize Rome wasn't built in a day. You can't just bring them up to like what a student at some suburban city school is going to be like. It's going to take years. You just can't get there over night.

While no teachers were opposed to accountability, they are concerned about the fairness of measuring students' progress with a single test. One teacher argued, "A one day, high-stakes test does not give a very adequate picture of any kid." Another stated:

I don't think [the state's high-stakes test] should be the only thing. To me that's like rating anyone, that's like giving you an evaluation for, say, one hour of your work for the whole year, and that counts for everything, and to me that's just not realistic. ...It's like putting all the eggs in one basket and dropping that basket.

One teacher commented, "I've had students that I know could perform way beyond what they scored on the test."

The majority of teachers believed that the scores from high-stakes tests are of little use in planning instruction for ELLs (see Table 7). While some teachers agreed that scores can be useful, one of these teachers clarified what she meant by "useful": "It's only productive in planning for the lessons that you need to teach to take the AIMS test, it doesn't really help you plan to meet the standards." However, teachers are greatly concerned about the impact of high-stakes tests on their instruction for ELL students: 80% percent agreed/strongly agreed that the focus on high-stakes testing is driving instruction for ELL students which is inappropriate; 95% agreed/strongly agreed that teachers are under pressure to teach to the test, and 98% agreed/strongly agreed that teachers are under pressure to raise test scores for ELL students. Indeed, 88% of teachers felt that the amount of time teachers are expected to spend on testing and test-preparation is too much and inappropriate.

Table 7

Teacher's Views on Impact of High-Stakes Tests on ELL Student Instruction

| Statement | Agree/ Strongly Agree | Neutral | Disagree/ Strongly Disagree |
|---|--|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Scores from high-stakes tests are useful for planning instruction for ELLs | 35% (14) | 10% (4) |
| Teachers are under pressure to “teach to the test” | 95% (38) | 3% (1) | 3% (1) |
| Teachers are under pressure to raise test scores for ELL students | 98% (39) | 0% (0) | 3% (1) |
| The amount of time teachers are expected to spend on testing and test-preparation is too much | 88% (35) | 5% (2) | 8% (3) |
| The focus on high-stakes tests is driving instruction for ELL students which is inappropriate | 80% (32) | 10% (4) | 10% (4) |

When asked to reflect on their own classrooms, only 38% of the teachers felt high-stakes tests have increased the quality of teaching and learning in their classroom, only 20% felt the high-stakes tests have helped them become a more effective teacher of ELL students, and only two teachers (5%) felt these tests have helped them focus on the linguistic and cultural needs of the ELL students (see Table 8). Regardless, 95% reported personally feeling some pressure (35%) or strong pressure (60%) to teach to the test.

Table 8

Impact of High-Stakes Tests on Teaching Effectiveness in Teacher's own Classrooms

| Statement | Agree/ Strongly Agree | Neutral | Disagree/ Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| | High Stakes Tests have increased the quality of teaching and learning in your classroom | 38% (15) | 10% (4) |
| High stakes tests have helped you become a more effective teacher of ELL students | 20% (8) | 5% (2) | 75% (30) |
| High Stakes Tests have helped you focus on the linguistic and cultural needs of your ELL students | 5% (2) | 3% (1) | 93% (37) |

One teacher who felt the test had helped her become a better teacher explained, “The reason why I agree is because it has helped me to see what it is they are going to be taking on that test.” Most teachers, however, did not view narrow test-preparation instruction as good teaching. One teacher lamented:

It has become so geared to testing, and so regimented, and also compartmentalized... so it feels artificial, and it feels contrived in the classroom, more than it ever has, and it also has really taken the creative edge out.

Even when test scores go up, teachers do not necessarily feel they are better teachers. One teacher commented:

The test scores have gone up, but I still don't feel like I'm being as good of a teacher as I could be if the test scores weren't there. I'm teaching them what they

need to know for the test. But I don't feel like I'm teaching them what they really need to know.

Teachers expressed concern about how the test is diverting attention away from the real needs of ELL students. One teacher observed, "All you are geared towards is getting them so that they can be successful on the test, and not to where you are sensitive to their language or culture."

In terms of views on the inclusion of ELLs in high-stakes tests, 85% of the teachers are opposed to the current policy which requires ELLs to take the state test, regardless of how long they have been in the United States. Half of the teachers felt ELLs should simply be excluded until they become fluent in English, 70% feel that ELLs should be excluded from the tests for the first three years they are enrolled in school, and 93% feel ELLs should at least be provided with accommodations when taking the tests. Furthermore, 98% (all but 1) of the teachers believe that the state should use alternative assessments for ELLs until the students become fluent in English.

Table 9

Teacher Views on the Inclusion of ELLs in High-Stakes Tests⁶

| Statement | Support | Oppose |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Require all ELLs to take the test, regardless of how long they have been in the U.S | 15% (6) | 85% (34) |
| Provide accommodations for ELLs when taking the tests | 93% (37) | 5% (2) |
| Exclude ELLs from high-stakes tests for the first three years they are enrolled in school | 70% (28) | 25% (10) |
| Exclude ELLs until they become fluent in English | 50% (20) | 38% (15) |
| Use alternative assessments for ELLs until they are fluent in English | 98% (39) | 3% (1) |

In summary, no teachers are opposed to accountability for ELLs, neither are teachers opposed to testing of any kind. However, the overwhelming majority feel that the high-stakes tests in use are inappropriate for ELLs, do not provide accurate measures of ELL achievement, are of little use in planning instruction for ELLs students, and that the pressure to teach to the test and raise ELL test scores is taking up too much valuable instruction time, driving instruction for ELLs which is inappropriate, diverting attention away from the real needs of ELLs, and thus is not helping improve the quality of teaching and learning in their classrooms nor helping teachers to become more effective teachers for ELL students. The overwhelming majority of teachers see the need for different policies which (a) give ELL students time to learn English before taking the state test in English, (b) which provide ELLs with appropriate accommodations, and/or (c) which provide an alternative assessment that ELLs can take until they attain a level of English proficiency sufficient for taking the regular state test in English.

⁶ Some do not add up to 100% as some teachers responded "Don't know" or "Not sure."

Table 10

Type of Program the Majority of ELL Students were Placed in at Participants' Schools Before and After Proposition 203

| Statement | Before Proposition 203 | After Proposition 203 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mainstream | 40% (16) | 45% (18) |
| Sheltered English Immersion | 28% (11) | 48% (19) |
| Bilingual | 23% (9) | 3% (1) |
| Other/Don't know | 10% (4) | 5% (2) |

Impact of Proposition 203 on School Instructional Programs

Bilingual Education Programs. With the passage of Proposition 203, the teachers provided insight into the ways in which their instructional programs were affected. In regards to bilingual education, 68% (27) of the teachers reported that their schools had bilingual programs in place prior to Proposition 203.⁷ However, even in these schools, bilingual programs were often only in a few classrooms (see Table 10). Over 77% of the teachers reported that even prior to Proposition 203, the majority of ELL students in their schools were placed in non-bilingual classrooms. However, Proposition 203 did have a major impact on the small number of bilingual classrooms in the 27 schools which had them (see Table 11); 67% (18) of these schools completely eliminated their bilingual programs, while 19% (5) made substantial reductions in the number (and type) of students placed in bilingual classrooms.⁸ Two teachers reported that few changes were made to their schools' bilingual program, however further questioning revealed that one of these schools did not actually have any bilingual classrooms. One of the reservation teachers even claimed that her school's Navajo Immersion Program had expanded since the passage Proposition 203, however, she later acknowledged there is little emphasis on teaching Navajo right now in her school due to pressure to teach to the test. Thus, despite teachers' responses to survey items, only one school with a bilingual program appears to have been relatively unaffected by Proposition 203. However, in this case, the school's bilingual program has always been quite small, and the teacher acknowledged it has been a challenge to for parents to obtain the waivers necessary to keep the program going.

⁷ Prior to Proposition 203, only about 30% of ELLs in Arizona were in bilingual classrooms. The high percentage of schools that had bilingual programs in this study's sample is indicative of this study's exclusive focus on those elementary schools with the largest ELL populations in their respective districts, thus confirming the expectation that these schools likely experienced the greatest impact of changes in state policy.

⁸ Changes to school bilingual programs did not necessarily happen immediately following the passage of Proposition 203. Many schools that were able to continue their programs through the waiver provisions of the law nonetheless had to make further changes (or complete elimination) following new waiver guidelines issued soon after the election of the current Superintendent of Public Instruction. For details see: Wright (2005c).

Table 11

Impact of Proposition 203 on Bilingual and ESL Pull-Out Programs in Participants' Schools

| Type of program | Schools before Proposition 203 | Schools after Proposition 203 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Bilingual Programs | 68% (27) | 10% (4) |
| Pull-out ESL Programs | 38% (15) | 15% (6) |

Former bilingual teachers reported the change from bilingual education to SEI was not an easy one for themselves or their students (see also Combs, Evans, Fletcher, Parra, & Jiménez, 2005). One teacher had half his class pulled out after the first month of school year:

I had 30 kids and all of a sudden, we were told that that this was going to change... So eventually, I had 30 kids for the first month, and then they all left, and they got distributed to other teachers, and I ended up having like, I forget how many kids, but it was under 15 I think. It was really harmful to the kids to get used to me for the first month and then have to move classrooms.

Another teacher reported that emotions began running high for herself and her students even during the Proposition 203 campaign:

It was an emotional roller coaster since that thing [Proposition 203] got on the ballot. All the kids knew what was happening [and] that was very, very hard on them. And then they thought that the moment that proposition went through like the next day they were going to be pulled away from me. I had kids crying the day of election, I had kids crying the next day because they thought they were going to be pulled out. I had parents crying as well. It was just a very emotional time. I cried all the time with them. So that, that was really hard.

Her school, however, attempted to continue the bilingual programs through the waiver provisions of the law. But according to the law, students first had to spend 30 days in SEI before a waiver could be granted for bilingual education. This also proved to be emotionally challenging for teachers and their students, and ultimately led to the decision to end the program:

Well, that was a horrifying experience, the parents coming with the kids saying, "Oh, I don't want them to go to that teacher. I want them with you, I want them with the other bilingual kids." And I said, "We can't. They've got to go for 30 days." And they [the students] were just screaming and crying and being pulled to the [SEI] classrooms. So I would literally go in there, promising them that they would come back in 30 days. The kids were stressed and stuff. ... But that was really hard, It was really really hard on the kids. In kindergarten, it was horrible because the kindergarten kids, after 30 days, having to switch to another teacher, the crying started all over again, and that was even harder. My 3rd graders, the only hope they had was coming to me, but then that's also when I heard that a lot of the kids were not coming to school. The other teachers were going, "your kids are not coming to school," and I call the parents and they go, "well they don't want to go to Ms. (so-and-so), they're throwing up, they're sick, they can't sleep, they got headaches," all that kind of stuff was going on. So that was with the 3rd graders. The kindergarteners were screaming and yelling and not settling down any faster than they should, and then when that 30 days came, switch over, it was

another disaster down in kindergarten. So, when we were done with that ... the kindergarten teacher said, “I can’t do this anymore. I can’t. It’s too stressful emotionally, it’s stressful on the kids, and I just, I just hate this. I just think if this is the way that it has to be done, then I’d rather not do it.” So we all supported her and we just abandoned it.

Out of the 40 teachers, only five reported their own classrooms to currently be officially designated as “bilingual,” and an additional four teachers reported that their schools continue to offer bilingual programs. Nonetheless, even in these nine schools, only a small number of classrooms were designated as bilingual; out of a total of 50 third-grade classrooms in these nine schools, only 14 are bilingual, the rest being designated as Mainstream (15) or SEI (21). Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between official designations and actual practice. Deeper probing of teachers during open-ended questioning at the conclusion of the survey revealed that many of these classrooms are bilingual in name only. One teacher whose classroom was the sole “dual language” classroom in the entire school, reported that mid-year he had to abandon the bilingual model and switch to all-English instruction—despite the fact that parents had obtained waivers—due to his school’s adoption of a scripted English-only language arts program and the pressure to prepare students for high-stakes tests in English:

We have been [labeled as] underperforming, and my new principal who just came in brought in SRA Direct Instruction, which takes an hour and a half of the day, and that cuts into my writing, my time for writing and Scholastic, and all the other things, and that was when I was going to teach Spanish. So at this point, I am not teaching any Spanish, even though the kids [obtained] the waivers... It's just, with the pressure we have, with the high-stakes testing and the time, there just isn't time for me to teach the Spanish.

Another teacher who claimed her school had bilingual programs was a fairly new teacher (in her 2nd year), and deeper questioning revealed that she misunderstood the distinction between *bilingual* programs and English-only programs which *serve* bilingual students.

Three of the teachers reporting their schools had bilingual programs were on Indian Reservations. Only one of these schools had an official Navajo Immersion Program, but the teacher reported that the program had never really been implemented effectively, and now, due to pressure to improve test scores and get out from under their Underperforming label, there is little focus on teaching Navajo. In the other two reservation schools, the “bilingual” program consists of a specialist who provides short language lessons to all classrooms in the school on a rotating basis. In one of these schools, a Navajo language teacher comes into each classroom for 45 minutes a day, 4 days a week. In the other school, an Apache language teacher provides 45-minute lessons daily, but each classroom only receives this instruction for 6 weeks out of the entire school year. Given the short amount of instruction in Navajo or Apache, and the fact that, as teachers reported, few (if any) of the students could even speak their “native” language, these programs do not constitute “bilingual education” as it is thought of in the traditional sense (i.e., providing extensive literacy and content-area instruction in the students’ first language).

Indeed, two other reservation teachers reported that their schools had similar Native American language programs, but they did not classify these as “bilingual education” programs. In one of these schools, a Navajo language teacher provides 30 minutes of daily instruction. The teacher reported that it is supposed to 45 minutes, and doubted the program’s effectiveness given the short amount of instructional time and the fact that students’ had little to no proficiency in Navajo. In the other school, the teacher reported that the “Apache language teacher” was in name only; the “teacher” was actually a paraprofessional with no training and no curriculum, and spent most of the time having students color.

Thus, while the raw survey data show nine schools have continued to offer bilingual education since the passage of Proposition 203, in reality, only four of these schools offer bilingual education programs in the traditional sense, with three offering “dual language” programs and one offering a “transitional” program. However, deeper questioning revealed that even these programs differ from bilingual education in the traditional sense. In one school, for example, there are no bilingual programs in K–3, and there is only one bilingual classroom each in 4th and 5th grade. In another school, there are no bilingual classes in kindergarten, and all students in the bilingual classrooms in grades 1–3 had to score as fluent in English on an English-language proficiency test. Only the 4th and 5th grade bilingual classrooms contain true ELL students (see Combs, Evans, Fletcher, Parra, & Jiménez, 2005 for a description of an elementary school with a similar type of bilingual program).

