English Learner Course Scheduling: Practice, Implications, and Aspirations

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ENGLISH LEARNER COURSE SCHEDULING:
PRACTICE, IMPLICATIONS, AND ASPIRATIONS

by

Aziza Boutaleb Simmons

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Education

In

Teacher Leadership

In the

Bagwell College of Education

Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw, Georgia

December 2018
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to America and to Lindy for giving me America.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the involvement and commitment of several individuals and institutions. First, I would like to recognize my dissertation chair, Dr. Karen Kuhel, for her sustained and consistent support and guidance from the conception of this research body to its final culmination. I thank her for her patience, kindness, and work with me during the entire lifetime of this dissertation. I will never forget her hospitality and work sessions that took place at her kitchen table and her desk at her house. I can still taste the lemon-ginger tea she made for us and other foods. Her chocolate labradoodle, Pepper, was a nice distraction from the intensity and panic moods I felt while working with her on revisions, organization, or new ideas and research. I am forever indebted to her. My other committee members were equally as crucial to the completion of this work. Drs. Megan Adams and Albert Jimenez provided me with targeted feedback and helped propel me into continuing my work and improving the quality of my research and my writing.

I depended on the support and encouragement of other individuals in my life, namely my former students: Marta and Harold, who have become a permanent part of my life. They believed in me and cheered me on. I felt the responsibility of working hard and achieving this feat, not just for me, but for them as well. I would like to thank my son, Zac, who thinks of me as brave and smart and brags about me to his friends and strangers alike, not knowing that he is my hero and he is, by far, the biggest and best achievement of my life. Other individuals who deserve recognition for contributing to this work are my research participants and their school. They were cooperative, open, and generous with their time and effort. I couldn’t have done it without them. Drs. Iván Manuel Jorrín Abellán, a qualitative research consultant, and Olga Coz, graduate school librarian, were equally as instrumental because they fulfilled several roles for me when I
called on them for assistance. And lastly, none of this, not even me, would have been possible without the work, compassion, and foresight of Carolyn W. Anderson (Lindy) who saw the promise in me almost three decades ago and opened a door that would change the course my and my family’s history forever. Lindy is truly one of a kind. Her missions, her conviction in doing good, and her embodiment of eternal, humanitarian values know no boundaries. Words fall short of describing her, what she stands for, and what she accomplishes.
ABSTRACT

ENGLISH LEARNER COURSE SCHEDULING
PRACTICE, IMPLICATIONS, AND ASPIRATIONS

by

Aziza Boutaleb Simmons

Educating English learners (ELs) is a complex, multifaceted job that takes into account numerous constructs, some tangible and others not. For this endeavor to work optimally, all parties need to work closely and rely on each other with the end result in mind: offering a quality and equitable education to ELs that addresses their academic and language needs and propels them to reach their full potential (Baecher, 2014; Dirocco, 1998). One influential factor is course scheduling for content and career areas (Minaya-Rowe, 2015). Using qualitative case study methodology, this dissertation investigates the current process for scheduling ELs through in-depth semi-structured interviews of teachers and administrators involved in the scheduling process and observations of a small group of ELs to determine a) what students understand about current scheduling practices; and b) the impact of the current scheduling process on how content teachers address or do not address ELs’ needs in mainstream classes. Through presentation and analysis of the data, the reader will learn more about how ELs’ education at LUHS is impacted and whether introducing a new cohort model has a place in scheduling classes for ELs. The data revealed that students were unaware of current scheduling practices and the rationale behind these practices. They were also unaware of other areas impacted by the scheduling process, such as high school graduation rates and college admission
processes. The participants saw value in establishing a new scheduling model based on cohorts.

*Keywords:* cohort model, English language learners, English learners, ESOL, secondary ELs, scheduling, homogeneous grouping
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose and Rationale</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study and Research Questions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who I Am</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling Scenarios</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keywords and Their Definitions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Literature Review</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditions for High Academic Achievement of English Learners (ELs) in</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Schools</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Preparedness</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Training and Collaboration</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ELs Do Not Understand the Courses That Are Selected For Them and How Their Educational Goals Dovetail With Graduation ......................... 109
ELs Do Not Understand Either High School or College Requirements ....... 111
Participants See Value in Introducing a Cohort Scheduling Model to Address ELs’ Unique Learning and School Community Needs - Data linked to Research Question 2 ................................................................. 116
Implications for Practice .................................................................. 117
Future Research ............................................................................. 120
Research Limitations ...................................................................... 122
Conclusion ..................................................................................... 124
References ....................................................................................... 126
Appendix A: Observation Protocol Example ........................................ 143
Appendix B: List of Interview Protocols ........................................... 145
Appendix C: Example of Document That Outlines High School EL Accommodations 151
Appendix D: Course Artifacts for American Literature Class Observed ............ 153
Appendix E: Course Artifacts for Earth Systems Class Observed ................. 157
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Correlating Graduation Numbers in Georgia as of 2016</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Graduation Numbers in the United States as of 2016</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Large Urban High School Demographics</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A Visual Representation of the Researcher</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Typical Scenarios</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Conceptual Framework Design</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Open, Multigrade Level, EL Cohort Design</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>A Snapshot of Data Analysis Using Google Drive</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Current Academic Groups at LUHS, Minus the EL Cohort</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Identification of Home Language of Students Through Student’s Home Language Survey</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Portion of the Document That Outlines High School EL Learner Accommodations</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Full List of all the 23 Credit Courses Required of Every High School Student in the State of Georgia to Complete/Pass in Order to Receive a High School Diploma</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Courses that are Offered to ELs in the ESOL Program Based on their English Language Proficiency Levels</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Generic Cornell Notes Form</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Classroom Arrangement in the American Literature Class</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Classroom Arrangement in the Earth Systems Class</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Georgia Standards for Earth Systems Course</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. Pictures the Earth Systems Teacher Uses During Observation Lesson ............ 101

17. A Section of Georgia’s CCRPI as it Pertains to High Schools .................. 109
Chapter 1: Introduction

School personnel must work tirelessly and continuously to balance many factors that affect student life and educational outcomes. Scheduling classes, which involves allocating time, is highly important (Baker, Fabrega, Galindo, & Mishook, 2004; Hanover Research, 2014). The amount of time devoted to the school day, the length of classes, the time spent on the different units of instruction, and the amount of time related to assessments shape school related data as they pertain to the education of the English language (EL) student (DiRocco, 1998; Eineder & Bishop, 1997; Hart, 1994; McGorry & McGorry, 1998).

Schools undergo constant changes, sometimes because of mandates from different government and community entities and sometimes because they want to improve student educational outcomes (Education Commission of the States, 2005; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Zacarian, 2011). Therefore, the traditional school schedule has also undergone several revisions since it “has been deemed by some ineffective, and administrators and educators are exploring new scheduling options” (Williams, 2011, p. 1). Some school leaders believe that there is a direct correlation between the amount of time a student spends on a particular topic and his/her achievement in that same subject (Kolbe, Partridge, & O’Reilly, 2011; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1984). Therefore, some school leaders have considered different ways of using school time, ranging from the traditional one hour per class for up to six or seven classes a day (Williamson, 2010) to a variation of a block of 90 minutes per subject (Hughes, 2004; Williams, 2011). Some blocks are semester long, 4 x 4, and others are yearlong, 8 x 8, which alternate subjects between A-Days and
B-Days. In other words, the student takes mathematics, for example, every other day, not every day. Because of the persistent pressure on schools and students to do well in order to compete for ever shrinking global resources and to be part of a highly competitive workforce, educators have tried to reorganize the school day to offer more choices to students, to focus on core subjects, or to remediate those students who are behind or below grade level (Baker, Joireman, Clay, & Abbot, 2006; National Center on Time and Learning, 1994). The continued reexamination of the school day “is imperative to achieving high learning goals for all students [and to] stretch and reshape learning time in order to improve student achievement” (Stedron, 2007, p. 32).

American secondary schools have local flexibility over the division of the instructional day. For example, in the same school district, one high school (School A) may adopt a 55-minute period per subject while another one (School B), just down the road, may opt for dividing its school day into four 90-minute blocks. This local flexibility may lead to complications if a student, say, moves from School A to School B. That student would end up with only .5 credits on his/her transcript, and his/her school year would be a little disorganized since he/she would not be on a similar graduation track as other students in the School B setting. Schools generally lack a national, or even a statewide, profile that governs policies and practices that would standardize school learning times for elementary, middle, and high schools (Baker et al, 2006; Kolbe et al., 2011). As such, data related to the allocation of time and how that impacts student performance vary with every change in scheduling (Baker et al., 2006; DiRocco, 1998). Variations in student learning outcomes, even within particular schools, are related to the different school demographics and other factors that affect school learning, such as teacher quality.
and professional education, student and family socioeconomic and cultural background, the student’s disposition to learning, and the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of students (Eineder & Bishop, 1997; Gullatt, 2006). Given these limitations and interferences, studying the effects of school schedules on student outcomes may be difficult or inconclusive. Having to address course scheduling for ELs makes the issue even more complicated since the ELs bring with them even more challenges and more factors that affect their education (Fuller & Clarke, 1994; Haas, Tran, Huang, & Yu, 2015).

**Background of the Study**

The students who make up the EL subgroup are students whose first language is not English and who have either entered the United States (U.S.) after they started schooling in their homeland or students born in the U.S. to families that speak another language at home and the children start school already speaking a language other than English (Lopez, 2008; Minaya-Rowe, 2015). The National Center on Educational Statistics (NCES) updates its online database with EL numbers periodically. Currently the NCES states,

The percentage of public school students in the United States who were English language learners was higher in school year 2013–14 (9.3 percent, or an estimated 4.5 million students) than in 2003–04 (8.8 percent, or an estimated 4.2 million students) and 2012–13 (9.2 percent, or an estimated 4.4 million students). In 2013–14, the percentage of students in ELL programs was generally higher for school districts in more urbanized areas than for those in less urbanized areas. For example, ELL students in cities made up an average of 14.1 percent of total public
school enrollment, ranging from 9.6 percent in small cities to 16.6 percent in large cities. In suburban areas, ELL students constituted an average of 8.7 percent of public school enrollment, ranging from 6.0 percent in midsize suburban areas to 9.0 percent in large suburban areas. (Kena et al., 2016, p. 93)

The correlating graduation numbers in Georgia as of 2016 are shown in Table 1. Table 2 demonstrates that nationally the numbers are very similar to those in Georgia.

Table 1

*Correlating Graduation Numbers in Georgia as of 2016*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall (adjusted cohort)</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English Proficient (All English Learners who received ESOL services at the time of graduation)</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities (numbers reflect both regular diplomas and certificates)</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (GaDOE, 2016a).
Table 2

*Graduation Numbers in the United States as of 2016*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English Proficient</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (Kena et al., 2016)

Even though the trend of students graduating with a high school diploma has been improving for the general education students, reaching as high as 80% nationally, for ELs, the numbers have been stagnant for many years (Cech, 2009; O'Sullivan, 2015). These numbers may change when considering ELs graduating with diplomas, good grade point averages (GPAs), achievement of full English language proficiency. By looking at the students’ course scheduling, I hope to shed light on a structural aspect that has the potential to affect the students’ outcomes in secondary schools. This, however, is only one area of influence and the ELs are affected by numerous constructs that contribute to their final educational results.
Typically, one of the very first tasks every new student, or all students at the beginning of every new school year engage in, is receiving a course schedule. Many students feel very intense anxieties over what courses their schedules dictate for them. As teachers greet students during the school’s open house events or other meet-and-greet events before the beginning of school, students are usually focused on receiving their schedules in order to see what courses and what teachers they will be working with that school year. This seemingly simple task differs from school to school depending on the school’s EL numbers and the school’s available resources, including teachers. I identified the area of scheduling ELs as a gap in the educational research field. I researched the rationale Large Urban High School (LUHS) in Large Urban District (LUD) implements in issuing course schedules to the ELs, the course scheduling patterns currently practiced, and whether scheduling students in course and grade level cohorts is a more successful model and logistically easier to implement. The data for this study was collected from LUHS in the metropolitan Atlanta area in Georgia. Establishing an EL cohort model would implement a new scheduling model at LUHS. The model would need to be in place for a few years before it is assessed for how successful it is and whether it has facilitated the ELs’ instruction at LUHS and enabled them to graduate from high school having achieved both full English language proficiency and good grade point average (GPA) in a timely manner.

**Purpose and Rationale**

I investigated current ways of scheduling secondary school ELs at Large Urban High School (LUHS) in Large Urban District (LUD) in Georgia and looked into those practices and the rationale behind selecting courses for the ELs. The study also examined
whether offering scheduling cohort models for ELs at LUHS is more practical in addressing the ELs’ educational needs and focusing resources in order to better serve the students. Studying how cohort models work for other students, especially in higher education institutions, aims to help set up uniformity and a comprehensive path for the students’ eventual high school graduation (Fenning, 2004; Gentry, 2016; O'Sullivan, 2015). Schools follow curriculum mandates from the state department of education and program guidelines from the federal and state governments, but have large flexibilities in establishing EL program specifics, such as the order of courses, at each school (Baecher, 2014; Cech, 2009; ESSA, 2015). Most of what affects EL programs has to do with the number of the students served in the program and the availability of resources and expert staff within the school (Baecher, 2014; Minaya-Rowe, 2015).

Around the U.S., EL program models differ significantly from each other and have also undergone perpetual change (Cellante & Donne, 2013; Faltis & Arias, 2012). The program model that is more prevalent is an English language development (ELD) program, mostly offering one or two daily sheltered English instruction (SEI) and/or second language development classes ranging from 45 to 90-minute blocks. These ELD classes differ at each school based on the ESOL teacher’s credentials (Cellante & Donne, 2013; Minaya-Rowe, 2015; Sparks, 2016). If the teacher is certified to teach secondary school English language arts (ELA) and has ESOL credentials, then the ELs take those courses to satisfy the ELA graduation course requirements with the ESOL teacher. However, if the teacher is not licensed in ELA, then the students only take ELD as an elective and are still required to take ELA courses with other ELA teachers in mainstream classes, often with the general education population. Additionally, the ELs are required to
take other subject-specific content for graduation often with the general population in what is often termed mainstreaming of ELs or the Sink-or-Swim model by critics of this model (Cech, 2009; Somé-Guiébré, 2016; Varela, 2010). In these classes, the ELs have to be with their native English-speaking peers in mathematics, social studies, science, and sometimes, ELA courses. Some schools that have larger numbers of ELs are able to offer sheltered content courses in what is known in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) field as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) where the content teacher, who is certified in both TESOL and a content area, plans and delivers both content and language objectives side-by-side for the ELs (Echevarría, Short, & Powers, 2006; Lindholm-Leary, 2000).

Because of these scheduling and program variations, the main purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the course scheduling rationale and practices at LUHS, and to investigate whether proposing scheduling ELs in grade level and subject specific cohorts, slightly similar to SIOP and higher education cohorts, would help to standardize the scheduling practice and lead to a systematic and consistent scheduling practice at LUHS that would streamline concentration of resources and structural logistics at LUHS. Establishing a scheduling cohort model within a school is a novel idea in addressing the ELs’ education in secondary school grades as well as assist them in acquiring English language proficiency in a more efficient and systematic manner (Gentry, 2016; Sylvain, 2010). I have set up scheduling cohorts at some of the schools where I worked before, but I have not been able to measure their efficacy or whether the model worked for the ELs, mostly because the model was not implemented with fidelity and was not put in place for the duration of four years, the amount of time an EL goes through high school to
graduate. Additionally, the success of the students in language proficiency and improving graduation rates depend on many other factors; scheduling is only one of them. This is a clear limitation of the study.

Significance of the Study and Research Questions

Who I Am

I am many things but for the sake of this study, there are three parts of me that are intertwined and affect my work on this dissertation and in the classroom. I am a teacher, who has been working in the field of second language teaching and learning for more than twenty years. I have taught all grades from kindergarten through 12th grade; though most of my career has been devoted to high schools. I am also an English learner. I immigrated from Morocco in 1990 to pursue higher education and have attended many universities and achieved many academic degrees and teaching credentials. Here, I am a researcher investigating how ELs are scheduled in secondary schools and how those schedules affect them and their education. Figure 1 is a visual representation of the three parts of me discussed above.
Research Questions

This dissertation answers two research questions:

1. What current scheduling approaches are implemented at LUHS and what is the rationale behind them?

2. What educational implications are there for the implementation of a grade level and subject specific cohort model for ELs at LUHS?