The irony of offering K–3 bilingual classes for students who were already proficient in English while newly arrived students were being denied access to the bilingual programs which were designed to help them, was commented upon by some of the teachers. One teacher said:

The ones that really need it the most, I mean they both need it, but the ones that come in from Mexico and do not understand English at all, are put into this classroom where the teacher is talking to them only in English, and the teacher cannot help them at all, so they go home frustrated. It’s hard for them to learn anything, and so basically, they’re learning concepts that are primary concepts, kinder [kindergarten] concepts, when they can be advancing so much faster if they were put into a bilingual classroom.

Another commented:

The ones who really need this [bilingual education] are the kindergartners and first-graders that come in and are not learning anything, because they’re trying to learn English as quickly as possible.

This issue caused at least one school to abandon its bilingual program. The teacher from this school reported that they decided to end the program this year as they did not feel it was fair that the trained bilingual teachers were teaching in bilingual programs where students were already proficient in English, while the lower ELL students were struggling in SEI classrooms with teachers who could not communicate with them or their parents, and had little training or experience in working with ELL students. This teacher stated, “As a team we decided that it would be better for us to have the bilingual teachers in a SEI class because we have the strategies to help the kids.” In addition, the school became a Reading First school, with strict mandates in terms of the (English-only) curriculum and number of minutes of instruction:

It’s because we have the Reading First grant, and we have to be doing our reading core program and writing in English, and it takes two and a half to three hours a day. We couldn’t find the time to do anymore teaching reading in Spanish, in their native language.

One school with several bilingual classrooms fears that the number will decrease dramatically the following school year due to the fact that the state adopted a new English language proficiency test, and fewer students under the age of 10 will reach the proficiency level needed to qualify for a waiver. Even now, however, the amount of native language instruction is limited to two days a week, and even on “Spanish” days, there is instruction in English due to the requirements of the school’s English language arts program.

Only two schools reported that K–3 bilingual programs continue to serve ELL students (who obtained waivers), but even in these schools, the bilingual classrooms are less than half the number of the English-only classrooms, and the amount of native language instruction is limited. For example, one teacher who described her classroom as a 50/50 dual language classroom (i.e.,

50% of instruction in Spanish, 50% in English), later acknowledged that it is more like 70% English and 30% Spanish, given the pressure to prepare students for the high-stakes tests in English.

In summary, out of the 40 schools, only 27 reported having bilingual education programs prior to Proposition 203. Despite raw survey data showing that nine schools currently offer “bilingual education,” in reality, only four of these schools continue to offer bilingual education programs in the traditional sense of providing substantial literacy and content-area instruction in the students’ native language (see Table 11). And even in these classrooms, most are not serving ELL students with low levels of English proficiency (i.e., the ones for whom bilingual education was intended), and the amount of actual classroom time for native language instruction is limited due to mandated English language arts curriculum and the pressure to prepare students for English-only high-stakes exams.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Instruction. While most people understood Proposition 203’s restrictions on bilingual education, there has been a great deal of confusion over the law’s impact on ESL programs, particularly pull-out ESL. In this study’s sample, only 15 (38%) teachers reported that their schools had an ESL Pull-out program prior to Proposition 203 and only six teachers (15%) report that their school currently has a pull-out program (see Table 11). In many of these schools, only newly arrived ELLs with the lowest levels of English proficiency are pulled out for ESL instruction. Some teachers reported that their schools ended their pull-out ESL programs under the belief that these programs were in violation of Proposition 203. Other schools began their pull-out ESL programs after the passage of Proposition 203. One teacher reported her school ended its program after the proposition passed, only to start it up again a year later: “They [the administrators] went back to what we were doing before. They said, “Oh, we were wrong. Now we can pull them out.”

In the absence of pull-out programs, it becomes incumbent upon ELL students’ teachers to provide direct ESL instruction within their own classrooms. Indeed, having a trained classroom teacher with an ESL endorsement providing the ESL instruction in their own classroom is viewed as a much better model than pull-out, as these teachers can focus their ESL instruction to complement other content area instruction, and as the ELL students do not miss out on classroom instruction if they are pulled out. However, this model is effective only if teachers are properly trained and actually make time in their schedule to provide daily ESL instruction for the ELL students.

Survey data reveal that 50% of the teachers do not provide any ESL instruction whatsoever. An additional 20% claim that while they do not provide direct ESL instruction, they essentially teach ESL “all day.” This view and claim represents a significant misunderstanding of the difference between ESL and sheltered content area instruction (Hughes, 2005). Only seven teachers (18%) reported that they have a regularly scheduled time for direct ESL instruction, and only five teachers (13%) indicated their own students (and typically only their lowest newly-arrived ELLs) get pulled out for ESL instruction. Thus, in 83% of these teachers’ classrooms, ELL students are not receiving any ESL instruction (see Table 12).

The lack of ESL instruction is also likely due to the fact that, despite the push for teachers to complete an ESL endorsement, there is little to no school or district support for classroom-based ESL instruction. Over 67% teachers reported that their school has not adopted an ESL curriculum program or purchased instructional materials for ESL instruction (see Table 12). One frustrated teacher stated, “Our school is pretty much anti-ESL, if you ask me.” Even for the 13 teachers who did have some ESL materials in their classrooms, often these were limited supplemental materials which come with literacy programs, rather than comprehensive stand-alone ESL curricular programs. One teacher expressed her dismay that even though her school’s adopted literacy series comes with supplemental ESL materials, the school decided not to purchase them.

Table 12

Classroom-based ESL Instruction and Materials in Participants' Classrooms

| Classroom strategy | Yes | No |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| ESL instruction | 18% (7) | 83% (33) |
| ESL curricular materials | 33% (13) | 68% (27) |

One teacher commented on the irony that many schools and districts have been pushing (or requiring) teachers to earn an ESL Endorsement, yet there is no emphasis on actually teaching ESL in the classroom:

This is real weird. We have an endorsement. People are saying, “you’ve got to have your ESL endorsement,” but nothing is said that you need to teach 15 minutes of ESL. Nothing! So, you know, that’s funny. I mean, they’re all saying, “Get it done! Everybody’s got to get an ESL endorsement!” But, there’s nothing anywhere that says it is the teacher’s responsibility to teach at least 15 minutes or 20 minutes of ESL everyday. None!

Another teacher commented about the great strategies for ESL instruction she is learning in her ESL Endorsement courses, but laments that there is no support in her school to implement them:

I’m in the ESL [Endorsement] program right now, and like, all the strategies and everything they teach us to do, we’re really not allowed to do at our school. It’s looked down upon. So, everything I’m learning are great strategies for ELLs, and I would love to do some of the things in my classroom, but I can’t.

In summary, few pull-out ESL programs existed prior to Proposition 203, and even fewer exist today, largely out of confusion over whether such programs are allowed under the new law. Despite the fact that many districts and schools have pushed teachers (and provided incentives) to complete an ESL endorsement, there is little support for actual ESL instruction, as evidenced by the lack of ESL curricular program adoptions and the lack of purchases of supplementary ESL materials. Thus, the vast majority of ELL students represented by the sample of teachers in this study are receiving little to no ESL instruction in either pull-out programs, or within their own classrooms.

Primary Language Support. One other area of major confusion that has arisen since the passage of Proposition 203 is whether or not teachers and other staff members are permitted to make any use of students’ home languages in the classroom, and even whether or not students themselves are allowed to speak their native language while at school. The use of students’ languages in non-bilingual classrooms is typically referred to as primary language support, that is, while instruction is in English, the primary language(s) is used to provide explanations and assistance, to preview or review key concepts, and other strategies which help make the English language content instruction more comprehensible for ELLs. Indeed, the literature on sheltered English instruction describes ample primary language support as an important component of this model (Baker & de Kanter, 1981; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Peregoy & Boyle, 2004; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005b).

Nevertheless, many have interpreted Proposition 203 as banning all use of students’ native language within SEI classrooms and/or the entire school. This view represents a significant misunderstanding. Proposition 203 only addresses the narrow issue of language of instruction used by SEI (or mainstream) classroom teachers within their own classrooms. The law does not address

the language used by students in the classroom, nor language use anywhere outside of the classroom. Even within SEI classrooms, the law clearly states that while all instruction must be in English, “teachers may use a minimal amount of the child’s native language when necessary” (A.R.S. §15–751). In addition, bilingual programs in which literacy and content instruction are delivered in both English and the students’ native language(s) are possible—and technically required if certain conditions are met—through the waiver provisions of Proposition 203. Thus, under the new law, primary language support is allowed in SEI classrooms, native language instruction is allowed in bilingual classrooms (through waivers), and there are no restrictions on students themselves in terms of speaking their native language(s) in their classrooms and schools.

Despite these allowances, current state education leaders and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) have played a role in perpetuating the view that Proposition 203 outlaws all use of students’ native languages at school. For example, a couple of participants in this study noted that in visits to their schools by Proposition 203 Monitors from the ADE, these officials stressed that Arizona is now an “English-only state.”⁹ These monitors personally visit classrooms to ensure that all instruction and materials in SEI (and/or Mainstream classrooms) are in English, and they even pay attention to ensure that students are speaking English to their teachers and to each other (Ruelas, 2003; Wright, 2005c). As another example, when a teacher in Scottsdale was fired amidst allegations that she hit students for speaking Spanish in the classroom, Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne commented “it is correct for a teacher to insist that students speak only English in class,” but then quickly added “it is wrong to hit them” (Ryman & Madrid, 2004). As another example, Associate Superintendent Margaret Garcia Dugan (and local chairperson of the Proposition 203 campaign) made public comments suggesting that a school’s annual Spanish spelling bee was in violation of Proposition 203 (Wingett, 2004), when in-fact the spelling bee was well within the confines of the law (Kossan, 2004). As a final example, ADE sponsored statewide seminars on SEI have been utilized to stress English-only classroom environments (Wright, 2005c).

Despite the current confusion and misrepresentation of the requirements of the law, among the surveyed teachers, 78% (31) reported that in their schools, teachers and paraprofessionals are allowed to speak to ELLs in their native language to provide primary language support (i.e., explanations or assistance). Furthermore, 90% (36) reported that ELL students are allowed to speak to their teachers, paraprofessionals, and/or to each other in their native language. Nonetheless, in many schools, restrictions on primary language support are greater than that required by state law. Furthermore, deeper probing of teachers through the open-ended questions revealed that restrictions on the use of students’ primary languages are much greater than the survey results above would suggest, and misunderstandings regarding what the law does and does not allow abound.

Many teachers reported being told directly by school or district-level administrators that Spanish was not allowed at all in the classrooms, as the following quotes from different teachers illustrate:

They instruct us [that] we cannot help them in Spanish at all.

Everyone was told that you have to teach in English.

⁹ The insistence of ADE officials that Arizona is an “English-only” state is completely erroneous. In 1988, Proposition 106 was passed by Arizona voters which attempted to declare English as the official language of Arizona, and was designed to limit government services in languages other than English. The law was struck down by the Arizona Supreme Court. More recently, the Arizona state legislature attempted to pass a similar bill (SB 1167), but it was vetoed by the Governor in May of 2005.

We were basically told that we're not allowed to use the [Spanish] language to instruct the children.

They told us that in the classroom, we are supposed to only speak English to our students.

I was told that not to speak any Spanish.

No Spanish at all in the classroom, speaking to the students, you just can't do it.

We are told not to speak it [Spanish] in class. When we have meetings, I've just been told to speak English to the students and let them speak English to each other and don't speak Spanish to them so they can learn.

We aren't supposed to teach students things in Spanish. We're not supposed to talk to them in Spanish.

Other teachers were not told this directly, but commented that it is just a given as the following two teachers indicate:

We haven't been specifically told nothing can be Spanish, but it's pretty well known that you're not supposed to.

I've never ever asked. I've always heard you can't, you're not allowed to by other people, but I've never asked administration. I just know that it's the law that we don't.

Teachers' comments revealed that in many schools there is a climate of fear when it comes to primary language support:

I think some teachers are scared, even if they speak Spanish, they are scared of using it.

I think there's much more of a tendency to shy away from [it].

I've heard is that if you do [speak to students in their native language], you're going to get fired, you know, you could lose your teacher's certificate and things like that.

These issues are very, are very explosive and very dangerous issues to talk about because we can lose our licenses.

In the most extreme case, one teacher reported that in his school, students are sent to the office for speaking Spanish in class, and in some cases, suspended:

I know so many children that get in trouble, that get sent to the office because they were talking in Spanish to their classmates. ... So I talked to [one] student, I said "Man, what happened?" "Oh, I didn't understand the teacher. I didn't understand the question in English, so I was asking so and so, and I asked in Spanish, and I got in trouble for speaking Spanish." I know children [who] have gotten suspended [for speaking Spanish].

In other schools however, teachers were given instructions regarding the use of primary language support which appears to be more consistent with state law. However, as these teachers' comments illustrate, they have been instructed that use of the primary language should be very brief and kept to a bare minimum:

If they don't understand and the teacher just feels that she can't get it across through modeling or sheltering, then she can just explain it and move on.

You can clarify one on one with the child, but no instructions can be done in the primary language.

Even on a one-on-one basis, it's just, I keep it really quiet between us.

We were told that we can explain, we can clarify directions and things like this. But we cannot sit down with a child and give strictly Spanish instruction to a kid in order for them to learn. We were told that.

We can do so for clarifications, but we were told only as "a last resort."

This is what they tell us. If they're going to ask you a question, it has to be related to what you're teaching at the moment. You answer it in Spanish, and continue the instruction in English.

I let the students know, that during instruction they can answer in Spanish but I will answer in English

One teacher explained that she cannot speak Spanish to a student during the school day, but "maybe after school, if you're tutoring somebody after school; with the parent's permission you can use their native language." Interestingly, a couple of teachers from very restrictive school environments reported that the only time they are allowed to use Spanish is to translate instructions when administering the AIMS test.

While teachers received mixed messages about the oral use of native languages, instructions and guidance regarding native language books and other materials in the classroom and the school library also varied greatly across the schools. Many teachers were told they had to completely remove Spanish-language books and materials from their classroom:

I had some Spanish materials, but I was told that was not appropriate.

I had some Spanish books on my bookshelf, and I did pull them. So, they're not allowed.

Everyone was told that you have to get rid of all your [Spanish language] books.

We were supposed to take all of our Spanish books out of our classroom. We weren't even allowed to let them read in Spanish.

If I put something up, another teacher will say "you're not allowed to have that poster because there is Spanish on it."

One former bilingual teacher reported that two other teachers were sent to her classroom when she was not in to remove all of the Spanish language books. Many of the confiscated books were purchased with her own money. Only when she protested to the administration were her materials returned.

In other schools, teachers have been told that some native language books and/or materials are okay, or at least they have not been specifically told they are not allowed. For example, some teachers have been told that they are allowed to have Spanish on the classroom walls; others say it is okay for students to self-select Spanish-language books during silent reading time. One teacher reported that he can only have Spanish-language books in his classroom only if the book is bilingual, that is, it has both English and the Spanish translation on the same page. One teacher said the policy at her school is "We can have Spanish up on the walls, but we can't have Spanish books." Another teacher reported the policy at his school is the exact opposite: "We can't have stuff on the walls. ... [but] I've never been really told I couldn't have ... Spanish books in there."

There is also inconsistency in school policies related to native language materials in the school library. One teacher reported, "the librarian told me that she was supposed to take all the Spanish books out of the library, and she had to do so because of Prop. 203." Other school libraries,

however, have maintained their Spanish-language book collections. One teacher expressed her confusion and frustration by her school's policy which allowed Spanish-language books in the library but not in the classroom:

They have Spanish books in the library. Okay, they are allowed to check the Spanish books out, but as soon as they walk into your classroom, they have to put them in the backpacks, and they are not allowed to read them in class. I had some Spanish books on my bookshelf, and I did pull them. So, they're not allowed. But they provide them in the library! So, that's what I don't understand. Its kind of contradictory, don't you think?"

Another teacher commented that even though her school library has Spanish materials available, "many teachers have forbid the children to even take out Spanish books." Other teachers commented that while they provide primary language support in their own classrooms, most teachers in their schools are more restrictive:

I do hear it as I'm walking down the hall and stuff, teachers that would say, "In English!" And the kids have to figure out how to say it in English. It's very degrading.

A lot of teachers do believe that we should only talk to them in English.

I hear teachers saying, "I do not want them speaking Spanish in class, I tell them they are not allowed to speak Spanish."

Many teachers, particularly those in the more restrictive schools, report that they nonetheless provide primary language support as it is needed. These teachers have adopted a somewhat defiant attitude as though they feel they are doing something wrong. However, the strategies they described appear to be within the confines of the law:

I still have some [Spanish language books]. They can come in and do what they've got to do to me. ... If they say anything, I'm just going to plead ignorant basically. "I don't know how they got there. They're not mine."

I don't know the language [Spanish] completely, but I do use it whenever it's necessary. Whatever I could do to help them make a connection, I'm going to do it, and I don't care.

Well, if it's going to get me in trouble, I don't care. My goal is for them is to reach a certain level of expertise, whether they learn it in their own language or if they're comfortable doing it in English, it really doesn't matter to me, as long as they learn what I want them to learn. I'm not afraid of getting into trouble. ... As a Spanish teacher, how can you stand there and explain something in English and have them look at you like "please tell me," you know 'explain to me' and [not say anything?] ... It hurts me so much because, you know, if a child cannot understand, he's trying to grasp a concept and is unable to, and is looking for a way to understand, and the only way he or she can understand is by speaking the language, well, what is wrong with that?

Another teacher commented that she doesn't get in trouble for providing primary language use because "nobody comes into my room." This same teacher, even though she had been explicitly instructed not to speak Spanish in the classrooms, related the following telling experience:

Even though we've heard it from the principal, when she takes over my class, like for an emergency I have, or for a phone call or whatever, and I go back in, she's translating!

Many teachers described several strategies they use to provide primary language support. Some of these have already been mentioned above: providing simple explanations, giving one-on-one assistance, allowing students to ask questions or answer questions in Spanish, allowing students

to check out Spanish-language books from classroom or school libraries, and allowing students to self-select Spanish language books during silent reading time. Other teachers described being able to use strategies like preview-review (i.e., previewing and reviewing in Spanish a lesson taught or a book read in English), and allowing students to use Spanish to help with their writing in English. One teacher described her use of these strategies:

We can do preview-review, we can do any bilingual strategies that we know, and we can use, basic things for them to understand the directions and what they're supposed to be doing and how to guide them. And, I can tell them to write, like the story, they can write simple sentences in Spanish and they will work together, and to write them in English.

Another teacher described how these strategies help her students to improve their writing in English:

If I'm doing direct instruction, I won't speak Spanish but if they're welcome to speak Spanish to me, [or] write their papers in Spanish ... In fact, when they're writing their paper, they say, "how do you say this in Spanish?" And I'll tell them, "tell me your story in Spanish," then I'll give it to them in English. I always tell them for me, it was easier to think in my story in Spanish first, because they're trying to think of their story in English where they don't have the vocabulary... If they think of their story first in Spanish and then have somebody help them, they'll get more on their paper. That's kind of the stuff that I do.

One strategy several teachers mentioned using to provide primary language support is allowing students with some proficiency in English to translate instructions and provide other primary-language assistance for newly arrived students with little to no English language proficiency:

In my class, I let them converse if they are trying to get the instructions, finding out what they are doing, but otherwise, we try to discourage it.

The other children, if they understand, they can give assistance in the other language, they can talk together in Spanish.

I always have a bilingual person in the table actually, I have them in paired, bilingual, you know, on the tables and I'll have the kids explain it.

If he [a newcomer student] doesn't understand, I have couple [of students], I call them his partners, if he needs help, he can ask them too.

In the classroom, I try to make them speak only in English, except when they work with those three newcomers.

Only a few teachers said they do not allow students to speak to each in class in their native language. Only one expressed her desire to see the entire school made English-only. She was clearly alone in her opinion. Many teachers commented that students speak to each other in Spanish "all the time," and as one teacher explained, "you can't stop it, it's their first language." While use of the native language(s) was restricted in the classrooms, some teachers reported that students have "free liberty" to speak their native language at recess on the playground, in the cafeteria, or even at music or PE. One teacher stressed the importance of using Spanish with her children outside the classroom, especially given the fact that she is not allowed to use it in the classroom: "So, when I'm not instructing, like I'm standing outside, I can speak Spanish to the kids. And so the kids still have the connection with me."

For the Indian Reservation schools, the issue of primary language support is much different. Reservation teachers did not mention any strict English-only classroom rules. In fact, many reported little concern with the restrictions of Proposition 203 on native language use. Only one teacher reported restrictions on the use of Navajo during her 90-minute language arts block, simply because

they were using a scripted reading program in conjunction with their Reading First grant. Other than that, she was free to speak Navajo with her students.

The issue for the Reservation schools was not *if* they were allowed to use the students' native languages, but whether it would do any good. Every Reservation school teacher reported that few if any of their Native American students could actually speak their tribal languages (see Benally & Viri, 2005). As a teacher from an Apache Reservation reported:

Yes they're allowed [to speak to each other in Apache], but sadly, they've lost the language. ... When I first came [20 years ago] I heard only Apache in the classroom. Now I never hear Apache and even the paraprofessionals, they do not interact with the children in Apache because the children no longer speak Apache.

In summary, there is great confusion about what Proposition 203 does and does not allow with regards to primary language support in SEI/Mainstream classrooms, and practices vary widely from school to school. As one teacher observed, "Prop. 203 was left a lot to interpretation of your administrator and your district." Indeed, many administrators issued school policies which are even more restrictive than Proposition 203 itself, and state education leaders have also contributed to the false notion that state law forbids all use of students' native language(s). Even in those schools where primary language support is allowed, teachers are instructed to keep it to a bare minimum, only a few teachers make use of it, and many teachers feel pressure not to by administrators and other teachers in their school. Others feel their use of primary language support is an act of defiance, and some described a real climate of fear in their schools when it comes to providing this type of assistance to their students who need it. In many of these schools, students are receiving a clear message about the value of their language (and culture) in school. As one teacher observed: "We talk about [how] we should honor their culture, honor their language. Yeah, but that's at home. Don't do it here. And that's a message that they're getting."

Impact of High-Stakes Testing on Content Areas and Instructional Practices

Teachers were asked to reflect on changes in the amount of their instructional time in the content areas as a result of high stakes testing and the pressure to raise test scores. Teachers reported increases in the amount of instruction time for content areas which are on the high-stakes tests, and decreases in the non-tested content areas (see Table 13). For Reading, 95% reported some or major increase in the amount of instructional time, and none reported decreases. At least 11 of the teachers were in schools which received a federal Reading First grant, thus, in these schools, there is a major focus on Reading. For both Writing and Math, 80% reported some or major increase in the amount of instructional time. Those few teachers who reported some decrease in Writing instruction (10%) or Math instruction (5%) noted that these slight decreases were due to the heavy emphasis on Reading.

Of the non-tested areas, Science was the most severely affected, with 75% of teachers reporting some or major decrease in the amount of instruction (see Table 13). Social Studies was nearly as affected, with 73% reporting some or major decrease. Art, Music, and PE were less affected, due largely in part because in Arizona these subjects are frequently taught by specialists at least once a week. Nevertheless, 40% reported some or major decreases in Art instruction, 38% reported some decrease or major decreases in Music instruction, and 25% reported some or major decreases in amount of PE instruction. In contrast, no teachers reported increases in Art instruction, and only 3% and 5% reported any increases in Music or PE instruction respectively.

Table 13

Impact of High-Stakes Testing on Content Areas

| Content Area | Some/Major Increase | No Change | Some/Major Decrease |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Reading | 95% (36) | 5% (2) | 0% (0) |
| Writing | 80% (32) | 10% (4) | 10% (4) |
| Math | 80% (32) | 15% (6) | 5% (2) |
| Science | 10% (4) | 15% (6) | 75% (30) |
| Social Studies | 8% (3) | 20% (8) | 73% (29) |
| ESL | 28% (11) | 40% (16) | 30% (12) |
| Art | 0% (0) | 60% (24) | 40% (16) |
| Music | 3% (1) | 60% (24) | 38% (15) |
| PE | 5% (2) | 70% (28) | 25% (10) |

Several teachers commented that in their schools, Science, Social Studies, and/or Music have been completely eliminated. As one teacher explained:

Right now the only thing pushed really hard is Reading. We've been told to stop Science and Social Studies so we can make sure we can focus on Reading and Math; more so Reading than Math. The Science and Social Studies hook the kids in, but it's hard to get around that because the state is now mandating the [reading] programs we use.

One noted that while her students go to Art with a specialist 40 minutes a week, in her own classroom Art has "been totally eliminated." One teacher explained the de-emphasis on these subjects came from the principal, who told the teachers, "concentrate on Reading and Math, Reading and Math!" Several teachers described their efforts to "save" Science and Social Studies by attempting to integrate these subjects into their language arts block, but lamented that they could really only scratch the surface of these important content areas in this manner.

Teachers were also asked about the impact of high-stakes testing on ESL instruction. This question caused some confusion, as many teachers did not understand ESL instruction to be a separate content area (see findings above and discussion below related to ESL). Nonetheless, 30% reported some decrease or major decreases in the amount of ESL instruction, while only 28% reported increases. Most (40%) reported no change, which either means that the amount of instructional time for ESL has not changed, or they never taught ESL in the first place.

Teachers were asked about 35 instructional strategies, practices, and techniques that are commonly used in third grade classrooms (see Question 21 for the full list, available at <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v14n13/v14n13appendix.pdf>). Teachers were simply asked to state whether their use of a particular strategy/technique increased or decreased, or if there had been no change (or if they have never used it) during the past few years because of pressures related to high-

stakes testing. In general, the survey revealed that teaching varies greatly from classroom to classroom and from school to school. For most items, there was no majority for any of the four categories (increase, decrease, no change, never used), but increases were reported by the largest percentage for most items. The exceptions, however, are telling.

As shown in Table 14, decreases were reported by the largest percentage of teachers for only five of the 35 strategies/techniques/practices: a decrease in silent reading time (where students self-select books to read silently according to their own interests and proficiency level) was reported by the largest percentage, and the majority reported decreases in science experiments, movies/videos, field trips, and recess. A majority reported increases for 11 of the strategies/techniques: small group instruction, shared reading, guided reading, shared/modeled writing, multiple choice tests, direct phonics instruction, reading comprehension worksheets, grammar worksheets, test preparation, test preparation worksheets, and skill and drill exercises.

Table 14

Reported Increases and Decreases in Effective and Less Effective Instructional Strategies/Techniques for ELL students (% of teachers reporting increases/decreases)

| Instructional strategy | % reporting change (N) |
|--|------------------------|
| Increases in Effective Strategies/Techniques | |
| Small group instruction | 58% (23) |
| Shared reading | 53% (21) |
| Guided reading | 55% (22) |
| Shared or modeled writing | 60% (24) |
| Increases in Less Effective Strategies/Techniques | |
| Multiple choice tests | 63% (25) |
| Direct phonics instruction | 68% (27) |
| Reading comprehension worksheets | 63% (25) |
| Grammar worksheets | 58% (23) |
| Test preparation | 93% (37) |
| Test preparation worksheets | 83% (33) |
| Skill and drill exercises | 65% (26) |
| Decreases in Effective Strategies/Techniques | |
| Silent Reading Time | 43% (17) |
| Science experiments | 55% (22) |
| Movies/videos | 55% (22) |
| Field trips | 50% (20) |
| Recess | 58% (23) |

There is general agreement that the most effective strategies for ELL students are those that are hands-on, interactive, and flexible in terms of meeting the needs of students at their current language proficiency and academic level (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Peregoy & Boyle, 2000; Wright, 2002). Thus, decreases in silent reading time and science experiments represent a move away from these types of strategies. The decrease in movies/videos and field trips is also of concern as, when used appropriately, these strategies can build needed background knowledge for content-area instruction and provide rich visual support for language learning. The decrease in recess is also of concern, not only for reasons related to physical fitness, but also because of the great mental strain placed on students when learning (and learning through) a language in which they are not yet proficient; recess provides a much needed break and prevents mental shut down. While the increases

in small group instruction, shared and guided reading, and shared/modeled writing might be considered as positive changes, the seven other areas in which the majority of teachers reported increases typically are more one-size-fits-all, do not or can not account for individual differences in students' language or academic proficiencies, are less interactive, less hands-on, rely more on worksheets, and are more focused on the test than the needs of individual students. Overall, as shown in Table 14, there is a pattern of decreases in instructional strategies/techniques that are viewed as effective for ELLs, and an increase in those which are less effective.

In addition, 75% of the teachers reported that their school had purchased a variety of new programs and/or adopted new curriculum over the past few years in an effort to raise test scores. In terms of how effective these new programs/curriculum were in helping ELLs improve their test scores, 63% felt they were somewhat effective and 5% felt they were very effective, while 20% questioned their effectiveness. Most of the Reading First schools adopted new language arts curriculum which meets the federal requirements for the grant. Several of the reading adoptions in these schools and others included scripted programs, meaning there is literally a script of exactly what the teacher is to say, write on the board, and have the students do for each lesson. Reading First requires at least a 90 minute block of whole-group instruction in which all students are reading the same story from a basal-type reader. Several teachers expressed concern about the one-size-fits-all nature of Reading First. As one teacher commented:

I believe that the ELL children are suffering. ... I've got this little girl who's been here I think a year, but she speaks hardly any English, and she's expected to read these stories that are at grade level or above, every single week. She doesn't get attention at her own level because we have to deal with the book. We're not supposed to stray from outside of the book. I really think that we're neglecting those children and they're going to suffer, although she is learning the vocabulary words really well, but that's because I'm bringing in pictures and doing strategies that I think they need. The program has never been scientifically researched on ELL children. I'm frustrated, I'm very frustrated... I'm not sure if it's making me a better teacher. I'm really not sure I'm meeting the needs of my ELL children.