Scheduling Scenarios

Figure 2 depicts two snapshots of situations that I have dealt with concerning scheduling. Both the situations below were not remediated to benefit the students for different reasons. Usually these scenarios are not as emotionally benign as they appear in this paper. The situation is usually more dramatic where the student is pleading with me with a desperate expression on their faces and tears lining up their eyelids. I have often
been put in helpless positions where sometimes both my students and their teachers wonder why the ELs are in those classes and how they are supposed to participate in a content that is in a language different from the language the students know. As an ESOL teacher, these situations are quite personal to me.

Scenario 1

Miss, please change my schedule. Please, I don’t understand anything in that class. I can’t talk or ask a question. The teacher speaks too fast. Miss, do I need that class? I am failing! Please, Miss, Yes, I know but just try to get me out of that class, OK?

Scenario 2

Email March 21, 2017 at about 11:00 AM:

Hello,

Would you please place AB (from Gambia) and CD (from Pakistan) in reading instead of Spanish? They both are new in the country and they need to spend more time studying English. They are unlikely to benefit from a Spanish class currently.

A few days later and another email to the school registrar:

Good day, XY,

Would you please authorize EF to make the requested schedule changes below? I emailed the counselors yesterday, but they have been too busy with the career fair and I’m not sure they have seen the email.

Thank you very much.

A few more days later and one more email:

Greetings Ms. Simmons,

The counselors will speak to the students and inquire about their interest. They will place them in another elective.

No change was made and the two newcomer ELs spent a semester in a Spanish class.

Figure 2. Typical scenarios.
Throughout my career, I have worked to bridge the gap of differences between the students and their content teachers by reteaching and clarifying the material in my classes. The teachers and I have also worked together to rewrite the assessments or to modify them in order for the ELs to perform and make progress. Additionally, I have offered training and tips to teachers in order to assist them with how to understand and work with their ELs.

Statement of the Problem

Schools have the flexibility of choosing different cluster models that may address the ELs’ unique scheduling needs that would target both English language proficiency and content courses (Cellante & Donne, 2013; Martin-Beltrán & Peercy, 2012). The EL subgroup of students could be treated in similar scheduling practices as the gifted/talented and the special education students. Those subgroups have had success through ability grouping as is the case for the gifted and talented students and grouping as mandated by the students’ individualized educational plans (IEPs) for the students with learning disabilities (Bloom, 1984; Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011). However, “cohorts” as referenced in this dissertation, resemble more closely how higher education degrees are organized and implemented for older, professional students, who return to school for more career advancement and look for nontraditional educational settings to complete their degrees faster (Fenning, 2004; Witteveen, 2015). If the ELs are grouped by language proficiency levels and/or by grade level and subject specific schedules, the school would be able to customize their services, as they do for other subgroups. EL grouping may also be able to streamline resources to focus on that group of students and their teachers (Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011; Fenning, 2004; Schultz, 2000). In these
content and language groupings, schools would establish collaboration on instruction between the ESOL teacher and the content teacher (Cellante & Donne, 2013; Echevarría et al., 2006). Teachers would also be able to concentrate their education and training in order to teach ELs (Martin-Beltrán & Peercy, 2012; Minaya-Rowe, 2015; Witteveen, 2015).

This study is significant because it examines the status quo of course scheduling for secondary school ELs at LUHS, how well current scheduling practices are working, what affects decision making regarding EL course scheduling, whether ELs know what courses they need to take and why, and how implementing a cohort model, a form of grouping, would serve the ELs’ needs and if it would streamline scheduling logistics. These questions guided this study:

1. What current scheduling approaches are implemented at LUHS and what is the rationale behind them?
2. What educational implications are there for the implementation of a grade level and subject specific scheduling cohort model for ELs at LUHS?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study encompasses the relationships among all the elements of the research process: past and current literature, my interests and goals, EL identity and positionality, context and setting, research on course scheduling, and methodology and methods (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). A conceptual framework is a series of sequenced, logical propositions, the purpose of which is to ground the study and convince readers of the study’s importance and rigor (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017; Stake, 2005). The conceptual framework for this study guides its purpose of why it matters,
even if it is relevant only to a small community (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017).

Through a well-mapped conceptual framework, I argue that:

- the research questions are an outgrowth of the argument for contextual relevance;
- the research design maps out the study goals, questions, and context(s);
- the data to be collected provide me with the raw material needed to explore the research questions; and
- the analytic approach will allow me to address those questions effectively (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). Figure 3 is a visual of the study’s conceptual framework.

**Figure 3.** Conceptual framework design.
Keywords and Their Definitions

- **Accommodation**: Adapting language (spoken or written) to make it more understandable to second language learners. In assessment, accommodations may be made to the presentation, response method, setting, or timing/scheduling of the assessment (Baker, 2000; Rivera & Stansfield, 2000).

- **Bilingual education**: An educational program in which two languages are used to provide content matter instruction. As with the term bilingualism, bilingual education is "a simple label for a complex phenomenon." An important distinction is between those programs that use and promote two languages and those where bilingual children are present, but bilingualism is not fostered in the curriculum (Baker & Jones, 1998).

- **Cohort**: A group of students educated together; e.g., first-grade students who remain together through fifth grade, and whose scores are reported as a unit, or a group of ELs who enter a third grade Structured English Immersion (SEI), program together. In this dissertation, cohort is used similarly to the higher education set up of students who enter a program of study together, take classes together, and graduate together.

- **Content area**: Generally refers to academic subjects in school; e.g., math, science, English/language arts, reading, or social sciences.

- **Core content areas**: are those on which students must be tested annually to determine their progress towards meeting academic content standards and achieving graduation or grade level promotion. These currently include reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies.
• **ELD**: English language development (ELD) means instruction designed specifically for English language learners to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. This type of instruction is also known as English as a second language (ESL) or teaching English to speakers of other languages (ESOL).

• **ELL/EL**: English Language Learners (ELLs) or English Learners (ELs) are students whose first language is not English and who are in the process of learning English.

• **ESOL**: English for speakers of other languages is an educational approach in which English language learners are instructed in the use of the English language. Their instruction is based on a special curriculum that typically involves little or no use of the native language, focuses on language (as opposed to content) and is usually taught during specific school periods. For the rest of the school day, students may be placed in mainstream classrooms, an immersion program, or a bilingual education program.

• **Home language**: Language a student speaks at home, with family. Also known as first language (L1), mother tongue, and native language.

• **Lau v. Nichols**: Lawsuit filed by Chinese parents in San Francisco in 1974 that led to a landmark Supreme Court ruling that stated that identical education does not constitute equitable education under the Civil Rights Act and does not provide access to students whose first language is not English, effectively establishing programs in schools that address students’ needs whose first language is not English. School districts must take affirmative
steps to overcome educational barriers faced by non-English speakers (Baker, 2000).

- **OCR:** The Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Education, has responsibility for enforcing Title programs of Civil Rights Act of 1964, like Title III. OCR investigates allegations of civil rights violations and initiates investigations of compliance with federal civil rights laws in schools that serve special student populations, including language-minority students. The office has developed several policies with regard to measuring compliance with the Lau v. Nichols decision.

- **Pull-out:** A program in which LEP students are "pulled out" of regular, mainstream classrooms for special instruction in English as a second language (Baker, 2000).

- **Push-in:** In contrast with pull-out instruction, in push-in programs, the ESOL teacher provides instruction by going into the regular classroom, collaborating with the classroom teacher, and addressing the ELs’ language needs through content instruction.

- **Sheltered English:** An instructional approach used to make academic instruction in English understandable to English learners to help them acquire proficiency in English while at the same time achieving in content areas. Sheltered English instruction differs from ESOL in that English is not taught as a language with a focus on learning the language. Rather, content knowledge and skills are the goals. In the sheltered classroom, teachers use simplified language, physical activities, visual aids, and the environment to
teach vocabulary for concept development in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and other subjects (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1987).

- **Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP):** SIOP is a framework for planning and delivering instruction in content areas such as science, history, and mathematics to English language learners as well as other students. The goal of SIOP is to help teachers integrate academic language development into their lessons, allowing students to learn and practice English as it is used in the context of school, including the vocabulary used in textbooks and lectures in each academic discipline.

**Conclusion**

Given the complex educational situation that ELs have to maneuver through as they progress through grade school, culminating with a potential high school diploma, the educational establishment and its personnel have their work cut out for them. The ELs depend on and trust the educational institution to do what is best for them. The students, because of their cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, typically do not demand attention because most of the time they do not know what governs their educational access and what options are available to them. They lack the linguistic, cultural, and institutional knowledge needed to be involved in bargaining their predicament. School personnel are generally aware of these factors and they try to address the students’ needs appropriately. However, much work is still needed for the educational services to work maximally for all students.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Conditions for High Academic Achievement of English Learners (ELs) in Secondary Schools

Teacher Preparedness

Research on many aspects of the education of English learners (ELs) is extensive and it continues to expand. Researchers in the EL field have spent time studying the current conditions that contribute to the success of ELs in grade schools (Ardasheva, Tretter, & Kinny, 2012; Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Cummins, 1979, 1981, 1997). The University of the State of New York published a blueprint for a successful educational plan for ELs, which has a great vision aiming at addressing the diverse needs of all the ELs in New York’s public school systems by,

- providing a clear vision for student success that includes high expectations for ELLs’ achievement and socioemotional development, supported by a purposeful plan of action that provides multiple pathways to college and career readiness through high-quality programs that meet the needs of ELLs. (University of the State of New York, 2014, p. 2)

Schools across the country strive to provide equitable educational conditions for all student groups, including ELs. One condition that enhances the ELs’ predisposition to benefiting from their classrooms is the amount of formal education they have prior to entering a U.S. school (Cunningham, & Stanovich, 1997; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015). DeCapua and Marshall (2015) identify between the different types of formal schooling, whether it is similar to that in Western schools or different. These distinctions are important because children in Western schools, such as the U.S., are trained “to
participate in an educational system based on logic, analysis, reasoning, and literacy” (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015, p. 49).

Capitalizing on the ELs’ previous educational assets is sound educational pedagogy to implement in classrooms (Blair, 2016; Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 1997; Karathanos, 2010). An EL’s biggest asset may be his/her native language and culture (Cummins, 1997, 2000; Karathanos, 2010; Nascimento, 2017). Teachers who view ELs’ linguistic and cultural background as a positive aspect and use it as a springboard to tap their prior knowledge and competencies usually are themselves more successful educators and their students do better (Cummins, 1997; Garcia-Vazquez, Vazquez, Lopez, & Ward, 1997; Karathanos, 2010). Cummins (1997), Garcia-Vazquez et al. (1997), and Lee (2002) find that proficiency in a native language leads to higher academic achievement in a second language. Using native language and home culture depends on teachers’ positive attitudes towards these aspects of the EL (Blair, 2016; Crawford, 2004; Garcia-Vazquez et al., 1997; Karathanos, 2010; Pettit, 2011). In those cases, teachers approach the EL with a different set of values towards linguistic and cultural diversity. Values that teachers hold affect their expectations and their actions in the classroom (Blair, 2016; Cummins, 1981; Pettit, 2011). Pettit (2011) states,

Teachers’ beliefs about second language learning and teaching shape their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect students’ behavior in the classroom. Similarly, teachers’ attitudes toward ELs affect the classroom interaction between these students and the teacher, which ultimately affects achievement. (p. 124)

This view is held by many other second language teaching and learning
researchers, such as Cummins (1997), Crawford (2004), and García-Vázquez et al. (1997).

Teachers’ attitudes towards their ELs’ backgrounds and conditions to learn are shaped by personal and social values, local and national policies, and teacher education and training (Cummins, 2000; Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004). According to Walker et al. (2004), teachers internalize all aspects of life around them and those influences affect their behavior in the classroom towards their students. Pettit (2011) argues,

Many teachers who have completed their degrees have an overwhelming lack of knowledge of second language acquisition (SLA), multicultural education, and ESOL pedagogy. In addition, many inservice teachers have not learned a second language and, therefore, cannot appreciate how difficult the experience can be. (p. 125)

Teachers who have more exposure to bilingualism and multiculturalism, through personal experiences and teacher education or training, have more favorable attitudes towards their ELs and are more likely to include more culturally and linguistically diverse pedagogy in their classrooms (Karathanos, 2010; Nixon, 1991; Pettit, 2011; Walker et al., 2004). However, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) points out that it is not fair to blame teachers for negative feelings they may have towards their ELs without proper training. The NCES points out that, “Only 12.5% of U.S. teachers have received 8 or more hours of recent training on teaching students of LEP [limited English proficiency]” (NCES, 2002). García-Vázquez et al. (1997) and Pettit (2011) believe that mainstream teachers can expect to teach ELs, and, therefore, need to be equipped with the skills to meet their needs. Pettit (2011) emphasizes that it is evident
there is, a poverty of language learning in teacher education that translates into detrimental effects for ELLs in mainstream classrooms. These mainstream teachers of ELLs need professional development in order to adopt a new set of beliefs for the successful inclusion of ELLs. (p. 128)

**Teacher Training and Collaboration**

Another factor that researchers establish as important in enhancing the ELs’ educational growth is the amount of time and effort teachers spend planning for teaching their ELs using professional learning communities (PLCs) or collaborative planning (Ransom & Esmail, 2016; Schneider, Huss-Lederman, & Sherlock, 2012). In *Charting New Waters: Collaborating for School Improvement in U.S. High Schools*, the authors tracked how three school systems implemented professional learning to increase the ELs’ academic achievement in three high schools (Schneider et al., 2012). The researchers posed this question: “How do we understand the emergence and development of professional teams as a means for improving the instruction and learning of ELLs, especially in high schools?” (Schneider et al., 2012, p. 374). The researchers pointed out that for these school-based PLCs to work, there needed to be a shared vision, common planning and organization, job embeddedness or added pay stipends, and a long-term commitment to the notion that “it takes a village” to improve the ELs’ educational outcomes that would serve their needs at the high school and beyond. Successful PLCs also engaged in self-reflection, reevaluation, and ongoing progress checks, as well as the implementation of real change that the students can observe (Schneider et al., 2012).

Karathanos (2010) reports that teachers are willing to put forth the effort to learn
new skills to address their ELs’ needs; however, teachers commented [in her study] on how difficult it was to find materials/resources in their students’ native languages when they were already pressed for time with their regular lesson plans. They also expressed frustration with lack of funds and support from the school in obtaining (first language) L1 resources as well as the limited availability of bilingual aides to assist in their classrooms. (p. 19)

To assist teachers in the implementation of new practices to increase their ELs’ classroom performance, teachers need training in ways that are practical but do not necessarily place new burdens on them (Karathanos, 2010; Nixon, 1991). One such example of classroom practices would be enabling teachers to use the students’ native language (L1) without the teachers themselves knowing the students’ first languages (L1; Blair, 2016; Karathanos, 2010; Nixon, 1991). Crawford (2004) and Karathanos (2010) point out that teachers are very frank about not allowing native language interactions among the students in class because they, themselves, do not know the students’ L1. Also, when teachers group students for classwork, they assign linguistically heterogeneous groups and avoid homogenous language grouping, thinking that the students would not stay on topic and that they may not improve their English language proficiency. In a study of in-service teachers seeking endorsements to teach English as a Second Language, Penner-Williams, Díaz, and Gonzales Worthen (2017) focused on how well teachers transfer knowledge and skills they learn in PLCs to their classrooms to benefit their ELs. The authors found that PLCs, which have taken the place of
professional development (PD), have proven beneficial to teachers and schools in many ways:

(a) Dwindled feelings of isolation; (b) Greater commitment to the mission and goals of the school; (c) Shared responsibility for student success; (d) Increased job satisfaction and morale; and (e) Lower rates of absenteeism.” (Hord, 1997, p.216)

Research also supports the positive impact of PLCs on teaching practices and student learning, as well as achievement (Penner-Williams, 2017). These are areas of teaching and learning that are important for teachers that would justify ongoing PLCs.