Most, if not all, of the Reading First schools have also adopted the use of the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)¹⁰ test, which is administered frequently to lower performing students. The DIBELS has a strong focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, and other skill-specific reading tasks, and has little if any emphasis on reading comprehension. Some teachers expressed concern about the appropriateness of the DIBELS test for ELL students:

And I'm frustrated with the DIBELS, the test that we do that goes along with it [Reading First], because, it's never been tested as well with ELL children. You know, they always, when they talk to us about it, they say how well it did in like, Detroit or something like that with a totally different population.

Students are classified into different groups depending on how well they perform on the DIBELS test. Those in the lowest group must be assessed frequently. Teachers, especially those with large numbers of ELL students in the lowest group, are concerned about the amount of instructional time taken up by "DIBELing" their students:

I can tell you that it's added tremendously to my workload, so I don't care for that.... I'm DIBELing 22 [students]. So that pretty much wipes out, I have an

¹⁰ See <http://dibels.uoregon.edu/> for information on the Dynamic Indicators of Early Basic Skills (DIBELS) test

hour a day with those kids and that's wiping out my week. So there is a week of no instruction in my flexible reading group because I have to DIBEL them. ... We are DIBELing every four weeks, which is incredibly time consuming. ... We are DIBELing so frequently, and our paperwork with Reading First and everything has just tripled. We're not getting test scores back from each other. We just don't have time, so I don't have time to sit down and look at [them].

Some teachers described it as a struggle to keep doing what they consider to be effective strategies for ELL students. For example, one teacher described her resistance to cut down on her read-alouds: "I am back to increasing it to where it was because I decided that I'm not going to teach the way they are telling me to." Another talked about refusing to cut down on field trips:

I personally refused. That's one of those areas where I won't give up. I mean, we are still going to go to enriching kind of places. We went to a play downtown at the theater today. I won't give up on that.

Another teacher spoke of the importance of field trips:

Our school is a Title I school, and they don't get the prior knowledge, so we try to work on exposing the children to different environments.

One teacher mentioned that her former principal banned field trips altogether "because we weren't performing well on the tests." Fortunately, she said, her new principal this year is "alright with going on field trips."

A couple of teachers also mentioned that recess has been eliminated, due to high-stakes testing. One teacher reported his strategy to resist this policy:

Believe it not, they decreased it. Actually, there's no recess, except for lunch. It's been eliminated. I mean, believe it or not, what I do is I hold my class outside to make up for it. I get in trouble, but, it's okay. You would have to be here to understand. I do hold my classes outside.

As shown above, the majority of teachers reported feeling strong pressures to teach to the test and to raise ELL scores, and reported increases in test-preparation-type activities. With regards to when their schools begin direct test-preparation instruction, 38% (15) of the teachers reported test-preparation begins right at the beginning of the school year, 10% (4) reported they begin two to three months before Christmas, and 50% (20) report they begin after New Year in the months prior to the administration of the test. In the month prior to the test, 25% (10) of teachers reported spending 30 to 45 minutes a day on test preparation, 40% (16) reported spending one to two hours a day, and 20% (8) reported spending three hours or more.

In summary, the overwhelming majority of teachers reported increases in tested subject areas (Reading, Writing, and Math), and a decrease in all other content areas (Science, Social Studies, ESL, Art, Music, and P.E.). While there were increases in a wide variety of instructional practices, strategies, and techniques, teachers reported decreases in practices/strategies viewed as effective for ELLs, and a majority of teachers reported increase in several practices/strategies viewed as less effective for ELLs. The majority of schools are adopting new curriculum and programs in an attempt to raise ELL test scores, and nearly half of the teachers report that direct test preparation instruction begins before Christmas, often right at the beginning of the school year. In the month before the tests, 60% (24) of the teachers reported using two-thirds of their instructional day or more to prepare ELLs for the high-stakes tests.

Accommodations for ELLs on High Stakes Tests

Even with the substantial amount of time spent on test preparation, many English Learner students need special accommodations during testing. Indeed, NCLB requires that states assess ELLs in a “valid and reliable manner,” and provide ELL students with “reasonable accommodations” (Title I, §1111(b)(3)(C)(ix)(III)). However, the federal law does not provide a list of any specific accommodations (other than “testing students in their native language” to the “extent practicable”) nor are any enforcement mechanisms put into place to ensure that ELL students receive the accommodations to which they are entitled. Thus, testing accommodation policies and procedures are left to each state. At the time of this study, it was unclear if Arizona had an articulated accommodation policy. If they had, few teachers appeared to know about it. According to survey responses, fewer than half (40%) of the teachers reported that testing accommodations for their ELL students were allowed in their schools. One teacher reported that at her school they were told that providing accommodations were “against the law.”

Even within the 17 schools where accommodations were allowed, teachers were given conflicting information, and the types of accommodations allowed or not allowed varied widely. On the AIMS test, a few teachers were allowed to read the test directions and/or the test items aloud in English. Only five were allowed to read directions in English and only one teacher was allowed to read the actual test items aloud in English. In contrast, 10 teachers reported that they were allowed to orally translate test directions, but only two reported they could orally translate individual test items. There were no reported cases of teachers being able to provide explanations in English or in the native language. There was some allowance for the use of dictionaries; two teachers allowed students to use an English dictionary and four teachers allowed students to use bilingual (English-Spanish) dictionaries. Only four teachers reported that were allowed to administer tests to ELLs individually or small groups.

As for the effectiveness of these accommodations, only one of the teachers felt the accommodation(s) provided for ELLs in his school were very effective, while five teachers felt the accommodations provided in their schools were at least “somewhat effective.” In contrast, 12 of the teachers believed the accommodations provided in their schools were not effective.

Teachers’ open-ended comments provide further understanding of why most of these accommodations were of little help for the ELLs. With regards to reading aloud of test directions, teachers noted that this is allowed for all students, and thus is not really an accommodation. More importantly, the directions are very generic. Several teachers noted that the accommodations were only allowed for the newcomer ELLs with little to no proficiency in English. Dictionaries proved to be of little use. In one school, the ESL teacher only had 5 Spanish-English dictionaries to be shared across 27 classrooms, and no bilingual dictionaries available in languages other than Spanish. Even when students were provided with a dictionary, no teacher reported students actually using them. Some reported that students simply did not have time to use them. One teacher commented on the peer pressure ELL students are under to do the test as quickly as possible and thus do not want to take the time needed to use the dictionary:

The kids are self conscious. If they see everybody else working, they don’t want to be the one having to look in the dictionary and taking longer. And I can see their little eyes looking around, and looking at one thing after another and they finally abandon it [i.e., the dictionary], and just started going with the bubbling.

This same teacher commented on how many students, particularly those newcomers who arrived in the country just before testing, do not even know how to use a dictionary. Thus, the dictionaries, whether English or bilingual, were of little help.

Even in the schools where translation of directions and/or test items was allowed, it was seldom used. Teachers explained that in order to provide translation, students had to specifically request it. In most instances, students never asked. One teacher noted that her lowest ELLs were sent to the ESL teacher for testing, so that she could provide translation, but it was not clear if translation was actually provided. Given the restrictions on native language instruction and primary language support described above, it is of little surprise that few students asked for translation. Indeed, research on testing accommodations suggests that accommodations on a test are only effective if they match accommodations provided during regular instruction (Rivera, 2003; Rivera & Stansfield, 1998). Only the teacher who was allowed to read aloud both test directions and individual test items felt this accommodation really benefited his ELL students.

In summary, ELL students are legally entitled under NCLB to testing accommodations when taking their state's high-stakes tests. Indeed, such accommodations are understood to be essential to meet the federal law's requirement to test ELLs in a valid and reliable manner. However, in over half of the schools represented in this survey (and by extension other schools in their districts), no accommodations were provided. In the few schools that did provide them, practice varied widely due to the lack of a clearly articulated state accommodation policy. Furthermore, even when accommodations were provided, few teachers felt they were of benefit to students. These findings are consistent with the research literature on testing accommodations, which, to date, is fairly inconclusive on how ELLs can be accommodated effectively in large-scale high-stakes tests (Abedi, 2004; Hollenbeck, 2002; Rivera, 2003; Rivera & Stansfield, 1998).

Behaviors of ELL Students during High Stakes Testing

Teachers were asked to report how often they observe various behaviors ELL students may exhibit while taking a high-stakes English-only test which may indicate (a) the difficulty of the test for the students, and (b) the emotional impact high-stakes testing has on students who are not yet proficient in language of the test. As shown in Table 15, the most common behavior ELL students exhibit were complaints about not being able to read (or understand) the questions or answers. This is especially true for newcomer ELLs who have the lowest levels of English proficiency, as one teacher described:

The newcomers definitely can't read the questions, the kids that really cannot read or write, can barely speak English. It's definitely frustrating. It's a very, very frustrating experience.

The second most frequently observed behavior was students randomly filling in bubbles (i.e., the circle next to their selected answer choice) without attempting to read the questions. Many teachers laughed out loud when responding to this survey item, and one half-jokingly suggested, "I think they actually do better on the test." One teacher described observing this frequently in her classroom:

The most common one is just trying to look like they're able to do it, and just bubbling randomly. Everybody else has 45 minutes, and they [the ELLs] are done in about 5 minutes. And then you just wonder, "Well, that was a productive bubble-in exercise, wasn't it?"

Another frequent behavior ELLs exhibited was leaving entire sections of the test blank. However, several teachers reported that this rarely happens in their classroom because their students are trained to guess. As one teacher explained, "They're taught to guess. We teach them to guess if they don't know. Never leave anything blank!"

Table 15

Observed Behaviors of ELL Students When Taking High-Stakes Tests

| Behavior | Frequently | Occasionally |
|---|-------------|--------------|
| Complained that they could not read the questions or answers | 68% (27) | 10% (4) |
| Complained that they could not understand the questions or answers | 55% (22) | 15% (6) |
| Left entire sections of the test blank | 48% (19) | 30% (12) |
| Randomly filled in bubbles without attempting to read the questions | 68% (27) | 10% (4) |
| Became visibly frustrated or upset | 50% (20) | 38% (15) |
| Cried | 28% (11) | 43% (17) |
| Got sick and/or asked to go to the nurse | 20% (8) | 48% (19) |
| Threw up | 10% (4) | 25% (10) |

The other behaviors are more emotionally tied. Half of the teachers reported that they have frequently observed students become visibly upset or frustrated during the test; another 15 (38%) teachers reported seeing occasional occurrences. Eight teachers (20%) reported frequently observing students getting sick or asking to go to the nurse during these test; 19 (48%) additional teachers observed this on occasion. Eleven (28%) of the teachers reported they have frequently observed students crying during testing, and 17 more (43%) reported observing this occasionally. Fourteen teachers (35%) have personally observed ELL students throwing up during high-stakes English-only testing due to the pressure.

One teacher offered an Arizona baseball metaphor to explain how ELL students must feel when required to take and pass the same test as their English-fluent peers:

It's like you're used to playing baseball with the boys and then suddenly you get dropped down at Bank One Ball Park, and they're going kick your ass if you can't keep up with Randy Johnson and hit his 90 mile-per-hour ball. How would you feel? You'd probably cry and run off the field too.

Despite students who randomly bubble in answers or leave entire sections of the test blank, several teachers reported that many of their ELL students, particularly those with intermediate or higher levels of English proficiency, really do try, but with little success. Given the amount of emphasis placed on these tests, as revealed above, ELL students no doubt understand the importance of doing well. This likely explains their strong emotional reactions. As one teacher described:

There are moments when they're just sitting there. They really want to please you, but they don't know what to do. I don't know. I think that when they raise their hand and they're like, "I just don't know it" and "I don't know what to do," they really just want to make you happy by doing this test, and it's really depressing.

Another commented, "Some of them become very sad, because they know they are not doing the right thing, so, they are disappointed."

Several teachers commented on their many efforts to lower their students' anxiety on the test, and simply encourage them to do the best they can. Other teachers, however, expressed concern in what they see as growing apathy on the part of ELL students when it comes to taking high-stakes tests. One commented, "They get bored very easy and they start fidgeting, and they just do the test anyway they want after that. They give up." Another lamented, "That's the sad part, that they just go through it whether they know it or not; it's like "I don't care, here's what I have." One teacher who has observed this same apathy feels it is a direct result of frequent testing (i.e., quarterly benchmark testing, tests in connection with scripted reading programs, practice tests, the DIBELS, and others) throughout the school year which is designed to get students ready for the "real" test:

We've over tested the kids, so the novelty is gone. They're indifferent to it. They just mark it just to get it over with. So these tests haven't accomplished a thing.

In summary, the overwhelming majority of teachers report frequently or occasionally observing nearly all of the behaviors listed in Table 15. These behaviors highlight both the difficulty of the task—performing on a test in a language they are not yet proficient in—and the deep emotional impact this task has on young ELL students. While some ELLs exhibit apathy by randomly marking answers and/or leaving answers blank, other students become emotionally overwhelmed to the point of visible frustration, crying, getting sick, and in some cases, literally throwing up.

Views on and Impact of School Accountability Labels

The 40 ELL impacted elementary schools represented in this survey have experienced a great deal of change in terms of their accountability labels over the past few years. As shown in Table 16, under Arizona LEARNS in 2002, most of the schools were labeled as "Underperforming," with slight improvement in 2003, and significant improvement in 2004 when 36 of the schools were labeled as Performing, and only two schools as Underperforming or Failing (2 schools did not receive a label in 2004). These schools also saw improvements in their NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Designations (see Table 16), going from 25 schools deemed as failing to make AYP in 2003 to only nine in 2004. The pressure on these schools to eliminate past Underperforming and Failing labels and/or to maintain a Performing label by raising test scores is reflected in the findings above.

Table 16
Selected Schools' Arizona LEARNS and AYP Labels, 2002–2004

| Label | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|--|------|------|------|
| LEARNS | | | |
| Excelling | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Improving ('02) or Highly Performing ('03,'04) | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Maintaining ('02) or Performing ('03,'04) | 15 | 21 | 36 |
| Underperforming | 19 | 16 | 1 |
| Failing (2004 only) | N/A | N/A | 1 |
| No Label | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Adequate Yearly Progress | | | |
| Made AYP | N/A | 12 | 31 |
| Failed to make AYP | N/A | 25 | 9 |
| No designation | N/A | 3 | 0 |

Arizona LEARNS did not have a failing label until 2004; schools were not judged by AYP until 2003.