Nationwide, schools are working towards improving student achievement with the support of the state and federal governments. Under The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), schools have to improve EL identification, English proficiency measurements, and instruction to get the students college or career ready. In order to meet these new types of demands, schools are required to create or adapt school structures that address these accountability measures. Every local school district must provide its English learners with instruction in English language development while simultaneously ensuring that students are held to the same educational standards and outcomes as their English fluent peers. It also means that schools may make use of a student’s native language for the purpose of learning English and content (Cummins, 1981, 2000; Goodwin & Hein, 2016). As in the case of EL identification, however, the guidelines for determining which instructional programs and assessments to use and the role of a student’s native language in instruction are left largely to the states and their local education agencies (LEAs; Cummins, 2000; Goodwin & Hein, 2016).
Students, including ELs, in American high schools have to master content standards, which are a set of subject-specific competencies, in order to receive credit for the courses assigned to each grade level (Blair, 2016; Echevarría et al., 2006). These standards, also called benchmarks and performance standards, are taught and presented in material, such as textbooks, in English only most of the time (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Echevarría et al., 2006). Haas, Tran, and Huang (2016) found in their study, “English Learner Students’ Readiness for Academic Success: The Predictive Potential of English Language Proficiency Assessment Scores in Arizona and Nevada,” that the higher the English language proficiency, the better the ELs performed on their respective state tests in core academic subjects. The authors, however, only gathered data on how students’ English proficiency affected their attainment of the minimum performance on state tests and did not look for what it would take for the ELs to perform at higher ranges (Haas et al., 2016). Ardasheva (2016), Bailey (2006), Barrow and Markman-Pithers (2016), and Haas et al. (2016) consistently showed that ELs’ English proficiency levels highly correlated with earned scores on state assessments of reading, writing, and math.

Bailey and Huang (2011) use the terms and acronym English language development proficiency standards (ELD/P), which I would like to use in my writing from here on. Bailey and Huang (2011) confirm that though research behind the importance of learning academic English and the distinction between the different varieties of English language communication go back to Jim Cummins (1979), the insistence on adequate ELD/P has remained strong among scholars and school educators.
(Bailey & Huang, 2011; Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016). ELD/P now has come to encompass many “different things to different educational practitioners from its broadest sense as the literate use of English to more specific notions of specialized vocabulary, sentence structures, and discourse encountered in each of the academic disciplines” (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016, p. 344). These complex language components take time to master and explicit instruction on the part of teachers (Blair, 2016; Echevarría et al., 2006). Since ELs spend the majority of their day in mainstreamed classes, teachers need to teach both content and ELD/P explicitly (Blair, 2016; Echevarría et al., 2006).

Blair (2016) explains that the use of academic language involves more than passing classes or doing well in school; they involve cognitively demanding tasks such as reading books at home and actively listening to complex discourse in the classroom, processing it, and responding to it. Blair (2016) and Garcia (2009) explain that using native language among individuals is fluid and those individuals should feel free to switch back and forth amongst academic and social contexts fluidly and naturally. This fluidity of discourse builds the individuals’ academic discourse as they make sense of their world (Blair, 2016; Garcia, 2009).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), ELs will continue to score lower on many of their subject competencies because of their lack of full English language proficiency (Aud & Hannes, 2011). What the NCES means is that students first have to learn to read before they are expected to read to learn (Tong, Irby, Lara-Alecio, & Koch, 2014). However, ELs have to take specific content courses before they are fully, or sometimes even partially, competent in English, even though, higher English proficiency levels correlate with higher standardized test scores (Haas et al.,
Haneda (2014) points out that ELs’ task of mastering school subjects spans past academic language proficiency into learning how to read graphs, how to problem-solve, and how to use content and classroom clues to learn the different school subjects. In other words, the ELs’ academic tasks seem to be daunting particularly if they still lack English language proficiency. Barrow and Markman-Pithers (2016) announce plainly in their research that, “Simply put, children with poor English skills are less likely to succeed in school and beyond” (p. 159).

When research points out that ELs are not likely to do well in school, or sometimes possibly may not even pass their classes and may drop out of school because of low ELD/P skills, research attributes those situations to the students’ missing important classroom interactions, their inability to access course material on their own, and the amount of time it takes them to master ELD/P standards (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Blair, 2016; Cummins, 1981). Both the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (HSA) and The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 affirm that,

difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language, that may be sufficient to deny the individual a) the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards; b) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or c) the opportunity to participate fully in society. (as quoted in Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016, p. 160)

ESSA (2015) goes on further to require local educational agencies (LEAs) that receive federal funding to adopt language standards that address the four main domains of ELD/P: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The law additionally requires school
districts to show EL growth in academic achievement too (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; ESSA, 2015). Lack or insufficient ELD/P has severe consequences on the ELs from not making adequate grades, to dropping out, to earning as much as 33% less than someone who is proficient in English, once they are in the workforce (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016).

**EL Second Language Programs and Models**

Programs that serve the ELs’ language needs can be grouped into two major divisions, referred to as additive or subtractive models depending on the role the students’ native language plays, or does not, in their instruction (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Crawford, 2004; Karathanos, 2010). Karathanos (2010) explains that additive models add English to native language instruction; whereas subtractive models deliver some kind of intensive English classes to ELs with the hopes of transitioning them into mainstream, general education programs as rapidly as possible, without any kind of native language support or training. For additive models, the students learn English in addition to their native language support in the form of bilingualism, multilingualism, two-way immersion, transitional or developmental bilingualism, or heritage language support (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Crawford, 2004; Karathanos, 2010). The subtractive models are represented in mostly pull out (PO) models that are taught in English only. The five categories of subtractive models are sheltered English instruction, structured English immersion, specially designed academic instruction delivered in English, content-based English as a second language (ESL), and pull-out ESL (Crawford, 2004; Karathanos, 2010; Minaya-Rowe, 2015).
English As a Second Language Programs

For the purpose of the literature review for this dissertation, I will rely on the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA) website to define the various programs that are used in the U.S. to teach ELs. I will list the programs alphabetically rather than by area of instruction. The NCELA list of definitions incorporates research by scholars in this field and lists them as sources. I will keep those citations as they appear on the website.

- **Additive bilingualism:** Additive bilingualism occurs in an environment in which the addition of a second language and culture does not replace the first language and culture, such as in dual language programs or developmental bilingual education programs. The opposite is subtractive bilingualism.

- **Bilingual education:** An educational program in which two languages are used to provide content matter instruction. An important distinction is between those programs that use and promote two languages and those where bilingual children are present, but bilingualism is not fostered in the curriculum (Baker & Prys-Jones, 1998).

- **Bilingualism:** The ability to use two languages. However, defining bilingualism is problematic since individuals with varying bilingual characteristics may be classified as bilingual. There may exist distinctions between ability and use of a language; variation in proficiency across the four language dimensions (listening, speaking, reading and writing); differences in proficiency between the two languages; variation in proficiency due to the use of each language for different functions and purposes; and variation in
language proficiency over time (Baker & Prys-Jones, 1998). People may become bilingual either by acquiring two languages at the same time in childhood or by learning a second language sometime after acquiring their first language.

- **Communicative-based ESL:** This approach to teaching English as a second language (also referred to as the functional approach or communicative approach) is based on the theory that language is acquired through exposure to meaningful and comprehensible messages, rather than being learned through the formal study of grammar and vocabulary. The goal of communicative-based ESL is communicative competence (Baker, 2001).

- **Content-based ESL:** This approach to teaching English as a second language makes use of instructional materials, learning tasks, and classroom techniques from academic content areas as the vehicle for developing language, content, cognitive and study skills. English is used as the medium of instruction (Crandall, 1992).

- **Developmental bilingual education:** A program that teaches content through two languages and develops both languages with the goal of bilingualism and biliteracy. The model is also known as late-exit bilingual education (Baker, 2001).

- **Dual language program/dual immersion:** Also known as two-way immersion or two-way bilingual education. These programs are designed to serve both language minority and language majority students concurrently. Two language groups are put together and instruction is delivered through
both languages. For example, in the U.S., native English speakers might learn Spanish as a foreign language while continuing to develop their English literacy skills and Spanish-speaking ELLs learn English while developing literacy in Spanish. The goals of the program are for both groups to become biliterate, succeed academically, and develop cross-cultural understanding (Howard, 2002).

- **Early-exit bilingual education**: A form of transitional bilingual education (TBE) in which children move from bilingual education programs to English-only classes in the first or second year of schooling (Baker, 2001).

- **ELD**: English language development (ELD) means instruction designed specifically for English language learners to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. This type of instruction is also known as *English as a second language* (ESL), *teaching English to speakers of other languages* (TESOL), or *English for speakers of other languages* (ESOL).

ELD, ESL, TESOL, or ESOL standards are a version of English language arts standards that have been crafted to address the specific developmental stages of students learning English.

- **English-only**: An umbrella term that is used to refer to different federal and state legislative initiatives and various national, state, and local organizations, all of which emphasize that the ELs’ instruction should be in English-only. The initiatives and organizations vary in the degree to which they promote the suppression of non-English languages.

- **ESL**: English as a second language (ESL) is an educational approach in which
English language learners are instructed in the use of the English language. Their instruction is based on a special curriculum that typically involves little or no use of the native language, focuses on language (as opposed to content), and is usually taught during specific school periods. For the rest of the school day, students may be placed in mainstream classrooms, an immersion program, or a bilingual education program. ESL may also be called ELD, pullout ESL, ESOL, and content-based ESL.

- **ESOL**: English for speakers of other languages (see ESL).

- **ESP**: English for specific purposes (ESP) refers to situations where technical English is taught for use in the professions, science, or for vocational needs (Strevens, 1977).

- **Heritage language**: The language a person regards as his/her native, home, and/or ancestral language. This covers indigenous languages (e.g. Navajo) and immigrant languages (e.g. Spanish in the U.S.; Baker, 2001).

- **Immersion bilingual education**: Schooling where some or most subject content is taught through a second language. Students in immersion bilingual programs are usually native speakers of a majority language. Bilingual immersion programs differ in the duration of the program and the amount of time spent on instruction in each language (Baker, 2001).

- **Late-exit bilingual education**: Late-exit programs provide bilingual instruction for three or more years of schooling. Late-exit programs may be transitional or developmental bilingual programs, depending on the goal of the program (Baker, 2001). See developmental bilingual education and
transitional bilingual education.

- **Maintenance bilingual education (MBE):** MBE, also referred to as late-exit bilingual education or developmental bilingual education, is a program that uses two languages -- the student's primary language and English -- as the means of instruction. The instruction builds upon the student's primary language skills and develops and expands the English language skills of each student to enable him or her to achieve competency in both languages (Porter, 1995).

- **Multilingualism:** Use of three or more languages. See also bilingualism.

- **Native-language instruction:** The use of a child's home language (generally by a classroom teacher) to provide lessons in academic subjects or to teach reading and other language arts (Crawford, 1997).

- **Native-language support:** The use of a child's home language (generally by a teacher or a teacher’s aide) to translate unfamiliar terms or otherwise clarify lessons taught in English (Crawford, 1997).

- **Pull-out ESL:** A program in which LEP students are "pulled out" of regular, mainstream classrooms for special instruction in English as a second language (Baker, 2001).

- **Push-in ESL:** In contrast with pull-out ESL instruction, in push-in ESL, the ESL teacher provides instruction by going into the regular classroom. (Baker, 2001).

- **SDAIE:** Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English is a program of instruction in a subject area, delivered in English, which is specially designed
to provide LEP students with access to the curriculum (Snow, 1986). See also sheltered English.

- **SEI:** Structured English immersion. See structured immersion.

- **Sheltered English:** An instructional approach used to make academic instruction in English understandable to English language learners to help them acquire proficiency in English while at the same time achieving in content areas. Sheltered English instruction differs from ESL in that English is not taught as a language with a focus on learning the language. Rather, content knowledge and skills are the goals. In the sheltered classroom, teachers use simplified language, physical activities, visual aids, and the environment to teach vocabulary for concept development in mathematics, science, social studies, and other subjects (Lindholm-Leary, 2000).

- **Sink or swim:** Programs where the course material is taught only in the dominant language of the country, e.g., English in the United States, without special concern for student comprehension. It is sometimes called language submersion (Baker, 2001).

- **Structured immersion:** In this program, language minority students receive all of their subject matter instruction in their second language. The teacher uses a simplified form of the second language. Students may use their native language in class; however, the teacher uses only the second language (Snow, 1986). The goal is to help minority language students acquire proficiency in English while at the same time achieving in content areas. Also, SDAIE and SEI.
• **Subtractive bilingualism**: Occurs in an environment in which the second language and culture are intended to replace the first language/culture. Instructional programs such as immersion and TBE have subtractive bilingualism as their goal (Dorian, 1982). The opposite of additive bilingualism.

• **Transitional bilingual education (TBE)**: TBE is an instructional program in which subjects are taught through two languages—English and the native language of the English language learners—and English is taught as a second language. English language skills, grade promotion and graduation requirements are emphasized and L1 is used as a tool to learn content. The primary purpose of these programs is to facilitate the LEP student's transition to an all-English instructional environment while receiving academic subject instruction in the native language to the extent necessary. As proficiency in English increases, instruction through L1 decreases. Transitional bilingual education programs vary in the amount of native language instruction provided and the duration of the program (Porter, 1995). TBE programs may be early-exit or late-exit, depending on the amount of time a child may spend in the program.

• **Two-way bilingual education**: See dual language program.

• **Two-way immersion education**: See dual language program.
Pull Out Models: Sheltered English Instruction, Structured English Immersion, Specially Designed Academic Instruction Delivered in English, Content-Based English as a Second Language (ESL)

These program models work similarly and only the naming is different because of how the school districts in particular states prefer to call their EL programs. With these types of programs, students take most of their courses with the general, English native speakers in mainstream classrooms (Karathanos, 2010; Minaya-Rowe, 2015). For example, the ELs take mathematics, science, and history with their English-speaking peers. For part of their day, for any scheduling variation from 30 minutes to up to two hours, the ELs report to their English Language Development classroom for English as a Second Language (ESL) specific instruction (Berube, 2000; Crawford, 2004; Karathanos, 2010). These program models serve the EL population in conjunction with mainstreaming where the students are expected to learn ELD/P alongside with content standards in age and grade level appropriate classrooms. In these educational situations, the majority of the responsibility of educating ELs falls on the grade level, mainstream teacher (Crawford, 2004; Karathanos, 2010). Blair (2016), Crawford (2004), Garcia-Vazquez et al. (1997), and Karathanos (2010) discuss in their research the major implications for these general education teachers who not only must link core academic instruction to national and state content standards, but must also ensure that curriculum and teaching strategies for ELs are aligned with English language proficiency standards as well as they can.

Mainstreaming

One scheduling model for ELs that is very prevalent is mainstreaming, where the
ELs are mixed with their native English peers in different content areas and where the teacher makes little to no accommodation for the ELs in her/his classroom (Karathanos, 2010; Somé-Guiebré, 2015). Esther Somé-Guiebré (2015) in “Mainstreaming English Language Learners: Does It Promote or Hinder Literacy Development?” writes,

To succeed in U.S. schools, students must be able to read academic texts in different subject areas, produce written documents in a language appropriate for school, and understand their teachers and peers, all in English. Therefore, language cannot be separated from what is taught and learned in school. (p. 35)

Mainstreaming can have positive effects on the EL population when teachers are trained in teaching pedagogies and cultural and linguistic understanding and are given the appropriate time to plan for both language and content standards (Martin-Beltrán & Peercy, 2012; Somé-Guiebré, 2015). Another consideration for the effectiveness of mainstreaming is the collaboration between the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher and the content area teacher. When this is implemented, students and teachers benefit. Somé-Guiebré (2015) points out the opposite, the “hindrance to the literacy development of [the] student participants [in content classes] was the lack of collaboration between both mainstream and ESL teachers about what is taught and when it should be taught” (p. 36). When collaboration is present and when teachers plan for both content and language goals, students benefit (Blair, 2016; Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 1997; Echevarría et al., 2006).