Despite significant improvements in the school labels, less than half of the teachers (48%) feel these labels are accurate in describing their school overall and even fewer (43%) feel these labels are accurate in describing their school's success with ELL students. Teacher elaborations to explain their responses revealed a wide variety of reasons for why they responded as they did. Some teachers agreed their schools were underperforming (or failing), and blamed problems on inexperienced or out-of-touch administrators, high teacher turnover in key testing grades (i.e., 3rd and 5th), high student mobility, and lack of teacher training to work effectively with ELL students. Some teachers from schools that improved to Performing believed the newer labels were accurate as they felt it reflected the enormous amount of work teachers put in to get rid of their Underperforming label. However, several other teachers in schools which saw improvement nonetheless questioned their accuracy. Some commented that even though their schools had been given a "Performing" label, it is still just one level above Underperforming, and thus does not accurately reflect the hard work of teachers in ELL impacted schools, particularly in comparison with teachers at more affluent schools. The following comment illustrates some of the complex issues teachers grappled with when contemplating the accuracy of their schools' labels:

I don't like the idea of the labels, and I think we do a much better job than the labels would indicate ... for the general [non-ELL student] population. I think that we have great teachers, with great training, that work hard, I mean, we do, and so, given that, I don't think [the] Performing [label] is adequate. But the ELL population, that's a different thing, because I don't feel that the teachers are well-versed or well trained in SEI or ESL methodology instruction to be able to adequately address the needs of the second language population.

Many teachers noted that their "Performing" label or "making" AYP designation came as a result of the appeals process with the Arizona Department of Education rather than improved test scores. Teachers did not fully understand the technical issues behind these appeals, but knew they had something to do with excluding ELL test scores. Indeed, as shown in Figure 2 near the beginning of this article, ELL scores in Math declined and there were no improvements in Reading scores. Thus, the dramatic improvements in these schools' accountability labels have little to do with improved achievement of ELL students; indeed the improvement in school labels actually masks the decline or lack of increase in ELL test scores.

While teachers' views on their schools' labels were varied and complex, there was 100% agreement that it is unfair to use these labels to compare schools with large numbers of ELLs with schools with low numbers of ELLs. And despite significant improvements in school labels, these improvements do not correspond with teacher's career satisfaction nor with the morale of their fellow teachers. Indeed, 27 (68%) reported feeling lesser satisfaction with their teaching career, and 33 teachers (83%) reported that current policies have decreased or substantially decreased the morale of their fellow teachers and staff members. Furthermore, 70% of the teachers reported that many teachers have quit or transferred to a different school due in large part to frustration with current state policies. In 28 of the most highly impacted ELL schools in the state of Arizona, teachers reported that approximately 453 teachers have quit or transferred over the past few years. This high-turnover rate no doubt ensures that many ELL students in these schools are instructed by the least experienced teachers.

One teacher with many years of experience commented on his satisfaction with his teaching career:

Certainly lesser satisfaction, and to the degree that if I really thought that I could find something different, that was as fulfilling as what I do, without the bullshit of No Child Left Behind and all the state regulations, I would certainly leave and do it.

Another commented:

You feel like you're busting your butt teaching people that are not reading English, and now they're going to be tested on it. I mean, it's very frustrating, and those are the scores we're told to bring up.

One teacher who has only been teaching for three years is contemplating transferring to a different district, or perhaps leaving the classroom altogether:

I'm going to get hired by another district to see if it's like this everywhere, because I haven't been teaching really all that long, and if it is like this everywhere, with just nothing but teach-to-the-test type stuff, and to heck with what the kids want to know, then, I'm going to get my Masters and probably become a professor. I'm not going to stay in the classroom because it just breaks my heart. There are things the kids just want to learn about. You teach them a little bit in these programs, but it's so structured that you don't have time to deviate from the program. I mean, we aren't allowed to have parties, they don't have recess. There is no time during the day where I am allowed to just have fun with my kids and just learn something that is just for fun. And it's really depressing.

Other teachers talked about leaving the profession. One actually did, but eventually came back. Still, she is frustrated:

I try really hard not to let politics bother me. I have left the profession for more money before, [but] came back, because my best day out in the real world wasn't as good as my worst day with the kids. But yeah, day to day, I have regrets. I love the content areas and I feel like I'm a very effective ELL teacher when I'm allowed to do what I do best. [But] a lot of this stuff is preventing me from doing what I feel I do best.

Those few teachers who reported no change in satisfaction, or even greater satisfaction in the case of one teacher, reported that this had to do with improving their label, changes to better and more-supportive administrators, or, in some cases, resolving not to give in to the test and going back to providing good teaching, as one teacher explained:

They [the students] were unhappy. I was unhappy. I finally just said, "I'm too close to retirement. What are they going to do to me?" So I have gone back to teaching the way that I personally feel is best for the kids, so now I have much greater satisfaction than before. The kids are happier because I've decided that I'm not going to play the game. And my tests scores are comparable to the other third grade teachers. In reading they're higher actually.

Teachers also made telling comments about the morale of their fellow teachers. Some commented on how many teachers feel that the overemphasis on testing and test preparation has taken the joy out of teaching and learning. As one teacher put it "Teaching is no fun anymore." Another teacher's comments illustrate this view:

[Morale has] substantially decreased. It doesn't seem to be about the kids anymore. It's all about the test scores. It's just sad. And a lot of teachers I know are going back for more education to do something else. It's simply too much for the amount we get paid. Too much pressure, and too much pressure for these kids.

Pressure from low test scores and labels can create a tense school environment. One teacher in a school that failed to make AYP the previous year, and that would have been labeled as "Underperforming" had there not been an appeal, commented:

The morale goes down because our principal screams at us, literally screams. I mean, it's [the Underperforming label] there, and I know we need to work on it. We're upset that it's down. But it gets, I mean, when she stands up there and screams at us, yeah, the morale goes down.

Along these lines, another teacher lamented about the morale of teachers in her school:

Oh it's horrible! The moral is terrible in our staff, terrible! They're [the administrators] constantly telling you that "You're not doing your job, you're not doing your job. You need to get the test scores higher."

Only two teachers reported an increase in morale, while only five described no change. These teachers from these schools typically described an established and dedicated teaching staff and a supportive administrator. Unfortunately, these seven schools represented less than 18% of the schools in this study, and thus are the exception rather than the rule.

One teacher commented that due to substantially high turn-over in his school, many of the current teachers are new, and thus are less affected by the changes which have taken place. In other words, this is all they have known since they have begun their teaching careers. One of the newer teachers to participate in this study described this as her own view:

Ever since I graduated, that's what I do. So I don't know anything different. I've never experienced anything else, so I don't feel stressed. It's the only thing I've ever known since I graduated, so. And I do see teachers that [have been teaching] 30, 20 years, they're really stressed out, but they had an opportunity to do a different style of teaching, where we who graduated three years ago, this is all we've done. ... No change [in satisfaction] because, like I said, it's all I've known.

Analysis and Conclusions

The findings outlined above cover a wide range of topics in relation to current federal and state language, high-stakes testing and accountability policies and their impact on the teaching and learning of ELL students. In this section we draw two main conclusions based on an analysis of the above findings, and provide evidence from the data to support these conclusions.

Proposition 203 and Related Mandates Have Not Improved the Education of ELL Students

There is little to no evidence that Proposition 203 and its mandates for the English-only structured English immersion "model" have led to improvements in the education of ELL students. Even before Proposition 203 became the law, the majority of ELL students were already in English-only programs. While 68% of the 40 ELL impacted elementary schools in this study had bilingual programs, even in these schools, most ELLs were placed in English-only classrooms. Thus, the widespread failure of schools to help ELLs learn English cannot be blamed on bilingual education, as is suggested within the text of Proposition 203 and as widely touted by its supporters. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of teachers in this study—regardless of whether or not they were bilingual themselves, were former bilingual teachers, or were monolingual ESL or mainstream teachers—hold personal views that are in stark contrast to the ideology of Proposition 203 and its supporters (including current state education leaders). With few exceptions, these teachers were overwhelmingly supportive of students both mastering English and maintaining their native languages, and agreed that properly implemented bilingual education programs were effective in helping students learn English and achieve academic success. Also in contrast to the mandates of Proposition 203, there

was little support from these experienced ELL teachers for the SEI model, and most agreed that Proposition 203 is too restrictive in terms of approaches schools can take to meet the needs of ELL students.

Proposition 203 claims that “Young immigrant children can easily acquire full fluency in a new language, such as English, if they are heavily exposed to that language in the classroom at an early age” (§1(5)), and mandates that “Children who are English learners shall be educated through sheltered English immersion (SEI) during a temporary transition period not normally intended to exceed one year” (A.R.S. §15–7 52). The current Superintendent of Public Instruction has enthusiastically supported this law, appointed the local chair-person of the Proposition 203 campaign as his Associate Superintendent, and together they have vigorously enforced their own narrow interpretation of it, with the assurance (repeated on many occasions) that SEI is essential so that ELLs “can soar academically as individuals” (Kossan, 2003).

Despite the emphasis placed on SEI and the promises of quick and easy English language acquisition, as the findings above reveal, there are no reports whatsoever from teachers that students are now learning English at a faster rate, let alone attaining proficiency in English after only 180 days (or fewer) of instruction, nor did teachers provide any evidence that ELLs are now “soaring academically.” Rather, the data show the exact opposite. These findings are consistent with recent analyses of ELL language proficiency and content-area (AIMS, SAT–9) test score data (Mahoney, Thompson, & MacSwan, 2004, 2005; Wright & Pu, 2005). The findings of this study further reveal that Proposition 203 has mostly resulted in wide-spread confusion and a decrease in the type of quality instruction ELL students need to learn English and meet grade-level content standards.

Proposition 203 resolved that ELL students be taught English as “effectively as possible” (§1(6)). The federal requirement for high quality “language education instruction programs” as outlined in Title III of NCLB makes it clear that state programs for ELL students must be designed to ensure that ELL students develop and attain English proficiency. In order for any instructional model to be successful and for any kind of instruction to be effective, there needs to be: (a) clear guidelines on what the model is (and what it is not), (b) an established curriculum and accompanying curricular materials, (c) training in the proper implementation of the model and instructional use of the curriculum and materials, and (d) support for this model and curriculum at the school and district level.¹¹ As the findings above reveal, none of these appear to be the case with SEI, at least in terms of how it has been implemented in Arizona.

To begin, Proposition 203 makes a weak distinction between “mainstream” and “SEI” classrooms. Both are classified as “English language classrooms” defined as “a classroom in which English is the language of instruction used by the teaching personnel.” A mainstream classroom is simply defined as “a classroom in which the students either are native English language speakers or already have acquired reasonable fluency in English.” Proposition 203 makes it very clear that ELLs students are *not* to be placed in a Mainstream classroom until they “are able to do regular school work in English” and are no longer “classified as English learners.” (A.R.S. §15–7 51(3)). Thus, the law clearly requires that ELLs be placed in SEI classrooms (unless they have waivers for bilingual education). SEI classrooms are described in the law as follows:

¹¹ These assertions are consistent with the ruling in the federal court case *Castaneda v. Pickard*, 781 F.2d 456 (United States Court Of Appeals For The Fifth Circuit 1986), which outlined three criterion for determining the adequacy of school program models for ELL students: (a) The school must pursue a program based on an educational theory recognized as sound, (b) The school must actually implement the program with instructional practices, resources, and personnel necessary to transfer theory into reality, and (c) The school must not persist in a program that fails to produce results.

Nearly all classroom instruction is in English but with the *curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the language*. Books and instructional materials are in English and all reading, writing, and subject matter are taught in English. Although *teachers may use a minimal amount of the child's native language when necessary*, no subject matter shall be taught in any language other than English, and children in this program learn to read and write solely in English. (A.R.S. §15-7 51) [Emphasis added]

According to these definitions, the only distinguishing factors between SEI and Mainstream instruction are that in SEI: (a) the curriculum and presentation are designed for ELLs, and (b) *nearly* all instruction is in English, as teachers may use a minimal amount of the child's language when necessary. Thus, in order for SEI to be different from a mainstream classroom, there needs to be (a) curriculum specifically designed for ELLs, and (b) primary language support. Without these, SEI is no different from mainstream instruction, which, according to both state and federal law, is not a legal placement for ELL students.

As the findings above reveal, the reality is that, at least in Arizona, SEI is no different from Mainstream instruction. Evidence for this conclusion is supported by the following data from this study: (a) Nearly half of the teachers who, by law, are SEI teachers in SEI classrooms, nonetheless described themselves and their classrooms as Mainstream; (b) Over 20% of the teachers do not have (or have not completed) ELL certification, and reported that many teachers of ELL students in their schools have likewise not yet completed this certification; (c) The overwhelming majority of ELLs in these schools are not receiving any ESL instruction, either in their classrooms, or through pull-out programs; (d) The majority of schools have not adopted ESL curricular programs or purchased supplemental materials for ESL instruction; (e) Primary language support is non-existent in many schools, and strongly discouraged in others and even in cases where it is used, it is typically used only by a handful of teachers, and is provided very briefly and discretely; and (f) Primary language support has not been emphasized nor supported by the ADE, and in many cases, even discouraged by top ADE officials.

Further evidence for the assertion that SEI is no different from Mainstream instruction can be found in the response of teachers who responded to the open-ended question: "Have you received any instruction or guidance from your school or district administrators as to what makes SEI different from Mainstream instruction?" The majority of the teachers who were asked this question answered flat out, "No." A couple of teachers claimed that the difference had been explained to them, but they could not remember what it was. One stated:

Um, I think that's what the in-services were about... It was explained, I don't know if I remember what exactly what they explained.

The other teacher answered:

Um, I don't remember right now, it's the end of the day, but you know, I've had workshops on SEI.

One teacher explained that SEI meant "you cannot help them [the students] in Spanish." Ironically, this is actually one of the characteristics which distinguishes SEI from Mainstream instruction. A couple of other teachers said that SEI was simply the default label for anyone who had ELLs in their class. As one of them explained:

We've just been told everybody's an SEI teacher because we all have ELL students. And we just need to use the same strategies we've used for the other kids, so it's good teaching, and um, it'll help everybody.

The other teacher stated:

Well last year they called our class sheltered English because of the fact that they [the ELL students] stayed in my room. That's the only explanations we've had.

Only a few teachers stated that SEI involved the use “ELL strategies,” but as one teacher stated, “they’re beneficial towards all students.” Thus these teachers did not make any distinction between SEI and good teaching in a Mainstream classroom. In other words, they could not articulate how, in an SEI classroom, the curriculum and presentation are designed for ELLs—one of the other key features which is supposed to distinguish SEI from Mainstream as outlined in the law.

At least these teachers had heard of SEI. One teacher responded when asked about SEI, “What is that?” while another teacher asked for clarification on what SEI meant. Another teacher asked if SEI is the same thing as pull-out ESL. Still another asked, “What is the difference? Do you want to tell me?” One teacher explicitly stated that there really is no such a thing as SEI:

SEI is basically a made up term. I mean, it’s not really a real thing. They just thought it looked good in the proposition and put it in.

Another teacher stated directly that there is no difference between SEI and Mainstream instruction:

It’s Mainstream instruction. I don’t think they’re using any different techniques...

They are Mainstream classrooms, it’s just sink or swim.

It is important to point out that these responses come from experienced teachers of ELL students in the state’s most highly impacted ELL elementary schools. These comments also come after the ADE has held two “Super SEI Seminars” over the past two years. In his 2004 State of Education speech, the Superintendent of Public Instruction described the first seminar as follows:

A year ago, I stated that it was not enough to enforce the initiative [Proposition 203]. We must make sure that every school is serious about teaching English as intensely, and rapidly as possible. Last spring we conducted a Super Seminar for over 400 English language teachers from all over the state of Arizona, teaching them best practices in English immersion. ... We are committed to a continuing, intensive effort, to help the schools reach the highest standards in teaching English quickly and effectively to these students. (Horne, 2004, p. 3)

At the first SEI Seminar, the Superintendent stressed:

It is important that all the teachers know the skills that they have to have to do the best possible job with English-language learners as well as their other students... We will have an important job to do in spreading the information today to not only the other teachers of English-language learners, but all of the teachers in the schools. (Wright, 2004, p. 216)

These comments were echoed by the Associate Superintendent, who also served as co-chair of the Proposition 203 campaign. At the SEI Seminar, she explained to the participants that the purpose of the meeting was

to present the best practices in teaching our English language learners... and to help teachers who are teaching English-language learners, to have strategies that they can utilize in the classroom in order to promote academic achievement.

(Wright, 2004, p. 215)

Despite this rhetoric, no comprehensive definition of, or guidelines for, SEI was offered at the SEI Seminar other than simply stressing the need to teach ELLs in English (Wright, 2004). When Proposition 203 monitors visit classroom, they simply focus on the *language* of instruction and classroom materials (to make sure everything is in English) rather than on the *quality* of instruction or ensuring that it is appropriate and designed for students learning English, as required by the law (Wright, 2005c). These facts help explain why teachers know so little about the mandated SEI instructional model which is supposed to ensure that students

learn English “as rapidly and effectively as possible” (Proposition 203, §1(6)) so that they can “soar academically as individuals” (Horne, 2004; Kossan, 2003).

Amidst this confusion and lack of guidance over what SEI is, the ADE has created what it calls the SEI Endorsement, and it is now required that all teachers and administrators in the state obtain it. The SEI endorsement only requires an initial 15 clock-hours of training, followed by 45 clock-hours several years later (Mahoney, Thompson, & MacSwan, 2005). Once teachers have completed the initial 15-clock hours of training, they are considered by the state to be sufficiently trained with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective instruction to ELL students who are placed in their “SEI” classrooms.

The requirement of only 60 clock hours (15 hours + 45 hours several years later) to complete an SEI Endorsement stands in stark contrast in terms of the amount of training required for the state’s long-standing ESL Endorsement, which requires 18 units of college coursework (6 three-unit courses) in addition to 6 units of foreign language coursework (or its equivalent).¹² Thus, in terms of the amount of training, the SEI Endorsement is about 88% less than the amount of training needed for the ESL Endorsement (Mahoney, Thompson, & MacSwan, 2005). The experienced ELL teachers in this study expressed a great deal of concern that the state would consider a teacher as certified to teach ELLs after so little training. As one teacher exclaimed, “It [the SEI Endorsement] is ridiculous, that one can learn how to teach ELL learners with only 15 clock hours.” Another found this to be personally insulting to trained ESL teachers:

You certainly cannot learn to be a language teacher in 15 hours. One of the most complex things we do is language instruction to speakers of other languages, and to hint that you can do that is one of the most insulting things I have ever heard. One of the teachers had already completed the SEI endorsement by time of her interview. While she was desperate for training in how to better teach her ELL students, she found little of value in the short amount of training she received:

[The 15 hours of SEI training was] insufficient. To be honest with you, we all took it just because we had to. We attended because, hey, now we’ve got a little certificate that says you have completed it. What did we get out of it? Zilch! I’m hungry for learning this, and I’m not getting it.

One teacher expressed her concern that many teachers with little interest in teaching ELL students would resist the SEI Endorsement training and thus get very little out of it:

[The SEI Endorsement will be] completely insufficient, and the reason being most [teachers] are going to view it as an obstacle, as a burden, and a hoop to jump through. But given the population that we now educate ... these are our learners, these are the students that we teach, and to turn a blind eye and pretend that’s not what our population is, we’ll never serve them in the long run. I think the goal is to have teachers more prepared and to have more education to be able to meet the needs of the ELL population, but I think that 15 hours ... is going to be completely insufficient.

The state is even requiring teachers who have previously earned the ESL or Bilingual endorsement to nonetheless also complete the SEI Endorsement. This requirement has mystified and upset many experienced endorsed teachers (and administrators), as it demonstrates that the state does not recognize, value, or honor their ESL training even though it required substantially more training and experience. It also creates a bizarre situation in which

¹² The state’s Bilingual Endorsement requires a similar amount of coursework and trainings as the ESL Endorsement in addition to demonstration of proficiency in a second language.

SEI is portrayed as somehow something completely different from ESL. As one teacher lamented:

I heard about that lovely thing [the SEI Endorsement] after I got my ESL Endorsement. I was just having a cow. They [state officials] keep reasoning that there is a difference [between ESL and SEI]. This is not anything to do with ESL. Sure, just tell us that.

Despite the above issues, several teachers nonetheless conceded that the short amount of training for the SEI endorsement would be “somewhat sufficient,” particularly for those who already had ESL training and experience. One teacher described it as “a really nice refresher, it keeps you on your game basically.” Others, however, expressed concern that sufficiency depends on who is providing the training, and how much support districts provide to teachers once the training is over.

While technically the SEI Endorsement does not replace the more extensive ESL Endorsement, there is nonetheless great concern that few teachers will pursue an ESL Endorsement once they’ve completed the SEI Endorsement. The SEI Endorsement requires little time commitment, is offered through professional development within school districts (and likely during paid working hours), and is free of charge. The ESL Endorsement, in contrast, is offered by colleges and universities, and while many cohorts have, in the past, been organized in partnerships with school districts that provided financial incentives for teachers to complete it, teachers nonetheless had to complete substantial coursework outside of normal working hours, and many had to pay for at least part of their tuition and registration fees, not to mention course texts and other materials. With the SEI Endorsement in place, there will be little if any incentive for districts to continue to push teachers to complete the full ESL Endorsement, and to provide the programs and financial incentives to do so.

In addition, with all teachers in the state “SEI Endorsed” each of their classrooms becomes, by default, SEI Classrooms. With the problems outlined above, combined with the bare minimum amount of training required for an SEI Endorsement, this policy will effectively eliminate any and all distinctions between Mainstream and SEI classrooms, even though such a distinction is made in state (and federal) law. In other words, in effect, the SEI Endorsement policy simply creates a way for all Mainstream classrooms to be converted to SEI classrooms, but essentially in name only.

With all classrooms labeled as the same thing, and with all providing essentially the same curriculum and textbooks, the state of Arizona is returning to the condition of sink-or-swim English-only submersion education which was declared unconstitutional in the landmark Supreme Court Case, *Lau v. Nichols* (1974). In the ruling in this case, the judge declared:

Under these state-imposed standards there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education. ... We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful.

The judge declared—echoing federal guidelines:

Where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin-minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students.

There is no evidence that Proposition 203 and the state’s current implementation of the “SEI” model represents “affirmative steps to rectify” the “language deficiency” of ELL students.

Instead, SEI in Arizona is essentially the Mainstream sink-or-swim instruction declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. Teachers do not understand what SEI is. The state has not provided a clear description or adequate guidelines for implementing quality SEI programs. The two key distinguishing features between SEI and Mainstream as outlined in the law—primary language support and curriculum/instruction designed for ELLs—are not emphasized at the state or district levels; in most cases, they are discouraged. Primary language support by and large is prohibited or highly discouraged. Few schools have adopted ESL curricular programs and supplemental materials, few teachers provide ESL instruction in their classrooms, and few ELLs receive pull-out ESL instruction by a certified ESL teacher. The state's creation of an SEI Endorsement further confuses the matter and ensures that current and future teachers of ELL student complete substantially less training which most experienced and endorsed ELL teachers have deemed as completely insufficient. Not one teacher reported students attaining English at a faster rate; not one teacher reported that their ELL students are now “soaring academically as individuals.” In contrast, teachers raised a number of concerns about current policies restricting their abilities to meet the needs of their ELL students. Thus, Proposition 203 and its mandates for English-only sheltered English immersion have not improved the education of ELL students as promised.

High-Stakes English-only Testing has not improved the education of ELL students

Like Proposition 203, English-only high-stakes tests have not improved the education of ELL students. As described above, Math and Reading test scores for ELLs statewide have declined for ELLs as a group, the gap between ELL students and their English-fluent peers has not narrowed, and improvements in Writing test scores are due to changes in the test rather than increases in ELL students' English language writing ability (Wright & Pu, 2005). Even in these selected schools, ELL Reading scores have not improved, and Math scores have declined (see Figure 2 above), despite teacher's report of the immense amount of pressure they are under to teach to the test and raise ELL student test scores.

The experienced teachers of ELL students in this study agree that accountability for ELLs is needed, but the overwhelming majority recognize that the state's high-stakes tests are not the appropriate for this purpose. They are painfully aware of the psychometric problems associated with testing ELL students in English before they have gained proficiency in the language. Indeed, the state appears to have agreed with this in part, as it systematically excludes numerous test scores of ELL students from state and federal accountability formulas. Nonetheless, ELLs are still required to take the high-stakes tests, and teachers feel immense pressure from their administrators to raise test scores by spending substantial amounts of instructional time preparing ELLs for the test.

Test scores of ELL students in Arizona are also highly problematic given that few ELL students received the testing accommodations to which they are legally entitled under federal law. Even in those cases where accommodations were provided, there was a great deal of inconsistency across schools, and few, if any, teachers found the accommodations to have been of any assistance. Teachers reported observing a number of disturbing behaviors which provided substantial evidence that their ELL students' lack of proficiency in English prevented their meaningful participation in the state's testing program. Observed behaviors also provide strong evidence of the emotional impact English-only high-stakes testing has on ELL students, including visible distress in students, even to the point of illness and vomiting. In other cases, students develop apathy towards the test as they leave sections blank or bubble answers randomly with no attempt to even read the questions.

Even if test scores interpretations for ELL could be considered valid, the results of high-stakes tests are only one indicator of the quality of a student's education. Of greater concern is the impact that high-stakes English-only testing is having on the curriculum and instruction for ELL students. The findings of this study revealed many issues of great concern: (a) Narrowing of the curriculum through substantial decreases in or elimination of the non-tested subjects of Science, Social Studies, Art, Music, and PE; (b) ESL instruction—which focuses on teaching ELL students English—has been decreased or eliminated and replaced with inappropriate test-preparation curriculum; (c) substantial amounts of classroom time are dedicated to preparing ELL students for high-stakes test even though for many ELLs this instruction is well beyond their current linguistic and/or academic ability, and even though most of their scores will end up being excluded from state and federal accountability formulas; (d) reductions in effective classroom instructional practices for ELLs, and increases in less effective practices; (e) adoptions of one-size-fits-all scripted language arts program which were not designed for ELLs, and which do not and cannot take into account differences in ELL students English language proficiency and current levels of academic ability; (f) the majority of teachers reported that high-stakes tests have not improved the quality of teaching and learning in their classrooms, nor have the tests helped them to become more effective teachers of ELLs; (g) the majority of teachers reported that high stakes tests are diverting attention away from their ELL students' linguistic, cultural, and academic needs; (h) teachers' morale and satisfaction with their teaching career have substantially decreased as a result of the state's testing and accountability policies; and (i) there is a high teacher-turnover rate at ELL impacted elementary schools due in large part to frustration with testing and accountability policies, which results in ELLs receiving instruction from less experienced teachers.

Due to the wide recognition among these experienced ELL teachers of how the current use of high-stakes testing is failing to meet the needs of ELL students or lead to improvements in their education, teachers were overwhelming supportive of alternative policies, such as excluding ELL students from high-stakes tests until they have sufficient English language proficiency to meaningfully participate, and/or to use alternative assessments designed for ELL students.

In summary, teachers are under immense pressure to prepare ELL students for high-stakes tests in English, even though they know these tests are not appropriate for ELLs, and question the validity of their test scores. The tests themselves have a strong psychological impact on ELL students. Pressure to raise scores has led to a narrowed curriculum to the point that many ELLs are not receiving any instruction in important content areas such as Science and Social Studies—instruction which is imperative to their future success in secondary school and beyond. In an effort to raise scores, schools are adopting curricular programs which are inappropriate for ELLs. At the same time, ESL instruction is not being provided, or has substantially declined, along with instructional practices which are effective for ELL students. Teachers recognize that high-stakes tests are not improving the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms, are not making them better teachers of ELL students, and diverting their attention away from their students' real needs. As a result of these issues, teacher's career satisfaction and morale is sinking, leading to high turnover rates of teachers in ELL impacted schools. And despite all this pressure and all these test-focused curricular changes, Reading and Math test scores for ELL students statewide have declined. Improvements in school labels are not the result of higher test scores, but rather, the results of excluding ELL test scores from accountability formulas. Thus, English-only high-stakes tests have not improved the education of ELL students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study that high-stakes English-only testing, Proposition 203, and its mandates for English-only SEI instruction, have not improved the education of ELL students, there is a need for substantial changes to current policies and practices with regards to the education of ELL students in the state of Arizona.

Before presenting our own set of recommendations, we offer the views of the classroom teachers who were asked at the conclusion of their interview “If you had the power to make any changes to current state and federal policies, what would you change and why?” Several teachers stated they would eliminate Proposition 203 and provide quality bilingual education programs, particularly dual-language programs in which both ELLs and English-only students develop full proficiency in two languages.¹³ Several teachers stated their desire to eliminate high-stakes English-only testing for ELL students. Other teacher recommendations include the following: (a) make changes which allow ELLs time to learn English before they are tested, (b) use alternative assessments until ELLs attain enough proficiency to take the regular high-stakes tests, (c) use multiple measures for accountability purposes, rather than basing everything on a single high-stakes test, and (d) establish an accountability system which does not hold teachers and schools accountable for things which are beyond their control.

In terms of instructional issues, several teachers just wished they could start teaching Science and Social Studies again, and wished for time for more hands-on activities, experiments, and field trips. Others wished for more time for ESL instruction so they could help their ELLs increase their English vocabulary. Other changes teachers wanted to make include greater recognition of teacher professionalism, or as one teacher put it, “let teachers do their job”; elimination of inappropriate one-size-fits-all scripted programs; elimination of the unreasonable demands on teachers’ instructional time and give students sufficient opportunity and time to learn what is required; allowing teachers time to build interpersonal relationships with their students so they do not feel detached and uncaring; instruction which focuses on the whole child and not just their ability to get a high test score; greater morale and instructional support for teachers; and policies which do not lead to high teacher burn-out and large numbers of good teachers leaving the field.