**English and Another Language (A Form of Bilingualism)**

Using the student’s native language provides numerous beneficial factors that contribute to the student’s education positively (Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 1979, 2000;
Cummins (1979) speaks favorably of using the student’s native language to reach comprehensible input, a point in the student’s cognition that first establishes what the student already knows and then introduces new concepts. Cummins (1979) also speaks of the “Interdependence Principle,” which implies that the students develop academic cognitive skills in their first language but that those skills easily cross over to the new language when the students are competent in their second language. In a bilingual/multilingual classroom, the student’s native language is used to provide the student with more opportunities to access new knowledge and foster independent learning (Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 1979; Karathanos, 2010). Through native language teachers can access prior knowledge in order to introduce new knowledge in a scaffolded type of instruction (Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 1979; Karathanos, 2010). Researchers agree that when it comes to supporting and educating ELs, fostering native language in the classroom is possibly the best way to achieve academic success and even work towards full proficiency in English (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Blair, 2016; Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 1981). However, they also agree that the debate is politically charged (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Cummins, 2000). Because the issue is politically motivated, bilingual and multilingual education has fluctuated in many states (Cummins, 2000). National policies are not focused on the ELs becoming bilingual or multilingual but rather on their achieving full English language proficiency (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Crawford, 2004; ESSA, 2015). However, ESSA, or state policies, does not dictate classroom pedagogies so teachers can implement native language support as long as the students are achieving success on the core subjects and are progressing in their ELD/P (Barrow & Markman-
Pithers, 2016). This type of pedagogy also has psychosocial benefits to the students since it validates the student’s linguistic background and that in return empowers him/her and boosts self-confidence and morale (Fay & Whaley, 2004; Karathanos, 2010; Lessow-Hurley, 2003).

Consistencies in Scheduling Practices

From the literature examined for this chapter, EL education researchers may have differing positions on what program model best serves the ELs or on who should teach them but they agree that ELs’ educational needs should be met well. The majority of research points out to the benefits of bilingualism and the importance of building on what the student already knows. However, there are still deep divisions among people who advocate for English-only-based programs which teach English without the incorporation of the child’s native language and culture, and the authors who advocate for a form of bilingualism or multilingualism. The research I read for this chapter seems to focus on how and how long ELs acquire English language proficiency, which program is more effective at helping the students reach proficiency quickly, and whether bilingualism or multilingualism have additional benefits when used in the EL field.

Examining Current Scheduling Rationales

EL students are scheduled in secondary schools dependent on many factors, such as the student's LEP eligibility, ELs’ cognitive abilities in cases of learning disabilities, EL program availabilities at the district and school levels, grade level promotion requirements, and the state’s graduation requirements (Cech, 2009; Crawford, 2004; Echevarría et al., 2006; ESSA, 2015; Kena et al., 2016). In the state of Georgia, most secondary schools use a program from the pull-out models, such as ESOL or SEI, to
address ELs’ English language proficiency needs and program requirements (GaDOE, 2016a). Georgia bases its course scheduling on the four-year graduation plan for high school students and on high school course graduation requirements (GaDOE, 2016a). ELs in Georgia follow similar course organization and requirements as their English native speaking peers in general education (GaDOE, 2016a).

Should There be a Different Way of Approaching EL Scheduling?

If the presence of ELs in American classrooms is as ubiquitous as research says, three out of four classrooms have at least one EL (Garcia-Vazquez et al., 1997; Karathanos, 2010; Sparks, 2016), examining how these students are scheduled may present a logistical and structural component of ELs’ instruction. As evidenced in the research examined for this study, one area in ELs’ education that needs addressing is teacher preparedness and education (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Martin-Beltrán & Peercy, 2012; Penner-Williams et al., 2017). If ELs were to be scheduled in grade level and subject specific cohorts in secondary schools, school districts would streamline their efforts to educate and even recruit teachers who are ready for this kind of challenge and have received their training while attending university teacher education programs. Another area that has been stated that increases ELs’ classroom participation and academic mastery is their native language use amongst themselves to make sense of the content by discussing it among each other (Blair, 2016; Cummins, 1981). Native language support, even if encouraged among the students alone, would increase the students’ cognitive and academic growth (Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 1981). For the students to be able to rely on native language support and each other, they would have to be grouped in classrooms together in a cohort model.
The NCELA defines cohort as a group of students educated together (e.g., first-grade students who remain together through fifth grade), and whose scores are reported as a unit, or a group of ELs who enter a third-grade SEI (Structured English Immersion) program together. The Consolidated State Application requires that, for reporting purposes, all public school K-12 students be included and that “cohorts” be defined by the state (Kena et al., 2016). *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* (n.d.) defines cohort as “a group of individuals having a statistical factor (such as age or class membership) in common in a demographic study, i.e., a cohort of premedical students [or] the cohort of people born in the 1980s.” Colorado Christian University (CCU) defines a cohort as “a group of people banded together or treated as a group” in a degree program or course of study (CAGS, 2011). CCU goes on to say that “a simple way to view a cohort program is a group of classmates” who start a degree together, take classes together, and graduate together (CAGS, 2011). Cohort programs provide a setting for students to grow their knowledge and skills together by relying on each other, in addition to their instructor and their materials (CAGS, 2011). A cohort model bands students together to build community, foster creativity, comfort, and interdependence (CAGS, 2011).

Cohorts, as a scheduling model, are in practice in higher education, particularly in teacher education and educational leadership programs, where this type of course offering has had some success (CAGS, 2011; CEHD, 2015; Fenning, 2004; Witteveen, 2015). Georgia State University College of Education and Human Development comments on its website that “a cohort engages a tight knit learning community of students, usually 10-12, throughout their entire academic program. Each member of the cohort is encouraged to listen, think deeply, and actively participate in discussions as they work towards their
degree” (CEHD, 2015). While staying with the same group of people throughout one’s entire graduate program may seem odd, studies have shown cohorts in higher education have become popular over the last several years because of the benefits the model can provide to students, faculty, and administrators (CEHD, 2015). Kristine Fenning (2004) discusses some of the benefits mentioned above as cohorts establish learner-centered communities where the members share and participate in learning and teaching rather than the higher education establishments’ notion of “seeking the sage on the stage” which they have followed in the past. Fenning (2004), Kipnis, Whitebook, Almaraz, Sakai, and Austin (2012), and Witteveen (2015) speak of the positive bonds and the emotional and academic support people provide each other when enrolled in degree cohorts because they establish an ongoing learning and professional community to the level where the success of one depends on the success of the group and the success of the group depends on the success of the individuals within it.

Kipnis et al. (2012), in conjunction with the University of California, did a longitudinal study of a cohort of students in an undergraduate degree who were all interested in pursuing a career in early childhood education after graduation. The cohort’s name was “Learning Together” and it spanned six university campuses in California: Antioch University, California State University-East Bay (CSU-East Bay), Mills College, San Francisco State University (SFSU), San Jose State University (SJSU), and the University of La Verne (ULV). The researchers wanted to know how “the Learning Together study explored students’ perspectives on the supports and services that facilitated their higher education access and success, and the impact of the educational experience on their professional practice” (p. 1). Kipnis et al. (2012) collected interview
data on the students after graduation and here is what they found:

A large majority (84 percent) of graduates viewed the cohort experience itself—taking classes with the same group of students, all of whom work in the [Early Care and Education] ECE field—as extremely important to their success in attaining a B.A. degree. Further, virtually all the graduates (99 percent) reported that they had maintained contact with someone in the cohort. For the 88 percent of graduates who reported on the nature of their relationships with fellow cohort members, about three-quarters (76 percent) reported that these colleagues continued to be important professional resources. (pp. 1-2)

Fenning (2004) touches on the essential rationale behind implementing cohort learning communities in higher education institutions in that she emphasizes the concepts that learning is shared between the members of the cohort, that instructors are not in possession of all that is to be learned, and that cohorts engage learners in the learning process as full partners with more responsibility for making choices to benefit all. Higher education cohorts are established for different reasons than secondary school’s cohorts would be. Universities and colleges find themselves accommodating adult learners who are already professionals and/or have families and they are in need of a non-traditional program setting, such as having fewer classes and shorter time periods but more intensive learning (Fenning, 2004).
If P-12 public educational institutions were interested in implementing cohort schedules at their schools, they would possibly look at how universities have followed this model, study its successes, and avoid its pitfalls. For me, the cohort model for ELs at LUHS would be slightly different from the models in higher education (Figure 4). The EL cohorts would be organized by grade and subject. For example, a group of ninth graders would be scheduled together to take content courses together but also if a 10th grader fails a course or moves from another state but still needs a course that Georgians take in the ninth grade, he/she would be scheduled in the ninth-grade cohort for that specific class and in a 10th-grade cohort for the other courses. This type of cohort is what
Fenning (2004) terms “Open Cohorts.” This type of arrangement is not in existence in public schools currently and the degree of its success, or lack thereof, is unknown. Examining scheduling cohorts is one component for this dissertation. One area I investigated was to find out whether implementing a scheduling cohort at Large Urban High School (LUHS) in Large Urban District (LUD) would be practical and would benefit the ELs and their teachers. This was identified as a research gap as well in that implementing EL cohorts has not been put in place and research around this area is still lacking.

**Conclusion**

These are only a few, but important, conditions that describe school situations for ELs. Educating ELs is very complex, with conditions that are available within schools and other conditions that come with the student. The student’s predisposition to benefiting from school and accessing education is just as important as what educators do at school to help the ELs learn and progress towards graduation and/or the workforce. In this dissertation, I will examine an area that is part of school structures that affect ELs’ educational outcomes, course scheduling. Karathanos (2010) states there are many systemic/structural difficulties in optimizing learning conditions for ELs and that some of these difficulties are sometimes not within teachers’ control. Bailey (2006), Cummins (1981), and Minaya-Rowe (2015), among others, advocate for bilingualism in EL classrooms because it contributes to the development of academic and cognitive skills simultaneously. Complex cognition and critical thinking skills do not have a language; they are brain processes. They manifest themselves in a person whether that person expresses himself or herself in English or not.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Worldview

Educational research is scholarly inquiry designed to investigate the process of instruction and learning by examining the behaviors, perceptions, and attributes of students, teachers, and other stakeholders. It sheds light on the impact of institutional processes, policies, and other areas of the educational system (Creswell, 2007; Fowler, 2009; Yang, Lee, & Tzeng, 2008). Because the educational institution is multifaceted, comprising of numeric and interpretive data, many researchers adopt qualitative research paradigms in order to investigate, explain, and describe relationships, current conditions, or influences on educational outcomes (Creswell, 2007; Fowler, 2009; Yang et al., 2008) because they feel that education is very complex and it requires interpretation of intertwining factors. Qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities held by each person and those realities are subjective, open to interpretation and individual perception (Guba, 1990; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Truth, knowledge, and the qualitative research paradigm that seeks to understand them, are intertwined and subjective (Creswell, 2007; Guba, 1990). Therefore, in practice, the qualitative researcher lessens the distance between himself/herself and the participants because the researcher gains knowledge by finding out what the participants think about their realities. Then the participants’ portrayals and perspectives become the qualitative researcher’s data. Since realities are subjective, values are shared between the researcher and the participants, and truth is open to interpretation; then it is fitting to write about those shared and created realities from a perspective of subjectivity, narratively, informally, and in the first person (Guba, 1990; Seale, 1999).
I, as a researcher and teacher, do not believe in research for the sake of research--a process which only produces information when studying people and situations. I believe in research as a tool for advocacy. I believe in research that propels people into action or that stirs ideas and ideals into them, pushing them to think about their role in society, and how they may contribute to reality in a positive way is the purpose of research. This branch of research is termed the advocacy/participatory paradigm or worldview, which focuses on the needs of people who are powerless in society and attempts to empower them to make changes in their communities and advocate for others like themselves in similar positions (Denzin & Giardina, 2012; Stake, 2010). In the advocacy/participatory paradigm, research participants are seen as fellow researchers and collaborators who are experts in their lives and have wisdom and knowledge to share. Davis (2011) makes the point that it is the responsibility of the researcher to take a stand against political or social oppression of people who may be a voiceless minority.

My research worldview as a teacher and researcher is shaped by the advocacy/participatory paradigm to a great extent. I feel that I embody the traits of an activist educator in many ways. I am an English learner myself who has been in the American educational system both as a professional and as a learner for over 20 years. I came to America from Morocco in 1990 to complete a Master’s Degree in English. Yet I felt alienated, isolated, and ignored even as an adult student who was proficient in English. I often wonder what the situation is like for younger learners who are present in our schools, who lack a voice, and who do not have the tools to advocate for themselves. Because of my background and my job, my research was born out of 20 years of work in the English language teaching and learning field and the myriad of diverse experiences
that have shaped my practice and my life. I have worked very closely with hundreds of students and colleagues in education, and I have gathered a wealth of knowledge which propels me into the next level while trying to find a balance between what the school and school system have in place and what the students need from me and from the school and school system.

**Research Tradition**

Shipman, in *The Limitations of Social Research* (1988), addresses the questions and factors that make quality research. He emphasizes that for research to be reliable, data need to be collected, analyzed, and written through structured and socially approved manners. The research methodology used for this dissertation is qualitative, more specifically the case study method. Case study is an established, and sometimes preferred, method of doing social research, particularly in education because “the prime referent in case study is the case, not the methods by which the case operates” (Stake, 2005, p. 444). Prior to Stake, Smith (1978) stated, “Researchers should view case as a ‘bounded system’ and inquire into it as ‘an object rather than a process’ which has a boundary and working parts” (as quoted in Yazan, 2015, p. 139). Case study uniquely fits my topic because it is flexible, it is able to reach deep understanding of a limited number of participants in a bounded system, and it is a well-established research tradition (Stake, 2005; Yazan, 2015). This paradigm is what Stake (2005) references as the researcher being interested in the case itself not in the process of research that leads him or her there. Stake (2005) goes on to state that case study is popular in the qualitative research paradigm because it allows the researcher to be more humane and transcendent. Case study implies a certain degree of flexibility allowing the researcher to do research
“analytically or holistically, entirely by repeated measures or hermeneutically, organically or culturally” (Stake, 2005, p. 443). Possibly because case study “does not have well-defined and well-structured protocols” (Yazan, 2015, p. 134), it has an appeal amongst researchers in education.

The bounded system in this dissertation is a portion of the EL population, their ESOL teachers, one guidance counselor, and one or more school administrators in a large urban high school in a large school system in Georgia. For the sake of this dissertation, the school will assume a pseudonym, Large Urban High School (LUHS) and the district, Large Urban District (LUD). My interest in this case requires “extensive examining of how things get done” (Stake, 2005, p. 444) at LUHS as far as scheduling academic courses for the ELs and how current practices are working for the students and the school. This case study focused on the methods by which class schedules are determined for ELs at LUHS. In my literature review, I investigated the different EL models and how they were implemented in schools around the country. I also researched how and why higher education cohort models were implemented in order to juxtapose different scheduling models in order to illuminate how the ELs are scheduled in schools.

The issues of trustworthiness, dependability, and transferability in qualitative research need to be addressed by following structured and established norms in collecting data, analyzing them, and writing a report that reflects the entire process as accurately as possible (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Shipman, 1988). In this dissertation, I examined the students’ realities, recorded them, and interpreted them, using the students’ experiences and their narratives to tell the story of their educational settings and how they were affected by the students’ course schedules. Marshall and Rossman (2011) argue that
the social world where we exist is not a given but rather one we, ourselves, create. This study followed qualitative research protocols, including consistency in collecting interview data by using semi-structured interview protocols and using Audacity software. Careful and redundant data annotations were recorded via Google Drive and manually. Replicability and dependability in interpreting the data were implemented by checking and cross checking for prominent and significant themes. Marshall and Rossman (2011) write that the need to present a clearly focused design for research that is inherently "messy," with its focus emerges from the act of carrying out the research itself. They recommend that, in support of the proposed research, the qualitative researcher build a logical argument which demonstrates a focus by linking the specific research context to a larger body of theoretical issues and policy concerns.

To achieve these research traits, I established similar interview protocols for each participant and followed scripted questions, meticulously transcribed the interviews, read them carefully, and coded them for themes. Marshall and Rossman (2011) also suggest that researchers use the terms neutrality and confirmability in qualitative research, which are the opposite of objectivity in quantitative research. They point out that most social researchers pursue a certain topic because of their own interest and that sometimes translates into having strong opinions and biases. I have strong opinions fueled by my own passion for my work and the academic and social life of the ELs inside educational institutions. I also consider myself an advocate and an insider who is in the field both as a student and as a teacher. This involvement may translate into my being biased. In this situation, I have admitted to bias in my research. Also, I used first person pronouns in writing this report, letting the reader know of my involvement and my opinions.
Research Design

See Figure 5 for an overview of the case study research design employed in this research.

![Case Study Research Design](image)

**Figure 5.** Research design.

Research Design: Process

Before I proceeded with data collection, I filed an application with the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) at both LUD and Kennesaw State University. Both institutions reviewed my application and approved it for field data collection. Following these steps, I contacted the school’s administrators via email to inform them of my
research work at their school. Then I contacted the ESOL teachers at the same school via email and set up appointments with them at that school to obtain their consent to participate in the study. I then obtained written consent from the students and their parents or guardians before I met with any of them. Following these initial procedures, I scheduled classroom observations of the students’ content area classes. After the first classroom observation, I scheduled one-on-one interviews with the students to take place before or after school in order to minimize interruptions to the students’ daily school life. After I finished collecting interview and observation data on the students and their ESOL teachers, I scheduled a time to interview the school’s guidance counselor and the registrar/administrator who is in charge of scheduling ELs at LUHS. I audio recorded my classroom observations and the interviews. I transcribed the audio recordings. I then read them for the first time and noted first impressions of what the data told me. Following, I highlighted and labeled the relevant pieces of data based on repeated/emphasized language, actions, activities, concepts, opinions, or whatever appeared relevant at the time. Additionally, I analyzed the participants’ class schedules to help me shed light on the students’ school performance and whether class placement played a role in their school experience. I also collected classroom observation artifacts like lesson plans, standards covered, and seating charts. These data focused on answering my research questions and also helped me make research recommendations for the future.

In writing up the results, I tell some of the students’ stories in the form of vignettes. This research method sets up the premise that people’s stories are important because they can tell something useful about the participants’ realities (Creswell, 2009; Stake, 2005). Qualitative research allows researchers to find out what people know and
how that knowledge can be interpreted and used (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2009). Our interest in doing this type of research is an inherent interest in people’s experiences and how those experiences tell stories that can be both informational and engaging to read. Qualitative research is interested in people’s experiences and how they contribute to meaning in the world they live in (Creswell, 2009).

Participants

Large Urban High School’s demographic makeup is listed in Table 3. I interviewed six ELs at LUHS, their two ESOL teachers, one guidance counselor in charge of scheduling, the school’s principal and her assistant principal in charge of creating master schedules. I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews at least twice with each participant and completed three classroom observations.

The participants were chosen based on what Palys (2008) calls stakeholder and paradigmatic sampling. Critical case purposive sampling was used because the ELs have a stake in the educational institution and practice of where they are. The group of participants in this study was made up of all ELs and were as diverse as possible—from both genders and from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
### Table 3

**Large Urban High School Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *U.S. News and World Report* (n.d.)

### Data Collection

The first meeting with the participants was in a classroom observation (Appendix A). I observed the students without their knowledge when they were in at least two of their academic content classes. I first requested the students’ schedules from the school’s guidance department. Then I got the principal’s and the teachers’ permission to go observe their classes. I audio recorded the classroom activity with Audacity software, took notes describing the classrooms, drew seating arrangements, etc. by using a
classroom observation protocol (Stake, 2005, 2012). I noted any accompanying body language and other behaviors that would help me in data analysis. After the classroom visits, I transcribed the audio recordings of the observations to see if additional observations were needed. Following the observations, I scheduled individual appointments with the ELs for the first in-depth interview (Appendix B). The interview was comprised of open-ended, semi-structured questions. I followed the interview protocol outlined by Milagros Castillo-Montoya (2016) which is:

Phase 1: Ensure interview questions align with research questions.
Phase 2: Construct an inquiry-based conversation.
Phase 3: Receive feedback on interview protocols.
Phase 4: Pilot the interview protocol. (p. 812)

Castillo-Montoya’s (2016) semi-structured interview protocol “offers a systematic framework for developing a well-vetted interview protocol that can help a researcher obtain robust and detailed interview data necessary to address research questions” (p. 812). After the first round of interviews, I transcribed them to see what follow up questions were needed. I then decided with whom I needed to schedule a second interview if their data were contradictory or not complete. The second part of interviews were with the ELs’ ESOL teachers, with the guidance counselor in charge of scheduling the ELs, and the two school administrators at LUHS.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed several established steps as recommended by Bryman (2012) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2009).

● Step 1: Read transcripts and made notes about first impressions
● Step 2: Labeled relevant pieces, starting with words, phrases, or sentences in the transcript. Labeling was about actions, activities, concepts, opinions, or processes. Labeling is also called coding or indexing (Bryman, 2012; Shenton, 2004). Researchers code concepts that are repeated in the transcripts or things that surprise the researcher. Sometimes interviewees explicitly state that certain ideas are important to them, or because certain information reminds the researcher of theories or concepts that have been published in previous research.

● Step 3: Decided which codes were more important and created categories by grouping several codes together.

● Step 4: Analyzed the codes, established connections between them, and created new codes by combining two or more codes and dropping the codes that were no longer relevant (Bryman, 2012; Shenton, 2004).

● Step 5: Decided which codes were most relevant and how they were connected to each other.

● Step 6: Did one or more of the following options: (a) Decided if there was any hierarchy among the categories, and (b) Decided if one category was more relevant than others.

● Step 7: Wrote up the results under a separate section heading for each student, followed by interpretation and a discussion, and finally the study was closed by a section on ending remarks.

The collected data were organized by participant and chronologically. So, Student #1 had his/her own files, including transcriptions of his/her audio recording, observation notes taken in the classroom, copies of the interview questions, and formal documents,
such as class schedules. The same process was repeated for each participant. I compared and contrasted student responses in order to form themes for data analysis and discussion. All data, recording, transcriptions, notes, sketches, and documents, were stored together in one filing cabinet once the research concluded.

**Research Trustworthiness and Credibility**

Qualitative research treats reality as something that people make, and people make many realities; therefore, the truth about these realities varies (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Credibility in qualitative research is established by the reader who decides if things make sense or not and if he/she would experience similar experiences if he/she were in a similar situation as the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Shenton (2004) points out that qualitative research has many appealing features, such as captivating the reader’s attention and pointing out something different in the human spirit. He goes on to comment that even if research follows strict technical procedures, it may not be worthy of attention if it lacks other elements like meaningfulness. Qualitative researchers distance themselves from the positivist researchers because they focus on different aspects of their research (Creswell, 2009; Shenton, 2004). However, it is important for the qualitative researcher to establish credibility by adopting research methods that are well established and build on an approach that has a good reputation (Creswell, 2009; Shenton, 2004).

Being familiar with the culture of the organization has both benefits and drawbacks. My being an insider facilitated my contact with the key participants needed for the research. This feature decreased my anxiety and the students’ nervousness as we worked together to gather data. However, as an insider, I may not be able to notice new
information, and I may have preconceived notions about my findings. The students may
also tell me what they think I want to hear. These factors affect the trustworthiness of the
study. I limited the impact of these factors by describing these features at the beginning
of the study and by admitting a level of bias or insider knowledge. Additionally,
employing a variety of data collection methods and triangulating the data collection
instruments provided me with three types of data that I compared and contrasted which
increased trustworthiness and was helpful in answering my research questions. Being an
insider reduced the anxiety level of the participants which increased their spontaneity,
openness, and honesty (Shenton, 2004).

The nature of qualitative research makes it difficult to ensure dependability and
transferability. For this objective, I have to show in my writing how previous
relationships I may have had with the students as their teacher may increase the
subjectivity of the study. Being familiar with EL course scheduling and having attempted
to implement EL schedule cohorts in previous schools may also have increased my
reliance on pre-existing knowledge. I conscientiously adhered to the scripted interview
protocols and only followed up when the situations presented themselves. I wanted to get
a clear picture of the complex ELs’ educational situation as it pertains to course
scheduling. For this purpose, I employed two different methods for data collection:
structured and unstructured interviews and classroom observations. I collected many
student and classroom artifacts to use in data presentation and analysis. I meticulously
documented the research process, and I checked and cross checked the interviews by
staying true to the transcriptions and the observations.
Conclusion

Case study research can be used to collect facts and anecdotes that the researcher may use to fulfill his/her research requirements towards a topic of interest. Numerous factors that affect the students’ lives outside school affect their education at school as well. Having to narrow factors that impact the students’ educational outcomes to one or two factors may be challenging. I, as the researcher, needed to maneuver my research path with skill and curiosity by using students’ narratives that reflected their realities.
Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate how a secondary school schedule affects English learners’ (ELs) educational outcomes and whether implementing a different scheduling model—a cohort system—may yield different results and facilitate scheduling in schools. Three separate interview protocols were developed for each group of study participants: the students, the ESOL teachers, the two administrators, and one guidance counselor. The study participants in all groups were requested to respond to a total number of 21 interview questions that were aligned to the study’s research questions to yield ample data to answer the research questions of the study and to develop prominent themes. Interview protocols are described and embedded in Chapter 2 and attached appendices. Sometimes, it was necessary to ask follow-up questions in order to probe for more data. The added questions did not veer substantively from the original, scripted questions. Descriptive data generated from the interviews and the observations are meant as instruments to answer the study’s research questions. Through initial, structured, and follow-up interviews, the participants offered very helpful and sometimes surprising, or unanticipated, answers. The findings of this study are reported in terms of descriptive participant profiles and are analyzed in the Chapter 5 following a similar format to Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings that aim to answer the research questions, which are:

1. What current scheduling approaches are implemented at LUHS, and what is the rationale behind them?
2. What educational implications are there for the implementation of a grade level and subject specific scheduling cohort model for ELs at LUHS?

The data collection stage began with making email contact with Large Urban High School’s (LUHS) administration to obtain permission to schedule appointments for personal visits with potential study participants. After receiving permission, I scheduled appointments for interviews and classroom observations.

The Participants

I interviewed six high school students, three teachers, two administrators, and one guidance counselor. I also carried out three classroom observations. The students were between the ages of 16 and 18 from 10th through 12th grades. There were four female and two male students. Four students were of Hispanic heritage and two of African background. The students had very different personalities from very chatty and comfortable to shy and reserved; some participants required my asking many prompts to elicit a response. The interviews ranged from 27 to 40 minutes.

I interviewed three teachers, two administrators, and one guidance counselor from LUHS. Two of the three teachers were English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers. They taught sheltered English Language Arts (ELA) and push-in ELA classes where they collaborated with another teacher, the teacher of record. The ESOL teachers were present in the classroom to support the teacher of record and the ELs. This kind of scheduling is called the Push-In model. I also interviewed one assistant principal responsible for creating the school’s master schedule as well as the school’s principal.

In addition to the interviews, I observed three classrooms that had ELs: an 11th-grade American Literature class, an Earth Systems science class, and an Algebra I class.
The observations lasted between 35 and 45 minutes each. The classrooms consisted of 30 students in the American Literature classrooms, 25 in Earth Systems, and 28 in Algebra I. The literature class had six ELs, the science class had four, and the algebra class had three.

**The Method**

Once I conducted the interviews, I transcribed them and then read them for the first time, noting any first impressions. Next, I reread the transcripts more carefully, labeling relevant pieces, such as words, phrases, sentences, or sections that stood out. Then I highlighted prominent themes and annotated where pieces were repeated in several places, when the interviewees mentioned that the information was important to them, or when the data were unexpected and surprising to me. I decided to feature in this chapter the narratives of three students, two teachers, two administrators, one guidance counselor, and two classroom observations. These profiles were written in vignette form and represented the data collected from all six students. I did not find it necessary to feature all six student interviews since some of the data overlapped and was repetitive. The three student participants provided me with ample material to present the findings for this chapter.

I chose to feature participants’ stories to develop context and present the data through their eyes. This research method sets up the assumption that people’s stories are important because they can tell us something useful (Bruner, 2003). My interest in doing this type of research writing is my inherent interest in people’s personal experiences and how those experiences tell stories that can be both informational and engaging to read.
Data analysis followed several established steps as recommended by Bryman (2012) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2009):

- **Step 1:** Read transcripts and make notes about first impressions
- **Step 2:** Labelled relevant pieces, starting with words, phrases, or sentences in the transcript. Labeling was about actions, activities, concepts, opinions, or processes. Labeling is also called coding or indexing (Bryman, 2012; Shenton, 2004). Researchers code concepts that are repeated in the transcripts or things that surprise the researcher. Sometimes interviewees explicitly stated that certain ideas were important to them or certain information reminded the researcher of theories or concepts that have been published in previous research.
- **Step 3:** Decide which codes were more important and created categories by grouping several codes together.
- **Step 4:** Analyzed the codes, established connections between them, and created new codes by combining two or more codes and dropping the codes that were no longer relevant (Bryman, 2012; Shenton, 2004).
- **Step 5:** Decided which codes were most relevant and how they connected to each other.
- **Step 6:** Did one or more of the following options: (a) Decided if there were any hierarchy among the categories, (b), Decided if one category was more relevant than others, (c) Drew connections between the data and the research questions.
- **Step 7:** Wrote up the results under their own section headings, followed by
interpretation and a discussion, and finally, closed with a section of ending remarks.

The collected data were organized chronologically by participant. Participant A had his/her own files, including transcripts of his/her audio recording(s), observation notes taken in the classroom, and copies of the interview questions. The same process was repeated for each participant.

A snapshot of raw data and how they were highlighted and annotated to draw on different findings in order to answer the research questions is presented in Figure 6.

![Figure 6. A snapshot of data analysis using Google Drive.](image)

Themes

The data collected and coded yielded the following major themes, which will be analyzed in Chapter 5.
ELs are scheduled in courses to meet graduation requirements, along with other program considerations, like special education or ESOL because of low English language proficiency.

ELs do not understand what courses they are taking, when it would be most appropriate to take them, and why the courses are important.

Teachers, administrators, and/counselors do not feel that performing well and passing classes are urgent matters. They have a system in place for how ELs can make up classes that they fail.

Participants’ consideration of a cohort model and their thoughts on its benefits and drawbacks.

The Researcher

This dissertation is both a professional and a personal journey for me because I am an EL student and teacher. Because of my personal experience, my research is highly personal too. In my dissertation, I am a teacher, observer, advocate, and research participant throughout this process. I admitted to bias at the beginning of this study in Chapter 1; however, my bias is not all that my presence here is limited to. I find myself often on the students’ sides even when it may not be to my best advantage professionally. I see my work with the students and their families as more of a responsibility; I have an allegiance to them because they often lack a voice in school and in the progress of their education, not intentionally, but by de facto. My students and their families often do not have an understanding of American school culture, the building structures and classroom practices that affect them. Nor do they know how to manipulate these structures or request services; therefore, they are excluded from participation in the decisions that
impact their education and quite possibly their futures.

I have worked in the field of ESOL for 20 years. During these years, I have strived to be creative and to approach a school’s administration with suggestions to serve the students well. One such area, though very limited, where I have been instrumental in implementing change that affects the students’ educational outcomes has been in establishing high school scheduling cohorts. I was amazed that the school where I worked had quite a wide range of flexibilities where it could establish programs and assign teachers and materials to them with a fair amount of ease. In this situation, I worked closely with the assistant principal who was in charge of creating the school’s master schedule (the registrar). I developed a list that grouped students in courses they needed, requested to meet with the assistant principal, and presented the idea to her. She took it and studied it for a while. Then she set up a meeting with me. In the meeting, we closed her office door, and we discussed with openness, honesty, and directness all aspects that involved the ELs. She was concerned with the students not performing well in certain classes. She listened to me because she appreciated the experience and the background I had to address the ELs’ educational needs, and we proceeded with scheduling the students together.

Approaching change from my position as a teacher with limited capacity to affect the status quo of school structures has been challenging and full of hurdles. One facet that makes the situation especially frustrating is not having the authority or the power of professional presence that would be more effective in such situations. So, in the case of the high school where I was allowed to implement the EL cohort, I had to proceed very carefully and tactfully. Because the process was new and had a potential for either being
successful or falling short of achieving the intended results, I kept meticulous notes
during the semester for what to look for when developing schedules the following
semester. I soon learned that one option we needed to consider closely was to leave open
spaces in each course that was designed as a cohort. This area proved to be a challenge to
sell to the principal and the district. The principal was adamant about denying such
request because she was concerned that other teachers would object to having empty
spaces left in certain teachers’ classes for the possibility of new enrollees. The risk was
that the space may remain open for the entire semester if no new ELs enrolled. In that
situation, the registrar was only allowed to hold two empty spaces in each cohort course.
And as expected, we had more than two students enroll many times and we had to put
them in courses that were not designated as cohorts. The cohort effort proved
counterproductive in such situations because even if only one student was left out, that
one student’s needs were basically ignored, or I was stretched too thin where I had to
double up my efforts, working collaboratively in cohort classrooms and meeting the
isolated student’s needs as well.