Several teachers also wished they could force “out-of-touch” policymakers to come and spend time in their classrooms in order to get a better sense of the reality of today’s schools. As one teacher stated:

I would like to take some of those people, put them in my classroom, and see what I go through on a daily basis with the students that come right out of Mexico that are spontaneously supposed to speak English when they cross the border. I think a lot of people who make these rules are out of touch, and they have no idea what goes on in a classroom.

Another commented:

¹³ There was one teacher who wanted to see Proposition 203 extended to all parts of the school to eliminate students’ use of Spanish on the playground and the cafeteria. Her view was clearly in the minority. However, it should be noted that this teacher is in a school near the Mexican border, is herself Hispanic, and went through a schooling system which did not allow her to use Spanish in school. She agrees that students should be fully bilingual, but because Spanish is the dominant language in the community outside of school in the bordertown where her school is located, she does not view a strict English-only school policy as threatening Spanish in any way.

I think that legislators sometimes get into their little halls up there in Phoenix and they have no more concept for what an elementary classroom is like than the man in the moon. It's been so many years since they were there, and things have changed so much, that they're passing laws for things they know nothing about. It would be like me, as a teacher, going and passing laws for doctors and lawyers. I think the absurdity of it is sometimes laughable, yet we have to live with what they pass.

Based on the findings of this study and echoing many of the teacher's views above, we offer the following recommendations to improve the education of ELL students in the state of Arizona.

Recommendations regarding Proposition 203. Proposition 203 should be repealed so that school districts, schools, and the families of ELL students are afforded the flexibility allowed under federal law to provide a full range of options of quality language instructional programs for ELL students. Indeed, recent research (Stritikus & Garcia, 2005) shows that in Arizona the majority of Hispanic parents (83%) and even a majority of non-Hispanic parents (59%) feel that both English and Spanish should be used in classrooms for ELLs. Further recent research has shown that, despite the claims of Proposition 203 and its supporters, bilingual programs are effective in helping ELLs learn English and achieve academic success (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders & Christian, 2006; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005a, 2005b; Slavin & Cheung, 2003).

Absent a full repeal of Proposition 203, school districts should be given greater flexibility—as was permitted under previous Superintendents of Public Instruction—in offering waivers for those parents who would like their children to learn English and receive academic content area instruction through bilingual education programs. The state should establish clear guidelines for providing quality bilingual education programs, including clarifying and emphasizing the role of ESL and sheltered English content area instruction within bilingual programs, and the goals of different bilingual program models in terms of helping students attain bilingualism and biliteracy.

Recommendations regarding Sheltered English Immersion (SEI). The Arizona Department of Education must provide a clear definition of SEI, making explicit how it differs from mainstream-sink-or-swim instruction and provide clear guidelines in how to establish and maintain a quality SEI program for those parents who chose this option for their children. At a minimum, this definition and these guidelines should include specific details on providing English as a second language instruction, sheltered content area instruction, and primary language support. Specifically, for English as a second language instruction, the state must clarify that ELL students should be provided with daily English language instruction designed to help ELL students increase their proficiency in English. The state should indicate a minimum number of minutes (e.g., 30 minutes) that schools are to provide for daily ESL instruction, and should require schools to adopt ESL curricular programs and supplemental materials which are aligned with the state's ELL standards. For sheltered content area instruction, the state must ensure that the curriculum and instruction in SEI classrooms is appropriate and designed for ELL students, as stipulated in the law. The state must clarify that content areas taught in English are to be taught in a manner which makes the instruction comprehensible for ELL students. The state should establish a clear set of guidelines which outline specific sheltered or specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies, techniques, and procedures. For primary language support, the state must make it clear that an identifying feature of SEI is the effective use of students' primary language(s) which makes content-area instruction taught in English more comprehensible for ELL students. The state should provide guidelines on the effective use of primary language support through techniques such as preview-review, and provide teachers with training and encouragement to make it a regular part of their SEI classroom instruction.

The state must make and maintain a clear distinction between SEI classrooms and Mainstream classrooms, as defined in the law. The state must ensure that ELL students are not placed in Mainstream classrooms until they have been redesignated as fluent English proficient, as required by the law. The state must ensure that SEI classrooms are taught by trained certified teachers who have completed a full ESL Endorsement. The relationship between the SEI and ESL Endorsement must be clarified. The SEI Endorsement must not supplant the ESL Endorsement. Rather, the SEI Endorsement should be viewed as minimal professional development and a precursor to the ESL Endorsement. The state should provide incentives for teachers to pursue a full ESL Endorsement following completion of the SEI Endorsement. For example, credit earned in completing the SEI Endorsement could be subsequently applied toward the full ESL Endorsement.

Recommendations regarding high-stakes testing and accountability. Federal and state policies should be revised to allow the exclusion of ELL students from high-stakes tests in English until students have obtained enough proficiency in English to be tested in a valid and reliable manner. The state should push for changes in NCLB to this effect. In the absence of exclusions, the state should make allowances for and provide clear guidelines in terms of the testing accommodations called for in the federal law. This includes the development and use of tests in the students' primary languages. The state should heed the federal law's allowances for alternative content-area assessments for ELLs until they attain enough proficiency in English to participate in the regular state test (with or without accommodations). At a minimum, the state should immediately make explicit to district- and school-level administrators and teachers which ELL students' tests scores will be excluded from federal and state accountability formulas. This would free teachers from test-driven curriculum which is inappropriate for ELLs and allow them to focus on providing instruction tailored to the linguistic and academic needs of their students. Such instruction would lead to a greater focus on teaching English (ESL) and content (in the native language or using sheltered English instruction) so that by the time students' scores do count, they will be better prepared and able to more meaningfully participate. The state should make it explicit that most ELL scores are excluded from school accountability formulas. The state should establish an alternative system for ELL impacted schools which tracks the progress of ELLs in various program types. Such a system should account for the length of time each ELL student has been in the U.S. and in the specific school, and should be based on students' progress over time rather than on whether all students in a category attain a specific pre-determined level of proficiency.

Recommendations for instruction and other issues. The state must ensure that schools are providing ELL student access to the full academic curriculum, rather than just instruction in the tested subjects. Districts and schools should avoid the use of one-size-fits-all scripted curricular programs which are not designed for ELL students, and which cannot account for differences in English language proficiency or academic ability. Administrators should allow certified, endorsed, experienced teachers to make professional curricular and instructional decisions within their own classrooms and schools based on their students' current levels of English and academic proficiency. The state and school district administrators need to find ways to increase teacher morale and create incentives for teachers in ELL impacted schools to remain to prevent high teacher-turnover rates. The state should establish a system to allow the input of experienced ELL teachers into the educational policy-making process for policies which affect ELL students.

Finally, the state needs to adequately fund ELL programs. Providing sufficient training, support, and on-going professional development for teachers and administrators, specialists, and support personnel who work with ELLs requires that adequate funding be allocated to accomplish this. Funding is also needed to purchase the needed ESL curricular and supplemental materials that few schools currently have. The state must address the federal court order in *Flores v. Arizona* to adequately fund ELL programs. The state should follow the specific funding recommendations of

the most recent ELL cost study conducted by the National Council of State Legislators (NCSL) which was commissioned by the Arizona State Legislature.

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TELEPHONE SURVEY
Proposition 203, High Stakes Testing and English Language Learners
in Arizona Elementary Schools

COVENTIONS

- **Bold Text** → Script of what exactly to say to participant
- Non-Bold Text → Record answers
- *Italic Text* → Special instructions for interviewer
- ALL CAPS → Section headings

| |
|--|
| County _____ |
| Type (circle one): Urban Rural Reservation |
| Completed by _____ |
| Date Completed _____ |
| Date Entered Database _____ |
| Audio File Name _____ |

INTRODUCTORY SCRIPT

Thank you again for your willingness to participate. As we described in the letter, this survey is about Proposition 203, high stakes testing, and English language Learners. Throughout this survey, I'll refer to the students as ELLs. This interview should take between 20 and 30 minutes. You may skip any question you do not wish to answer, and you may choose to withdraw at any time. If I use a term you are not familiar with, please ask me to explain it.

I would like to record our conversation to ensure I record all of your answers accurately. No one other than the researchers will hear this recording. Do you give permission for me to begin recording?

[*If "Yes"*] – **Thank you. I'm turning on the recorder (*begin recording*).**

[*If "No"*] – **OK. No problem. I will not record our conversation.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. **"To start, I'd like to ask a few questions about your current class"**

1a. **"How many students do you have in your classroom this year?"**

_____ total students

1b. **"Of these, how many are classified as ELL students?"**

_____ ELL students

2a. **"What is the official designation for your classroom? Is it designated as a *Bilingual, Structured English Immersion, Mainstream, or Other* type of classroom?"**

1 Bilingual [*Go to* → 2b]

2 Structured English Immersion (SEI)

3 Mainstream

4 Other [**Please specify**] _____

Survey instrument developed by:
Wayne E. Wright, PhD
University of Texas, San Antonio

2b. “What type of bilingual program best describes your class: Transitional, Dual Language, Immersion, or Other?”

- 1 Transitional
- 2 Dual Language
- 3 Immersion
- 4 Other [Please Specify]: _____

VIEWS ON PROPOSITION 203

“Thank you. Now let’s talk about Proposition 203 which, as you know, restricted the type of programs schools can provide for ELL students.

3. I’m going to read to you several statements which describe various views related to this issue and ELL students.

For each statement, please indicate your level of agreement by responding: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.*

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Not Sure Don’t Know No Answer |
|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) ELL students need to learn English to succeed in this country..... | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| b) ELL students should abandon their home language and speak only English..... | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| c) ELL students should become fully bilingual in both English and their home language..... | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| d) Schools should help students become proficient in both English and their home language..... | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| e) When properly implemented, bilingual education programs are effective in helping ELL students learn English and achieve academic success | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| f) Sheltered English Immersion is a better model for ELLs than bilingual education. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| g) Proposition 203 has resulted in more effective programs for ELL students..... | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| h) Proposition 203 is too restrictive in terms of approaches schools can take to help ELL students learn English..... | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

EFFECTS OF PROPOSITION 203

“Now I’m going to ask you some questions about the effects of Proposition 203 on your school”

4a. Prior to Proposition 203, did your school have a bilingual program?

- 1 Yes [Go to → 4b]
- 2 No [Go to → 4c]
- 77 New School/School did not exist prior to Prop. 203
- 88 Don’t know/Not Sure [Go to → 4c]
- 99 No Answer [Go to → 4c]

4b. What has happened to your school’s Bilingual Program since the passage of Proposition 203? Has the program been *Expanded, Reduced, Eliminated, No Change, or Other Change*?

- 1 Expanded [Go to → 5a]
- 2 Reduced [Go to → 5a]
- 3 Eliminated [Go to → 5a]
- 4 No Change [Go to → 5a]
- 5 Other Change [Please specify]_____ [Go to → 5a]

4c. Does your school have a bilingual program now?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 88 Don’t know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

5a. Prior to Proposition 203, did your school have a Pull-Out ESL Program?

- 1 Yes [Go to → 5b]
- 2 No [Go to → 5c]
- 77 New School/School did not exist prior to Prop. 203
- 88 Don’t know/Not Sure [Go to → 5c]
- 99 No Answer [Go to → 5c]

5b. What has happened to your school's ESL Pull-Out program since the passage of Proposition 203? Has the program been *Expanded, Reduced, Eliminated, No Change, or Other Change*?

- 1 Expanded
- 2 Reduced
- 3 Eliminated
- 4 No Change
- 5 Other Change [Please specify]_____

5c. Does your school have a Pull-Out ESL program now?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 88 Don't know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

6. Prior to the passage of Proposition 203, in which type of classrooms were ELL students usually placed? Were most placed in a *Mainstream Classroom, a Structured English Immersion Classroom, a Bilingual Classroom, or some Other type of classroom*?

- 1 Mainstream
- 2 Structured English Immersion (SEI)
- 3 Bilingual
- 5 Other [**Please Specify**]_____
- 88 Don't know/Not sure
- 99 No answer

7. In what type of classroom are most ELLs in now? *Mainstream, Structured English Immersion, Bilingual, or some Other type of classroom*?

- 1 Mainstream
- 2 Structured English Immersion
- 3 Bilingual
- 5 Other [**Please Specify**]_____
- 88 Don't know/Not sure
- 99 No Answer

8a. In your school, are ELL students concentrated in specific 3rd grade classrooms, or are they spread out among all the 3rd grade classes?

- 1 Concentrated in specific 3rd grade classrooms [Go to → 8b]
- 2 Spread out among all the 3rd grade classes [Go to → 8b]
- 3 School only has one 3rd grade classroom
- 88 Don't know/Not sure
- 99 No Answer

8b. How many 3rd grade classrooms are there in your school?

_____ 3rd grade classrooms

8c. How many are classified as mainstream, Structured English Immersion, Bilingual, or other type of classrooms? [Enter # for each]

_____ Mainstream

_____ Structured English Immersion

_____ Bilingual

_____ Other [Please Specify] _____

9a. Of the teachers in your school who have ELL students, about how many currently have a full Bilingual or ESL Endorsement? Would you say *All, Most, a Few, or None*?

- 1 All [Go to → 10a]
- 2 Most [Go to → 9b]
- 3 Few [Go to → 9b]
- 4 None [Go to → 9b]
- 88 Don't know/Not sure [Go to → 9b]
- 99 No Answer [Go to → 9b]

9b. For those teachers who have ELL students, but do not have a bilingual or ESL Endorsement, how many are in the process of completing one? Would you say *All, Most, a Few, or None*?

- 1 All
- 2 Most
- 3 Few
- 4 None
- 88 Don't know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

**10a. In your classroom, do you have a regularly scheduled time for direct ESL instruction?
(Or do students get pulled out for ESL instruction?)**

- 1 Yes [Go to → 10b]
- 2 No [Go to → 11]
- 3 Sometimes/Occasionally [Go to → 10b]
- 4 Students are pulled-out for ESL [Go to → 10b]
- 5 I teach ESL all day/Everything I teach is ESL [Go to → 11a]
- 88 Don't know/Not sure [Go to → 11a]
- 99 No Answer [Go to → 11a]

10b. About how many days each week, and for how many minutes do students receive direct ESL instruction? (Note: If teacher says "all day" or "everything I teach is ESL," skip this question, change answer in 10a to #5 and Go to → 11a)

_____ days a week for _____ hours _____ minutes

- 99 Other (Please Specify)_____

11a. Has your school adopted a specific curriculum program for ESL or ELL instruction?

- 1 Yes [Go to → 11b]
- 2 No [Go to → 12]
- 88 Don't know/Not sure [Go to → 12]
- 99 No Answer [Go to → 12]

11b. What is the name of this program?