**Overview of Findings**

I present the study findings in the form of vignettes. Each vignette, or profile,
involved a conversation between a participant and me, and I chronicle the session as a
story. Telling stories has been one of humanity’s most fundamental communication
methods to present information, to entertain, or persuade audiences. Stories are powerful
because the reader is hooked on reading, and thereby becomes a participant. Parts of
qualitative research play up the importance of using stories to present data findings
(Bruner, 2003). Stories are reflections of a person’s perception of reality (Bruner, 2003). I
am using the present tense in writing the vignettes because the present tense represents
timelessness, transcendence, authenticity of the process.

**Student Profile A: There is a Vet Inside Every Little Girl**

The first participant, Student A, is a 10th-grade female EL. Asking the student
about her degree of satisfaction with school opens the door to many factors that are
relevant to my research topic. She rates her school satisfaction as a 4 out of 5 points. I ask
her what rationale she uses in evaluating her current situation at her school, and she
states, “Probably my teachers, grades, and classes.” I probe for deeper explanations about
why a 4 and not a 5, and she explains, “Well, yes, because I want to be a vet, and at this
school, there is not really an animal [science] class, like they have at the other high
school where I was. So that is the only problem I have.” The participant emphasizes
being in the right science class, such as anatomy or animal science as very important to
her and was obviously very concerned, saying, “When I first transferred here, I was very
worried because they kept changing my science class. First chemistry, then
environmental science, then now only healthcare sciences.” When asked if she knows
the reasons why she is in certain courses, and if she knows which ones of those are
required and which are optional, she says “no” adding, “I don’t really care about all this
classes; I just want to be in animal science class.” I ask her if she knows what classes she
is supposed to take and pass as a 10th grader in order to be promoted to the 11th grade,
and she says, “No, I don’t really know all that and I don’t care. I know why I am in
ESOL classes and that’s all. I think I need support in my reading and writing and it
actually helps me.”

When I ask her if she knows what classes she needs as a 10th grader at LUHS, she
says, “No, I don’t. What do you mean?” I shift the topic and ask her if she knows what an alternating A and B block schedule means, and she looks confused adding, “You mean A-Days and B-Days?” adding “that is normal for high school.” I ask her if she knows if all schools have the same A/B block schedules, and she shrugs her shoulders. I ask her if she knows the number of credit courses that she would be getting at the end of this school year, and she asks me, “Credit courses? I have credits if I pass all my classes. I don’t know about all that. I just focus on passing my classes.” I ask, “Would you still be in these classes if you did not have to be in them?” She answered an emphatic, “no.” I ask her if she knows who makes the decision about her course schedule. She laughs, raising her tone as if asking a question, “The principal?”

The last segment of the interview is about the implementation of the EL cohort at LUHS. I present the cohort design (Figure 4) to Student Participant A. I ask her to examine the different groups on the diagram. Then I ask her if she understands the figure. She looks hesitant and shakes her head. I point out the different high school groups to her, and I draw her attention to the EL group, which is missing. I ask her: “Do you know that your school has all these groups scheduled together or at least have the same teacher but different periods?” She gives me a perplexed look, which I interpret as her not understanding. She yawns, which is an indication to me that I am losing her attention. I shift the subject and say, “Would you like to be in the same classes as the other students learning English?” She nods, explaining, “I think it can actually be helpful because we can help each other, like, about work and all that. We can help the ones that don’t speak English and we can translate for them and help them with the work. We can talk about the work and help each
other understand it and help each other do it. So, if it’s something I don’t understand, I can ask them.

I ask her if she can think of a negative aspect for grouping ELs in core classes, and she responds,

I feel like that is a really good idea because some people, what if there’s someone who doesn’t speak [English] or understand in the class and there is no one to help them. Now they have to go to the ESOL class, “Oh I need help with this in math” and some teachers [core academic teachers] are like they don’t have to offer that [assisting ELs with understanding key parts of their classes].

I ask her what she finds difficult in her classes, and she opens up, saying, “to understand what the word means in a sentence, or how to pronounce it and it confuses me sometimes, like, ‘what does this word mean?’ and just like reading the word because I can’t pronounce it.” I continue inquiring about how she feels the native-English speaking students would respond to having ELs in their classes, and she says,

I feel like we would make new friends because, pretend you’re in a group and then the American students, they will, like, actually come up and “Oh, what’s your name?” and all that because many of them are like that.

**Student Profile B: I Need Chemistry, Not Astronomy**

The second participant is an 18-year old female EL who is in the 12th grade. I start the interview by asking her about her school experience at LUHS. She rates her personal satisfaction with her schooling as a 5 out of 5. I ask her what plays a role in that rating, and she answers very quickly: “Probably my schedule and my teachers.” I ask her to elaborate on why she likes her schedule, and she says,
Now that I am a senior, I am in a program called Workplace Learning. I feel that’s a good opportunity for me, you know, to do something than just stay at school. I do something after school or even before school.

She adds,

Then I am a Peer Facilitator as well so basically my B-Days is a free period for me, not free not doing anything but free because I get to move in the building and go see other students and even teachers.

I ask her why flexibility and freedom are important to her, and she states, “Because I get some practice at work; it’s kind of preparing me for what it’s like when I leave here [LUHS]. It’s like internship, or what do you call it?”

When I ask her if she participates in choosing her own classes or how she ends up with her course load, she shakes her head and explains,

I talk to, like, my counselor, Ms. P., and she’s flexible with me a little and I told her what classes I like, and she tries her best to get me into the class I want to do, so yeah.

I prompt her to elaborate on the Peer Facilitator class and she does, “Peer Facilitating? I serve as both a teacher assistant and peer tutor.” I ask her for more details about why those things are very satisfying to her educational needs, and she mentions, “Probably because of freedom and I get real independence and responsibility, and practice; that prepares me for life after high school, I think.” Upon my inquiry about how she became interested in these programs, she informs me that she came across them accidentally. She explains that for Workplace Learning, she learned of it from a friend who participated the previous year. She adds, “She [friend] graduated last year and told me it’s, like, a good
opportunity because I always wondered how she gets to leave [school] so early, and she told me about the program.” For the Peer Facilitator, she tells me that she overheard the ESOL teachers talking about needing a peer facilitator, and she volunteered to do it. The school year had already started, but she informed the teachers that she likes helping and she is good at translating, so they selected her for the program. When I ask if she knows that these programs are part of her electives, not required course load, she looks confused and does not know the difference, emphasizing, “But I still get credit for them.” I ask her to tell me the rest of her courses: Astronomy, British Literature, American Government and Economics, and Algebra II. She states that she does not understand why she is in Astronomy. She explains to me that she wants to study cosmetology after high school and become a beautician. So, the science she possibly needs is chemistry. I ask her why she has not requested to change out of Astronomy and she protests, “Sometimes I do ask for something different because I [expletive] at science, so I’d be asking my [guidance counselor] if I can change my schedule and take something else other than Astronomy but she told me like a requirement.” I ask her if she knows why there is not a lot of flexibility and freedom in choosing a science class, and she says, “Yes, it’s [flexibility] very low. So, I go ask my counselor to get out of it [science class] and she tells me, like it’s a requirement.” She adds, interrupting me, “Sometimes I ask not take something, but she [guidance counselor] does not change it.” I ask her why she cannot get out of those classes, and she states, “I don’t know; I think it’s just because the requirements because the school to graduate and stuff. I just go with what the school says.” I show her the chart of the required course units (Figure 9) and ask her about the number of course credits she needs for graduation. She relegates that responsibility to her counselor, stating, “I don’t
really know all of that, but my counselor does; she had told me but I don’t really get into it because I am on track [for graduation].” She shows obvious frustration by saying,

Since I don’t want to take Astronomy because it is about space and stuff, I’d rather take something about the body or something that’ll help me because I want to go to cosmetology school [after high school] but if it’s not that, then I want to be a psychologist and I believe like knowing stuff about the body has to do with science and psychology and stuff and that would help me.

I shift the conversation and ask the participant if she knows what kind of diploma she is getting or if she knows her grade point average (GPA). She shrugs her shoulders and says, laughing, “I don’t know, a regular diploma?” I inform her that it is called a general education high school diploma and all students in Georgia must get it if they graduate high school by taking similar courses. I continue, clarifying to her that is why students do not question their placement and counselors do not entertain course change requests because they are focused on whether the student has the required units and getting that student to graduate in four years.

When we discuss her ESOL classes, I ask her how being in the ESOL program helps her and she quickly states,

For me, ESOL is extending my knowledge in English and Spanish because, for me, I feel like even now I don’t know both languages still and sometimes I study both English and Spanish. So, I feel ESOL helps me in a way a lot.

I follow up: “Does the ESOL teacher intentionally teach Spanish or does she just allow you to use it?” The student answers: “She [the ESOL teacher] does not know Spanish and so she really tries her best to know to teach us to help her and the ESOL
students. We, kind of learn together.” I then pose the following question to her: “Because
you are a Peer Facilitator, which puts you in a position to interact with other ELs, what
do you think would help you and them to be more successful here?” She answers, “I feel
right now, they [ELs] need to learn their alphabet because they’re just going to start work
[school work] instead of trying to learn their alphabet and the sentence.” She continues,
“We need to be learning English first and we should start the other classes later. And we
need to learn Spanish too. It is good to use both of them [languages].”

I shift the conversation and ask, “It looks like you have a very good
understanding of what would help you and the other students learning English to do well
in school. So, what do you think about making a scheduling change, like this picture.”
Here I show her the cohort figure (Figure 5). She looks at the design, but she looks
confused. I explain to her the different groups her high school currently has. She still
looks confused or not grasping exactly what the figure represents. I ask her, “Do you
think it is a good idea to put all ELs in one group and have them take the same classes
together depending on their grade level? Do you think that would help you and them?”
She responds,

I feel like it is helping them like learn math together; they can help each other. I
feel like it’s better to have a friend with you who speaks your language. That way,
you both, you know, help each other. Say one person doesn’t know something,
the other person doesn’t know, they can help each other and that will help them
with their grades and stuff. But with Spanish I guess that too. It’ll help them help
each other. Say they don’t know how to say something in English, the other
person helps with that, so yeah.
I ask her if feeling comfortable in the classroom matters to her and helps her learn better, and she interrupts me adding,

I believe it does because coming from a place, they don’t really talk English and they come here and it’s something totally strange and so they feel stressed. And they don’t understand what is going on and so they can’t do work [class work].

On whether the students should try to understand and do work in all their classes in English or if they should be allowed to use their native language, she says, “I feel they should try to understand it in Spanish and just focus on learning English for later.”

**Student Profile C: I Need Skills, Skills, Skills, Instead I Get British Literature**

My session with Participant C is filled with passionate exchanges and endless enquiries on both sides. He is a senior, hoping to graduate and go to college. He gives his high school satisfaction with his education a 4 out of 5. He likes his high school, and he feels that he is getting what he needs at this point. But when I ask him why not a 5? He answers, “Because I don’t think I am really ready for life after high school. I need skills and I feel insecure about reality after I leave here [high school].” He adds, “I love reading books, not all of them, and even writing papers, and giving presentations. Those things help me with English, which has improved a lot.” I ask him why he feels insecure about reality after high school and he readily explains,

I want to learn skills like English, driving, work, and take classes that help my future. I want to go to any work, like McDonald’s or any place, and see how they work there, like see what the manager does and learn that way. I think that would help me with English too.

He adds, “I would rather go follow a CEO or a manager at a fast-food restaurant for my
I continue on and ask, “Why do you think schools teach concepts?” He rolls his eyes and laughs, “Because they want us to have a foundation and depth.” He insists, “Schools lack teaching real life experiences especially when some students do not have long attention spans or struggle with sitting still for hours inside closed spaces.” I switch the subject slightly and ask the participant, “What do you think schools should do to teach ELs better English and subject matter?” He says very quickly, “Maybe two teachers in one room or if it’s just one teacher, maybe she needs to know how to teach language and her subject.” He elaborates, “Some students learn fast but it takes work for me. I have to focus on English and learn what the class teaches too like math or history.” Besides skills and their application, the student also thinks that high school should focus on teaching ELs English and work on achieving full or at least semi-proficiency before they tackle serious academic courses. He asserts, “At school, I notice the difference in English between me and an American student and I worry if I don’t get like that.” He adds, “Because of that I am focused on learning English in all classes. I take a lot of notes, and I ask questions when I have a problem, even if I get very nervous.” He then points out that ELs are more likely to learn English faster if they were allowed to interact with people from different walks of life and also use their native language between each other to clarify concepts. For this point, he brings up his own situation. He has a part time job at a Kroger’s grocery store. He says that he started working there a few months ago and that his boss wanted him to push carts and stock shelves. He elaborates,

After a few months of having good work record, I was asked to be a cashier. That gave me a little more interaction with customers. Then my boss told me I can
work at the customer service desk and that gave me more interaction with customers and I have to get over the not being fluent. So, I have to be more motivated and work to improve and if I don’t know something, I tell myself someone else knows and I ask for help. If it’s a phone call, I ask someone to take it and then I ask what the caller said. Even now I have pronunciation issues and I have to work on it. I have to get over feeling scared or embarrassed.

I shift the conversation to class scheduling and ask him, “Do you participate in choosing your classes?” He says, “Maybe just a little, one class or two.” I ask why, and he says, “I think the state decides about courses for high schools. Not just high schools, but for students in middle school and elementary school too. The state sets that up, I think.” I ask, “What classes would you take if you could choose?” He says,

I don’t know, just a little of everything but I really want application and freedom. In Peru, students can leave school and go home and then come back. Here we can’t leave school at all. I think we should leave and go to work or go to classes in a different school.

I ask him about his grades, and he comments, “I am disappointed in myself. I looked at my class ranking, and I am like more than a hundred. So, I know I need to work hard.”

I ask him if he knows how many core classes he has to pass to be promoted to the next grade level or to graduate, and he looks confused. I show him the 23-credit grid (Figure 9) and explain to him that a student has to pass all core classes in every grade level, plus at least one elective, to be promoted to the next grade level and to be treated as on track for graduation. He takes a long moment to ponder this information, and he brings in another situation from his own life to relate to me regarding this point. He says,
I have a stepbrother who is taking both 12th- and 11th-grade classes, but that he is counted as an 11th grader because he failed American Literature and physics, two 11th-grade courses. He then goes on to tell me that his stepbrother complains about being in a junior homeroom because he is missing many senior student milestones, such as ordering a senior t-shirt, being placed in the senior section of the school’s yearbook and may even miss out on ordering cap and gown. He continues explaining this situation by saying that his stepbrother is in a credit recovery course for American Literature and Physics and will probably pass them and still graduate this year without ever being classified as a senior.

Figure 7. Current academic groups at LUHS, minus the EL Cohort.
At the end, I show him the school grouping diagram (Figure 7) and ask him to look at it and see if he understands it. He shakes his head. I point to the different groups in his high school and also tell him that currently the EL group is missing. I go on to say that there would need to be teacher cohorts as well for the purpose of teacher education and to build a community of resources, learners, teachers, parents, and administrators within the school. He looks interested but does not understand the concept fully.

**Profile D: ESOL Teachers, A Department of Two**

I interviewed two ESOL teachers at Large Urban High School who form the entire ESOL department at LUHS. The two work together very closely and their rooms are in the same hallway right across from each other.

**ESOL Teacher 1.** ESOL Teacher 1’s educational background comprises of a Bachelor of Science (BS) in accounting and master’s degree in special education. She first worked as an accountant for a firm, and when she got married and had a child, she switched to education. She taught mathematics for 10 years before she received an endorsement in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). This is her second year at LUHS where she teaches two sheltered English classes, and she collaborates in push-in classes with other teachers for two other 11th-grade and 12th-grade literature courses. She rates her degree of satisfaction at LUHS a 3-1/2 out of 5 points. Elaborating on why she rates her job satisfaction with 3-1/2 points, she says,

> It definitely doesn't have anything to do with the students at all. It’s the politics of education. I think it’s unfortunate that our ELs are held to the same standards as their peers who have been speaking English their entire lives. And they [ELs] come here and they are expected to perform in the same manner as their peers
without knowing English. That’s disheartening to me and unfair. And that also makes it challenging, because they [school administrators] come into our rooms to observe and they're not seeing what they feel looks like what they’re seeing in other classrooms. So, I think that’s more of a political aspect of our education.

I ask her how she manages to bridge the divide between what is expected of her and what she feels she owes the students. She explains,

They’re [school administrators] not the ones who see the students directly, face-to-face, everyday. You are and then you see the frustration and that degree of whatever it is you’re struggling through, you and the students daily. People who make decisions don’t really get to experience that. Right? Too much unfairness in educating ELs, particularly when it comes to testing the students with the same instrument as all the general education students.

She adds,

The school [LUHS] can use additional resources, more teachers, and better educational material. There is also a disconnect between what the ELs should be learning, like English language proficiency based on the student’s ACCESS scores, and the teacher should really be teaching material that addresses the student’s language proficiency skills in the four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and what the school’s administration expects from the students and the teachers.

I ask her if ELs should receive instruction in WIDA standards, rather than the GA Standards of Excellence (GSE), and she nods her head:

That is the unfairness I am talking about. How are the students going to show
growth or even pass those areas [content areas that are assessed by state’s Milestones tests] when they don’t know English? To me, it feels backwards and unfair. I can’t explain it to the students [ELs].

I ask her to “tell me what your job responsibilities at LUHS are from the minute you walk into the building to the minute you walk out at the end of the day.” She answers,

Lesson planning, implementing the lesson, presenting the lesson. Also, registration and schedule adjustments when necessary, enrolling and testing new students, communicating with teachers and administrators when necessary, preparing paperwork as required by the district, parent communication.

I switch the topic to the process of enrolling ELs and ask the teacher, “You stated that you enroll about 2 to 3 students weekly sometimes and also you mentioned that you assist with enrollment. Would you elaborate on the process of enrolling new ELs?” She says,

Our program is constantly growing day by day. We register 2 or 3 new kids almost every week. So, one of the challenges I feel is that we don’t have enough staff in our department. We should at least have a full time parapro [program assistant]. Our classes are structured where we may have 2s and 3s [student’s English language proficiency levels based on ACCESS by WIDA. There are 6 levels] in each, in that one class, but sometimes that makes it difficult because the 3s could probably work independently if we were working in stations but the 2s and the 1s almost need direct instruction on different levels, so that kind of makes it difficult.

The participant explains that most of the responsibility of enrolling students falls
in the hands of the school’s Student Services Department. That is where all students receive packets of registration papers, which include a questionnaire to identify language minority students, also known as the Student’s Home Language Survey (see Figure 8).

![Figure 8. Identification of home language of students through Student’s Home Language Survey.](image)

Figure 8 shows the part of LUD’s enrollment form that is responsible for identifying language minority students. LUD offers registration forms in 8 languages: English, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, French, Korean, Portuguese, and Russian.

ESOL Teacher 1 clarifies,

If the student indicates that he/she knows another language other than English, then BP [the lead ESOL teacher] or I get contacted to come down, introduce ourselves to the family, help them finish the registration process, make copies of necessary documents for our files, and inform them of the testing and the program’s [ESOL] services.

She comments that enrollment has somewhat improved from past years because Student
Services,

used to contact us [ESOL teachers] as soon as a student who may not know English walks in, before they give them the questionnaire or anything; they just called us straight down and one of us would go down. It wouldn’t matter what use we’d be, but now the process is a little bit better.

I continue with questioning ESOL Teacher 1 about who actually enters the courses for the new ELs in the computer. She says, “90% of the time it’s the guidance counselor but the other 10%, it’s Ms. BP [the lead ESOL teacher].” ESOL Teacher 1 comments,

The process is somewhat predictable and simpler when the student’s English language proficiency is very lacking, and it is obvious that the student qualifies for ESOL services. She adds that the process gets murky and some students slip through the cracks because, They don’t speak with an accent or they answer oral questions easily but that they actually are still ELs because they haven’t mastered enough English, especially reading and writing, to exit the program. This is mainly an issue with students who are not or don’t look Latino.

I keep the momentum on course scheduling going by asking if the guidance counselors have specific courses and teachers to whom ELs are assigned or if they follow the same course track as the general education courses. ESOL Teacher 1 answers, “There is no system for scheduling ELs in specific courses or with specific teachers.” She clarifies that “the best that the guidance counselors can do at the moment is to try to place new students with low English skills in classes where there are other ELs” so that they may assist the new student, especially if the students speak the same language. She
explains that the system is still very random in that some guidance counselors,

look at classroom rosters and spot Latino names and then place the new student in
that class. We [ESOL teachers] had instances where she [the guidance counselor] did that and those students did not speak Spanish or they didn’t want to be the translator.

One area Teacher 1 knows needs improvement is EL achievement in core academic areas. She feels that most of the school staff want to work with ELs but,

they don’t know what to do, to work with them [ELs]; a lot of time they send us the material and see if we can find a way to help the students with whatever it is they are doing, albeit a project or a writing assignment or something like that. But I think the achievement could be great but it’s just OK right now.

She suggests that LUHS should consider having a group of teachers who would always work with ELs because,

anytime you get used to having a group or a demographic of students over and over again, you learn what works for them and what doesn’t. Versus I got one here, one there, I might get 2 this year, or I may not have any for the next couple of years, but that also would take teachers that are willing to take on the ELs and I don’t know if they want to.

I take advantage of this opportunity and inform her that my research project’s recommendation is to set up student and teacher cohorts for ELs at LUHS. (I show her the cohort design graph, Figure 4). I point to the graph and explain, “The cohorts would be grade level and subject specific, open in that students would enroll in them as they enroll in the school, and students may be part of multiple cohorts to address their course
needs for graduation.” I go on explaining, “Setting up cohorts would facilitate ongoing teacher education, communication with the parents and students, and streamline resources to benefit the students’ educational needs.” I can tell she does not understand the plan entirely, but she nods anyway.

**ESOL Teacher 2.** ESOL Teacher 2 is the second teacher research participant. She is the lead ESOL teacher at LUHS. She has a bachelor’s degree in special education and a master’s degree in literacy. She has been teaching special education for most of her career. This is her third year in ESOL. Her job responsibilities are in the classroom where she instructs students in the ESOL program and outside the classroom where she assists with intake of new students from filling out paperwork to testing new students to find out if they qualify for the ESOL program. After a student is identified as EL, ESOL Teachers 1 and 2 have worked to,

identify some of the teachers whom we [the two ESOL teachers] thought would be a better fit for our ELs. So, we have been successful somewhat in scheduling some of those kids with particular teachers. We had a meeting with our principal about two weeks ago and she informed us that she would like to start to schedule students who are new to the country in groups together and we are open to that idea.

I ask her if the sheltered English classes are scheduled by EL language proficiency level, and she says, “They are all in one class and we have all the levels in that ESOL sheltered English class.” I ask ESOL Teacher 2 if the ELs are served in the other content areas, like math, science, and social studies, and she says, “We currently only service the English language arts content for ELs. They receive no services in the
other classes. They only receive accommodations.”

Figure 9 is an example of a portion of the form that accompanies ELs in their general education courses where they do not receive special instruction based on their English language competencies. The complete document is available in Appendix C. Instead, the ELs are mainstreamed with the general education students. In such classes, content teachers, with the help of the ESOL teacher, go through the form and check particular accommodations that would assist the ELs in their content areas.

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**Figure 9.** Portion of the document that outlines high school EL learner accommodations.
I request more explanation regarding assigning a course schedule to ELs and ask ESOL Teacher 2, “What are factors that affect student placement? Would you talk a little more about that?” She explains,

We try to have a system of how we place them [ELs]. For example, if there is a Hispanic/Spanish speaking student, we try to put them in a class that we know there are other Spanish speaking students in there, especially if they are level 1 [English language proficiency level based on ACCESS by WIDA]. Now if they are Levels 2 or 3, they are placed in any class that they need for graduation with gen ed [general education students].

Teacher 2 states that she has a new 11th grader who has just started at LUHS and that student is taking three EOCT courses: two English literature and composition courses, (one is a make up for a ninth-grade English class, one an 11th-grade American Literature course), and a U.S. History course, all with high stakes End of Course Tests (EOCTs) while the student has very limited English language proficiency. The participant adds,

There are programs in place for them [ELs] [if they fail], like alternative school, summer school, remediation, the online program [GA Virtual School]. Some of our students are on GA Virtual School now making up credits they failed. One did last year as a senior and she passed and graduated on time.

I ask ESOL Teacher 2 if establishing a cohort at her school would streamline any of the difficulties that the ELs face in earning course credits and/or facilitate better grades at her school. She says that grouping of any kind would be very helpful, especially if “there are both teacher and student grouping at LUHS.” She comments,

One area where grouping teachers would help is in establishing a professional
learning community so that the ESOL teachers are able to communicate more effectively with the general education teachers. Now if we do a learning session, some teachers do not come and others who come may not benefit from it because they may not have any ELs.

**Profile E: Administrators E and F**

I interviewed the assistant principal, Administrator E, in charge of creating LUHS’s master schedule and the school’s principal, Administrator F.

**Administrator E.** Administrator E is a little reserved to speak with me because “This is my [her] first year at LUHS and also doing schedules.” She does not seem very confident about what to say to me. I encourage her to speak on anonymity stating to her that there will be no names of anyone or the school in my dissertation. She still apologizes to me stating, “There may not be anything to share with you.” I proceed to ask her a few questions on her responsibilities and her work on schedules at her high school. She was a middle school English language arts (ELA) teacher before she became an administrator. During her teaching career, she had experiences with ELs in a push-in model where the ESOL teacher came in her room to assist ELs with their ELA content. She states that she has very positive experiences working on creating the school’s master schedule because “they [teachers] are positive, encouraging, funny, and student oriented.” Administrator E states that her biggest challenge this year is being at a new school in a new role, so she is learning by doing. She states that she is not directly involved with enrolling ELs at her school because that is the responsibility of the guidance office and student services. She only creates segments, and she assigns teachers to them. She knows that as far as ELs go, they only have the ESOL sheltered ELA and communications
courses taught by the two ESOL teachers at this point. She states that for,

the other courses, students are distributed alphabetically by their counselors. I’ve
had some teachers come to me and say that some ELs should be grouped together
to help each other out. So, I am keeping that in mind when I do schedules for next
year.

There are no other scheduling considerations for ELs currently and the only rationale that
is applied to them at enrollment is what course credits they already have and what they
still need in order to graduate. She says that those are similar aspects of enrolling general
education students.

I ask her what factors are considered when enrolling new ELs at her school, and
she states there are two ways students enroll at LUHS. In the first way, the ELs come
from feeder middle schools, in which case the counselors and administrators do the
students’ orientation and enrollment when the students are still in the eighth grade,
explaining,

We visit the middle schools. We talk to them [the students] about high school. We
tell them about the courses required for ninth grade. We give them course
description sheets where they can indicate their elective courses. The core
academics are similar to all other ninth graders.

Administrator E then explains the second way that students enter at LUHS.

If the students transfer from another state or out of the country, we look at their
transcripts and the counselors decide what courses they still need and put them in
them. If the students are language minority, the ESOL teachers are notified to test
the students and schedule them in ESOL if necessary.
She adds to her answer:

The students are placed in courses needed for graduation. The counselors build transcripts and schedule students. I only create the master schedule. The only difference between ELs and the general education students would be in the ESOL sheltered or communication courses, or if they happen to be in special education courses too. All course requirements are the same for all students.

To wrap up the interview, I discuss introducing scheduling cohorts at LUHS and explain to the administrator how they would work and ask if she thinks that model holds promise for ELs. At first, she is reserved because she feels that would slow down the students’ acquisition of English language proficiency. I inform her that the focus for the cohorts would be both language and content, with the intention of improving student/teacher morale, attendance, mastery, and graduation rates with better GPAs. She listens intently and nods in agreement, when I say to her, “For example, in Biology, the focus would be to help the students learn Biology, rely on each other for collaboration, and improve their grades, which in turn would improve their higher education potential.” She nods, and says, “Oh, so in biology, for example, the focus would be biology, not English; I get it.” She, then, comments that she has already been thinking about doing some kind of schedule grouping and that cohorts are a type of grouping. She thinks that it would be a great measure to introduce to increase the success of ELs at her school.

Administrator F. My interview with the school’s principal does not last long. Actually, I felt very lucky to be able to interview her. She is a young, energetic lady, who gives out an air of informality and friendliness. I start by asking her about her work and education background. She was also an ELA teacher, but she has worked in many schools
and states. She has worked in Virginia, North Carolina, Illinois, and now here in Georgia. I then ask her about her experience working with ELs. She shows her involvement with ELs by stating,

I have worked with them [ELs] on and off but with more consistency in Chicago, Illinois, where there are large numbers of ESOL students. There I was introduced to SIOP [Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol], as a way of presenting both content and language to ELs.

She explains that SIOP was doable in Chicago because there was a large number of ELs. I seize the opportunity to ask her, “What are areas of improvements in course scheduling that could assist ELs achieve better school success at LUHS?” She looks like she has heard from other parties that part of my research topic focuses on the implementation of cohorts at LUHS, and she says, “I think some kind of grouping would be great. We also want them involved in ‘Move on When Ready.’ We think if we can get them to a college campus when still in high school, that might help them.”

“Move on When Ready” is also commonly referred to as dual enrollment where high school students take college courses usually at the higher education institution location and those course credits count as both secondary and higher education credits.

Profile G: The Guidance Counselor

LUHS’s guidance counselors’ (GC) student caseloads are divided by alphabet. So, each guidance counselor serves a number of students based on the beginning letter of the students’ last names. The guidance counselors at LUHS work by alphabet load, so each one of them serves a portion of the student body distributed equally by student last names. I ask the guidance counselor (GC) about the number of ELs she has in her
segment of the alphabet and she says, “I don’t know. That is a good question.” I ask her
who decides on the structure of assigning alphabet loads to counselors, and she says,
“Ultimately the administration does. Initially we discuss it as a group but ultimately the
administration makes that decision.” She says that students are divided, “after ninth
grade. We have a ninth-grade counselor that takes all ninth graders, but after ninth, we
break them down by alpha, 10-12.” I ask, “Would you tell me how many course units
each student must have before he/she graduates?” GC responds,

So, everyone who graduates from our school must have 23 credits. They need to
have 4 credits of math, 4 credits of science, 4 credits of English, 3 credits
specifically of social studies. And there are specific classes they must have:
American government, U.S. History, World History, and Economics. They have
to have with science two of those must be a physical science or physics, and they
must have biology. With math, they have to have Algebra I and geometry and
Algebra II and a fourth unit of math. In addition, in our high school, they have to
have three credits of career tech and/or foreign language or fine arts. So, adding
all those up they have to have 23 credit hours.

I show her Figure 10, the required course grid, to affirm her response, and she
nods. I inquire about whose decision it is to come up with those numbers and the exact
recipe for the courses, and she states,

That came from the district. I guess they work in conjunction with the State Board
of Education. They are the ones who say that they [students] need these units of
English, and math, social studies, and science. And they come up with that
formula … And that doesn’t matter what the student’s background is.
Figure 10. Full list of all the 23 credit courses required of every high school student in the state of Georgia to complete and pass in order to receive a high school diploma.

Since GC brings up the students’ background, I ask, “Would you describe in detail, as much as you can, the process or current practices of enrolling ELs in courses at your school?” GC answers,

So, I just started doing ELL students so what we do is after they’ve gone through testing to see their proficiency. Then our ESOL lead teacher determines what classes that they would be eligible for. So, for instance, and the other half is knowing certain classes have End of Course Tests, so as a freshman we typically would give any student a ninth-grade lit/comp class [literature and composition]; we’d give them Biology, and we’d give them Algebra I. But those have three major tests and we got students coming and who may not be able to speak the
language, we try to change that up so that they don’t have that kind of pressure their freshman year. So, they may take a second year class [10th grade] that we would not normally give to 10th-grade students. We’d give to them the first year because it doesn’t have a high stakes test involved and ensure their success. Of course, it also helps the school because it goes towards our CCRPI [College and Career Ready Performance Index] ratings.

This response is directly linked to Research Question 1: What current scheduling approaches are implemented at LUHS, and what is the rationale behind them? GC explains in detail the process and rationale behind scheduling ELs in courses at LUHS.

Once eligibility for ESOL services is established through testing, the lead ESOL teacher schedules the student in the available ESOL courses (See Figure 11) and then GC schedules the rest of the courses. She goes by assigning the student to courses as she explains,

How I do that, believe it or not, I try my best to put them [ELs] in classes with Spanish speaking students. Since I don’t have a guaranteed teacher that’s going to speak the language. At least if I have a student who can help them out. Because our true students who don’t have any English base, I try my best to pair them with someone who does.