(Don't read answer choice, just code based on answer)

- 1 Into English (Hampton Brown)
- 2 On Our Way to English (Rigby)
- 3 Transitions (Scholastic)
- 4 English at your Command! (Hampton Brown)
- 5 Scott Foresman ESL
- 6 District created program
- 7 Schools, grade-level, or teacher created program
- 8 Other [Please Specify]_____
- 88 Don't Know/Not Sure/Can't Remember
- 99 No Answer

12. Does your school have bilingual paraprofessionals who work with students in the classroom?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 88 Don't Know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

13. Does your school have a Bilingual or ESL Specialist?

- 1 Yes [*Go to → 13b*]
- 2 No [*Go to → 14*]
- 88 Don't Know/Not Sure [*Go to → 14*]
- 99 No Answer [*Go to → 14*]

13b. Is this specialist a certified teacher or a paraprofessional?

- 1 Certified teacher
- 2 Paraprofessional
- 88 Don't Know/Not Sure
- 99 No answer

14. In your school, are teachers or paraprofessionals allowed to speak to ELLs in their native language to provide explanations or assistance?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 7 Not Applicable (No one at school can speak students' primary language)
- 88 Don't Know/Not sure
- 99 No answer

15. In your school, are ELL students allowed to speak to you, a paraprofessional, or to each other in their native language?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 88 Don't Know/Not sure
- 99 No answer

16. The state is creating a new SEI Endorsement. This endorsement only requires an initial 15 clock hours of training in teaching ELL students, followed by 45 clock hours several years later. What is your opinion on the sufficiency of this training? Do you believe this training will be *Completely Sufficient*, *Somewhat Sufficient*, *Insufficient*, or *Completely Insufficient*?

- 1 Completely Sufficient
- 2 Somewhat Sufficient
- 3 Insufficient
- 4 Completely Insufficient
- 88 Don't know/Not sure
- 99 No Answer

VIEWS ON HIGH STAKES TESTING FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

17. “Thank you. Now I am going to read you some statements describing views on, accountability, and high stakes testing. By high-stakes testing, I am referring specifically to the AIMS and SAT-9 tests which were used in the past, and the new AIMS-DPA test now being used in Arizona.

As before, please indicate your level of agreement by responding: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.*”

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Not Sure Don't Know No Answer |
|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Schools should be held accountable for ELL student learning..... | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| b) High stakes tests are appropriate for holding ELLs, their teachers and their schools accountable | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| c) High-stakes tests provide accurate measures of ELL students' academic achievement. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| d) Scores from high-stakes tests are useful for planning instruction for ELLs | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| e) Teachers are under pressure to “teach to the test” | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| f) Teachers are under pressure to raise test scores for ELL students | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| g) The amount of time teachers are expected to spend on testing and test-preparation is too much..... | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| h) The focus on high-stakes tests is driving instruction for ELL students which is inappropriate..... | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

“Thank you. Let’s continue with statements referring specifically to you and your own ELL students.”

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Not Sure Don’t Know No Answer |
|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| i) High Stakes Tests have increased the quality of teaching and learning in your classroom | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| j) High stakes tests have helped you become a more effective teacher of ELL students | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| k) High Stakes Tests have helped you focus on the linguistic and cultural needs of your ELL students | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

“Thank you. Let’s go on to the next question.”

18. “How much pressure do you feel to ‘teach to the test? *No Pressure, Some Pressure, or Strong Pressure?*”

- 1 No pressure
- 2 Some pressure
- 3 Strong pressure
- 88 Don’t know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

19. “I’m going to read a few recommendations which have been made regarding the inclusion of ELLs in high-stakes testing programs. For each statement, please indicate whether you would *Support* or *Oppose* each recommendation:

| | Support | Oppose | No Answer |
|---|---------|--------|-----------|
| a) Require all ELLs to take the test, regardless of how long they have been in the U.S.... | 1 | 2 | 99 |
| b) Provide accommodations for ELLs when taking the tests..... | 1 | 2 | 99 |
| c) Exclude ELLs from high-stakes tests for the first three years they are enrolled in school..... | 1 | 2 | 99 |
| d) Exclude ELLs until they become fluent in English | 1 | 2 | 99 |
| e) Use alternative assessments for ELLs until they are fluent in English | 1 | 2 | 99 |

EFFECTS OF HIGH STAKES TESTING ON CONTENT AREAS TAUGHT TO ELL STUDENTS

20. “I’m now going to name the major content areas taught in 3rd grade. Think about how the focus on high-stakes testing has affected the amount of instructional time in your classroom for each of these content areas. As I say each content area, please indicate if there has been a *Major Increase*, *Some Increase*, *Some Decrease*, *Major Decrease*, or *No Change* in the amount of instruction time.

| | <u>Major Increase</u> | <u>Some Increase</u> | <u>Some Decrease</u> | <u>Major Decrease</u> | <u>No Change</u> | <u>Not Sure/No Answer</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| a) Reading | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 99 |
| b) Writing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 99 |
| c) Math | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 99 |
| d) Science | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 99 |
| e) Social Studies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 99 |
| f) ESL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 99 |
| g) Art | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 99 |
| h) Music | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 99 |
| i) PE | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 99 |

EFFECTS OF HIGH STAKES TESTING CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION/PRACTICES FOR ELL STUDENTS

21. Now I am going to read to you several types of classroom practices, strategies and techniques. For each one, please tell me if your use of this practice *Increased*, or *Decreased*, or if there was *No Change*, as a result of high stakes testing and the pressure to raise test scores. For any practice/technique you do not recognize or have never used, please say *Never Used*.

| | <u>Increased</u> | <u>Decreased</u> | <u>No change</u> | <u>Never used</u> | <u>No Answer</u> |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| a) SDAIE (sheltered) instruction | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| b) Primary language support | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| c) Small group instruction | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| d) Whole group or whole class instruction | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| e) Hands-on activities | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| f) Cooperative group learning | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| g) Learning centers | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| h) Authentic assessments | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| i) Multiple-choice tests | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| j) Class discussions | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |

| | <u>Increased</u> | <u>Decreased</u> | <u>No change</u> | <u>Never used</u> | <u>No Answer</u> |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| k) Read Alouds of Children Books | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| l) Shared Reading | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| m) Guided Reading | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| n) Silent Reading Time (DEAR, SSR, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| o) Accelerated Reader | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| p) Reading Basals | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| q) Direct phonics instruction | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| r) Phonics Worksheets | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| s) Reading Comprehension Worksheets | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| t) Grammar Worksheets | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |

| | <u>Increased</u> | <u>Decreased</u> | <u>No change</u> | <u>Never used</u> | <u>No Answer</u> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| u) Shared or Modeled Writing | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| v) Journal Writing | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| w) Writer’s Workshop | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| x) Spelling Textbooks | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| y) Spelling Worksheets | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| z) Independent seat work | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |

| | <u>Increased</u> | <u>Decreased</u> | <u>No change</u> | <u>Never used</u> | <u>No Answer</u> |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| aa) Math Worksheets | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| bb) Math Manipulatives | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| cc) Science Experiments | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| dd) Test Preparation | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| ee) Test Preparation Worksheets | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| ff) Skill and drill exercises | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| gg) Movies/Videos | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| hh) Field trips | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| ii) Recess | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |

Are there any other classroom techniques or strategies that have increased or decreased in your classroom as a result of high-stakes tests? (Specify)

| | <u>Increased</u> | <u>Decreased</u> | <u>No change</u> | <u>Never used</u> | <u>No Answer</u> |
|-------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 0 | 88 | 99 |

22. Within the past few years, has your school adopted or purchased any new programs or curriculum designed to raise test scores?

- 1 Yes [*Go to → 22b and 22c*]
- 2 No
- 88 Don't Know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

22b. What program or programs were adopted?

22c. How effective do you feel this program (or these programs) has been or will be in helping ELLs improve their test scores? Would you say *Very Effective, Somewhat Effective, Not Very Effective, or Completely Ineffective*?

- 1 Very Effective
- 2 Somewhat Effective
- 3 Not Very Effective
- 4 Completely Ineffective
- 88 Don't Know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

23. In what month do you begin direct test preparation instruction?

(i.e., test preparation worksheets, workbooks, taking practice tests, doing test-like problems with whole class, etc.) (*Don't read answers, just code when answer given*)

Month: _____ Number _____ (e.g., February = 2) (*Note: Just enter month number in database*)

- 0 Don't do direct test preparation
- 88 Don't Know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

24. In the month preceding the test, about how much time do you spend on Test Preparation each day?

_____ hours _____ minutes

(*Note: If say "All Day" enter 6 hours. If "I don't do test prep" enter 0. Leave blank if "Don't know, or No Answer"*)

25. Now I'm going to read to you a list of different behaviors ELL students may exhibit while taking a high-stakes test. For each statement, please indicate if you *Frequently*, *Occasionally*, or have *Never* observed these behaviors.

| | Occasionally | Frequently | Never |
|--|--------------|------------|-------|
| | | | |
| a) Complained that they could not read the questions or answers | N | O | F |
| b) Complained that they could not understand the questions or answers | N | O | F |
| c) Left entire sections of the test blank | N | O | F |
| d) Randomly filled in bubbles without attempting to read the questions | N | O | F |
| e) Became visibly frustrated or upset | N | O | F |
| f) Cried | N | O | F |
| g) Got sick and/or asked to go to the nurse | N | O | F |
| h) Threw up | N | O | F |
| h) Other _____ | N | O | F |

26a. Were any accommodations provided for your ELL students last year when they took the SAT-9 or AIMS tests?

1 Yes [go to → 26b and 26c]

2 No [go to → 27]

26b. What kinds of accommodations were provided?

(Don't read answers, just circle 1 for each accommodation described, and code all others 0)

| Quest. # | Provided | Not Provided | Accommodation |
|----------|----------|--------------|--|
| 26b-1 | 1 | 0 | Extra time |
| 26b-2 | 1 | 0 | Reading test directions aloud in English |
| 26b-3 | 1 | 0 | Read test items aloud in English |
| 26b-4 | 1 | 0 | Oral Translation/interpretation of test directions |
| 26b-5 | 1 | 0 | Oral Translation/interpretation of test items. |
| 26b-6 | 1 | 0 | Provide explanations in English |
| 26b-7 | 1 | 0 | Provide explanations in native language |
| 26b-8 | 1 | 0 | Allowed to use English dictionary/glossary |
| 26b-9 | 1 | 0 | Allowed to use bilingual dictionary/glossary |
| 26b-10 | 1 | 0 | Individual or small group administration |
| 26b-11 | 1 | 0 | Testing spread out over multiple days |
| 26b-12 | 1 | 0 | Other(s) (Specify) _____ |

26c. How effective were these accommodations in helping your ELL students do better on the tests? Were they *Very Effective*, *Somewhat Effective*, *Not Very Effective*, or *Completely Ineffective*?

- 1 Very Effective
- 2 Somewhat Effective
- 3 Not Very Effective
- 4 Completely Ineffective
- 88 Don't Know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

SCHOOL LABELING

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions regarding the school labeling under AZ Learns and NCLB.

I understand that over the past three years, under AZ Learns, your schools was first labeled as _____ (2002), then as _____ (2003) and now as _____ (2004). [See Cover Sheet]. Is this correct?

Last year under NCLB, your school was designated as (Making / Failing to Make) Adequate Yearly Progress, and this year your school has been designated as (Making / Failing to Make) Adequate Yearly Progress. [See Cover Sheet]. Is this correct?

27. How accurate do you feel these labels are in describing your school overall? *Very Accurate*, *Somewhat Accurate*, *Inaccurate*, or *Very Inaccurate*?

- 1 Very accurate
- 2 Somewhat accurate
- 3 Inaccurate
- 4 Very inaccurate
- 88 Don't know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

28. How accurate do you feel these labels are in describing your school's success with ELL students? *Very Accurate*, *Somewhat Accurate*, *Inaccurate*, or *Very Inaccurate*?

- 1 Very accurate
- 2 Somewhat accurate
- 3 Inaccurate
- 4 Very inaccurate
- 88 Don't know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

29. Do you feel it is fair to use these labels to compare schools with large of numbers of ELLs and schools with low numbers of ELLs?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 88 Don't know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

30. How have the recent changes in language, high-stakes testing, and accountability policies in the state affected your satisfaction with your teaching career? Have these changes resulted in *Greater Satisfaction, Lesser Satisfaction, or No Change*?

- 1 Greater satisfaction
- 2 Lesser satisfaction
- 0 No Change
- 88 Don't Know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

31. How have these policies affected the morale of your fellow teachers and staff members? Would you say these policies have *Substantially Increased Morale, Increased Morale, Had No Effect on Morale, Decreased Morale, or Substantially Decreased Morale*?

- 1 Substantially Increased Morale
- 2 Increased Morale
- 3 Had No Effect on Morale
- 4 Decreased Morale
- 5 Substantially Decreased Morale
- 88 Don't Know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

32a. Within the past three years, have any teachers at your school quit or transferred to a different school due in large part to frustration with current state policies?

- 1 Yes [*Go to → 32b*]
- 2 No
- 88 Don't Know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

32b. About how many teachers have quit or transferred?

_____ teachers

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Thank you. I'd just like to ask you a few more background question on your teaching experience.

33. How many years have you been teaching?

_____ years

34. How many years at your current school?

_____ years

35a. Do you have an ESL or Bilingual Endorsement?

(Don't read answers. Just code after response. Prompt for type of endorsement if necessary)

- 1 Yes – Full ESL Endorsement
- 2 Yes – Provisional ESL Endorsement
- 3 Yes – Bilingual Endorsement
- 4 No [Go to → 35b]
- 88 Don't know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

35b. Are you in the process of completing an ESL Endorsement?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No [Go to → 35c]
- 88 Don't know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

35c. Do you plan to complete an ESL Endorsement in the future?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 88 Don't Know/Not Sure
- 99 No Answer

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Thank you so much. The questions in the survey have raised a number of issues. At this point I'd like to give ask you a few open-ended questions so you can speak freely on these issues. ...

Have your school or district administrators provided clear guidance on how SEI classrooms differ from mainstream classrooms in terms of curriculum and instruction?

What directions, if any, have you received from your school or district administrators regarding the use of ELL students' native language in the classroom?

What do you perceive to be the greatest needs of ELL students?

How effective are the state's policies in helping you meet those needs?

How would things be different in your school or classroom if these policies were not in place?

What do you feel entails adequate training for teachers of ELLs? (Or, How much training do you feel teachers of ELLs need? Or, Can you describe what you believe is important for teachers of ELL students to be trained in?)

If you had the power to make any changes to current state policies, what would you change and why?

Do you have any other thoughts about any aspect of Proposition 203, high stakes testing, accountability and ELL students not covered by the questions above?

CLOSING STATEMENT

Thank you so much for your time. If you are interested in receiving the results of this survey, I'll be happy to take down your e-mail address.

(If e-mail or mailing address is given, write down on a separate sheet of paper).

Thank you so much for your time. I truly appreciate it.

Do you have any questions for me?

(Answer any questions they have)

Thank you again, and good luck with the rest of the school year. Goodbye.

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