Again, this is part of the process and rationale for scheduling ELs in courses at LUHS and this information is directly linked to RQ 1. I ask GC if this approach is systematic and/or a common procedure set up by policy, and she shakes her head, adding, I just try; it doesn’t always work out but that to me at least I feel better knowing that it’s hard for me to fathom students sitting in a class where no one can speak
to them. I can’t even imagine being in that situation so I try to get them in there with another student that can.

![Table showing courses based on ELs' English language proficiency levels.](image)

*Figure 11.* Courses that are offered to ELs in the ESOL program based on ELs’ English language proficiency levels.

We arrive at discussing LUHS student groups. I show GC the high school group design (Figure 7), and I ask, “These groups are common in any high school, correct?” She nods. I point out to her that the EL group in the design is currently missing, and she nods again. I, then, show her the second diagram, a design of the EL cohort model (Figure 4). I ask GC, “How do you feel about implementing an EL cohort at your school where teachers are ESOL endorsed and students are grouped together in classes?” GC replies, “I am wondering ... love the endorsement for the teachers because I think that is
great. My issue would be would we have enough students? Like the definition of the cohort seems loose. I am not sure.” Evidently, she understands that the ELs would be in classes alone, not with general education English native speaking students. I clarify by saying that,

the cohort would be embedded in general ed. So, for example, if you have six students taking biology they would be in the classroom with the rest of 20 or 25 students that you have in general ed. The reason that the ELs would be together is to concentrate our resources mostly and training. So, then you have your ESOL teachers, they can communicate with those teachers a little easier. Also, when you do training or they go to conferences or to the county office for additional meetings and resources, books and all that, then you only target those groups of teachers who are involved in the teaching of ELs. Also the ELs would rely on each other for support and they’d be allowed to use their native language to access the material.

To which she replies, “Gotcha, that would work. I can’t see why that wouldn’t.”

She then adds,

So that is what we have to do is the same thing we do with special ed. We have to allot, they get ten spots. We need to do like 5 spots and that would actually create more teachers. Those 5 spots would definitely increase the number of teachers.

But that’s what you have to do to make it happen.

Further explaining her comment, GC sees a clear link between establishing a cohort at her school, having to add new teachers who preferably are endorsed or licensed to teach ELs, and how the special education program works, which would facilitate
scheduling EL cohorts. This information is directly linked to answering RQ 2.

Profile H: Classroom Observations

I observed three classrooms at LUHS, one was an 11th-grade American Literature course, one was a ninth-grade Algebra I class, and the other one was 10th-grade Earth Systems, a science class. For this chapter I am including a profile of the American Literature class and of the Earth Systems class.

My observation of the American Literature class lasted about 45 minutes. The teacher and the students worked on how to define and identify themes in literary works. The teacher started the class by asking the students to participate in a quick write, defining what a theme is and how to find it, saying, “Write down everything you know about theme and how do you find it in a literary work?” She then tells them that they are going to take notes using a Cornell Notes template (Figure 1 shows a generic Cornell notes form. See Appendix D for the specific one used in this class). She has several students read what they wrote on theme. The teacher informs the class that “we did not do very well on the pre-assessment that I gave you last week. We did not know what a theme is and how to find it.” She then informs them that she is going to give them a strategy to define and find themes. After that she plays a YouTube video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIuKNVny9cM), discussing what a theme is in a relatable way. The video narrator speaks very fast and uses nuanced language, filled with humor, and props, like pictures of famous Hollywood figures and references to popular movies and songs. The teacher moves the class along by asking follow-up questions and leading the students to understand a theme. Then she puts a poem on the board: “A Dream Deferred” by Langston Hughes. She asks a student to read the poem. Then she
goes over it, explaining it one line at a time, eventually leading to a deep understanding of the poem and assisting the students in obtaining themes from reading, explaining, and understanding the poem. Appendix D includes the documents utilized by the students during this class.

Figure 12. Generic Cornell notes form. (Cornell Notes is a kind of interactive notetaking that many schools in Large Urban District (LUD) have recently implemented in the classroom. It allows the students to form and write questions based on their reading; then they write down explanations for their questions based on reading and peer/teacher interactions.)

During the YouTube video and during the teacher’s discussion, there are several side conversations going on among English native speaking students in the room. Some students have their mobile phones out and are scrolling on the screens with earplugs on too. The teacher ignores those who are distracted or intentionally look like they are not interested in the lesson. The six ELs sit dispersed in the class and do not participate in the
discussion. One of the students is a newcomer. The students do not raise their hands to volunteer answers, and the teacher does not call on them to read out loud or to answer oral questions. They look at the board and watch the video. Then they look at the board as the teacher reads and explains the poem. Appendix C is an accommodations form that classroom teachers are given in order to facilitate the content for the ELs or to use some of the strategies indicated on the form. The American Literature teacher is not observed making any accommodations and does not involve the ELs in the lesson. See Figure 13 for the classroom arrangement in the American Literature class.

Figure 13. Classroom arrangement in the American Literature class.

The second classroom I visited was an Earth Systems, 10th-grade course. There are 25 total students, four of whom are ELs, and one is a newcomer. The ELs are spread out around the room apparently randomly. The newcomer sits at the front near the door.
He has a small laptop computer in front of him. The teacher asks him, “Miguel, are you OK?” He nods. Figure 14 shows the science classroom table and seat arrangements with the EL seats marked “EL.”

![Classroom arrangement in the Earth Systems class.](image)

Figure 14. Classroom arrangement in the Earth Systems class.

The day’s lesson is plate tectonics. The teacher starts by reading and explaining

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**SES2. Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to understand how plate tectonics creates certain geologic features, landforms, Earth materials, and geologic hazards.**

a. Construct an explanation based on evidence that describes the mechanisms causing plate tectonic motion.

*(Clarification statement: The role of radioactive decay as the source of energy that drives the process of convection should be studied as part of this element).*

b. Develop and use models for the different types of plate tectonic settings (convergent, divergent and transform boundaries).

*(Clarification statement: Subduction zones, continental collisions, rift zones, and ocean basins should be included.)*

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Figure 15. Georgia Standards for Earth Systems course (GaDOE, 2016b).
the standard shown in Figure 15. Then she asks anticipation questions to find out what the students already know, or if they can predict what the lesson is about. The teacher also shows pictures on the board of different earth topography that shows how plate tectonics affects different earth formations (See Figure 16).

![Figure 16](image)

*Figure 16. Pictures the Earth Systems teacher uses during observation lesson. The figure shows an earthquake (top left), a tsunami (top right), a volcano (bottom left), and an island (bottom right). These are all formations that are caused by the different movements of the earth’s geological plates.*

The teacher then tells the students what the expectations for the day are. She wants them to know that they have to cut and paste into their notebooks labeled pictures of the different earth formations (See Appendix E). They are to take notes on plate tectonics from PowerPoint slides she will present in class, and, if time runs out, she will post the lesson in their online class for home access. After that she informs them, that
there is practice on quizlet.com. She finally tells them there is a quiz tomorrow, clarifying, “The quiz is not multiple choice. You will fill in the blanks or write out your answers and spelling count.” Finally, the teacher asks the students to use Cornell Notes to write down information from the slides. She asks them to use their own words to take notes so that they may understand what they are writing.

**Conclusion**

This chapter presents the findings of how ELs understand their high school schedules, whether they understand the factors involved in selecting their classes, if they have a voice in choosing their classes, and what implications their schedules have on their educational outcomes. The chapter also explores how the students feel about implementing a cohort scheduling model at their school and how it could affect their educational outcomes. Cohorts would be similar to learning communities that may affect the ELs’ academic achievement at LUHS. Findings are reported through vignettes that are representative of data collected through semi-structured interviews with six student participants, two teachers, two administrators, one guidance counselor, and two classroom observations. In Chapter 5, I will analyze and discuss the following themes:

- ELs are scheduled in courses to meet graduation requirements as dictated by CCRPI, along with ESOL federal and state program rules.
- ELs do not seem to understand what courses they are taking and why.
- Teachers, administrators, and counselors do not feel that passing classes with good grades is urgent; they have a uninformed attitude about how ELs can make up classes that they fail.
- Participants’ consideration of a cohort model and their thoughts of its benefits.
and drawbacks.

- The chapter will also have research implications, recommendations for future research, researcher reflections, and a conclusion.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

Brief Background, Purpose, and Problem of the Study

Students who speak another language at home and who have limited English proficiency form a school demographic labeled English learners (ELs). These students are provided extra services by local schools and school districts under Title III, officially known as the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was passed by Congress as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty initiative in 1965 (Casalaspi, 2017). This law is reauthorized every five years. In December 2015, it was reauthorized as The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaced No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This is the primary law of the country that affords fair and appropriate education to all students and makes provisions for minorities, students with disabilities, and language minority students. English learners (ELs) have additional legislation protections. The Supreme Court Decision, Lau v. Nichols of 1974 mandated addressing the ELs’ needs through a program that would be staffed by qualified teachers teaching English language skills to ELs, tracking their progression in learning English through periodic assessments, and placing other protections in place for the students, such as parental involvement and classroom accommodations (Commission on Civil Rights, 1997). Following Lau v. Nichols, the U. S. Congress passed the Equal Education Opportunity Act (EEOA) “which not only mandated equal rights for LEP [Limited English Proficient] students, but also stated that a failure to provide adequate resources for LEP students to overcome language differences was considered a denial of equal education” (Carrion, 2006).
Subsequently, ELs are also protected by landmark Supreme Court decisions and by many rules and guidelines put in place by the U.S. Department of Education and the Office of Civil Rights. The gist of all the guidelines and the rules is that ELs have to be offered quality education to address their English language proficiency needs and be involved in all aspects of the P-12 curriculum no matter the grade level or the English proficiency level. One area of concern regarding ELs’ education is the amount of flexibility schools and school systems have regarding affording a fair and quality education to ELs. Most schools resort to treating ELs equally when it comes to addressing their educational needs. ELs have similar requirements as all other native English speakers when it comes to course scheduling to address grade level promotion and subsequent high school graduation. This dissertation is concerned with researching how secondary course schedules affect ELs’ educational achievement and whether implementing a different model, cohort scheduling, would yield different results. The research carried out for this study investigated whether ELs at Large Urban High School (LUHS) know how their courses are chosen for them, whether they participate in choosing those courses, whether they were cognizant of the processes of assigning them to certain required courses, and if introducing a new scheduling model, cohort, would facilitate their language learning, content attainment, and improve their educational outcomes. In linking data to research questions, I will simultaneously answer the research questions, present and elaborate on prominent data themes, and make future recommendations, sometimes in the same paragraph. This crisscrossing of data and writing is needed essentially because RQ2 is a recommendation in essence. I will also suggest future areas of research regarding course scheduling.
The methodology used in this dissertation is case study qualitative research. The purpose of case study research is exploratory, descriptive, and interpretive (Mariano, 1993; Stake, 1995) Emphasis is naturalistic, philosophical through deep probes of contexts (Mariano, 2000; Stake, 1995) and is ideal for social research in education because it focuses on real world scenarios that present the researcher with opportunities to explore the cases in depth. For the analysis of data in this chapter, I will analyze the major themes that became prominent during data presentation in Chapter 4. Then I will conduct a situation analysis, through key participants, their issues, and perspectives. This chapter will also have sections for research implications and recommendations for further research. The participants’ individual voice is established in Chapter 4 through narratives to make the dissertation more engaging, personal, and authentic. It is my belief that an individual voice is also crucial, especially since the method for this study is case study in order to build abstractions across cases.

Careful consideration was taken when analyzing and interpreting data, especially when attempting to derive meaning from shared experience in order to understand the beliefs and experiences of participants (van Manen, 1990, as cited in Patton, 2010). Coding is one way to reveal patterns and allow themes to emerge from transcripts, fieldnotes, and artifacts. In addition to hand coding, the following Google applications and extensions were utilized in order to organize and code the data: Audacity digital recording software, Google Drive, Google Docs with tables, Google drawing, the commenting feature, and the highlight tool add-on for Google Docs.

This dissertation is concerned with researching what current practice LUHS implements when scheduling ELs in academic courses and what rationale is behind those
practices. The research will also establish how ELs’ school achievement is shaped by their course placement and present a new scheduling model, cohort, to the high school.

Discussion of Findings and Implications

Chapter 4 presented the findings of how ELs understood their high school schedules, whether they understood the factors involved in selecting their classes, and the implications of these factors on their educational outcomes. Also included were the perspectives of two of their ESOL teachers, two administrators, and a guidance counselor who is in charge of schedule development. All participants provided their perspective on the implications of an alternative scheduling model.

The major themes that emerged from the data include:

- ELs are scheduled into courses to meet graduation requirements.
- ELs do not understand the courses that were selected for them and how their educational goals dovetail with graduation.
- Participants see value in introducing a cohort scheduling model to address ELs’ unique learning and community needs.

ELs Are Scheduled to Meet Graduation Requirements

The first theme that emerged from the data was that ELs are scheduled into courses primarily to meet graduation requirements. The overarching rationale behind course scheduling at LUHS is for students to achieve high school graduation in four years based on Georgia’s College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI; GaDOE, 2018b). This theme directly answers Research Question 1: What current scheduling approaches are implemented at LUHS and what is the rationale behind them? The ESOL teachers, the guidance counselor, the assistant principal, and the principal all made this
goal clear in their interviews. The guidance counselor uses whatever measures available to her at her own discretion to assist the ELs in their classes. Such measures include scheduling new ELs with at least one other EL in classes together and shuffling the order of coursework to accommodate students with low English proficiency. For example, she does not place a newcomer ninth-grade EL in Biology because the course has an end of course test (EOCT) and is very demanding language-wise; though Biology is a required ninth-grade course. However, both the quantity and content of the courses required for graduation are beyond the local school’s control. The guidance counselor’s actions explain current scheduling practices at LUHS, which is part of the first research question.

The ESOL teachers explained the rationale behind EL course scheduling as one of three things: the student’s English language proficiency status, whether he/she had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) which is usually put in place if the student has a learning disability, or graduation requirements. Both teachers emphasized the importance of the ELs’ progress towards graduation and also explained that if a student failed a course, that he/she had access to remediation.

The number of courses required for graduation and the course specifics are set up by the state of Georgia (GaDOE, 2016a). The state board of education develops course requirements and their curricula for each grade level, how to meet them, and what the students are supposed to know and do in order to receive credit for each course and work towards high school graduation. The matrix that the Georgia board of education sets up is known as College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI; GaDOE, 2018b; Robinson, 2015). Below is as snippet of the CCRPI matrix, without the details:
For the school to meet CCRPI rules (See Figure 17), students have to graduate in four years (except students with severe mental or physical disability who have five years), meet certain attendance criteria, close the gap in performance and literacy among minority and majority students, and demonstrate growth in English language proficiency of ELs (GaDOE, 2018a). These rules dictate course scheduling.

**ELs Do Not Understand the Courses That Are Selected For Them and How Their Educational Goals Dovetail With Graduation**

When student participants were asked about their graduation requirements, their promotion to the next grade level, and the number of courses needed for graduation, they all did not know these specifics or what they entailed as far as their high school education was concerned. They acted confused and avoided answering the questions altogether. Student participants B and C were high school seniors, with graduation around the corner, but still did not know why they were taking classes that they, themselves, would
not have chosen for themselves.

The teacher participants, the guidance counselor, and the assistant principal explained that EL placement depended on what credits the student already had and what he/she still needed for graduation. These were similar processes that all new student enrollees went through whether the student was EL or not. The focus was high school graduation in four years as set up by Georgia’s CCRPI, and the guidance counselors followed the same formula with everyone. This theme is closely linked to Research Question 1 and further explains the rationale behind EL course scheduling.

There are other considerations when placing EL students, however. Teacher B and the guidance counselor explained that the school attempts to place a new EL into a course that did not require an End-of-Course Test (EOCT) as mandated by the state of Georgia. However, in most cases there was no avoiding placing a new EL in an EOC course if his/her grade level required that placement, as was the case for 11th graders who had to take two EOCTs, one in American Literature and one in U.S. History. Teacher B stated that she had a new 11th grader who had just started at LUHS and that student was taking three EOCTs courses: two English literature and composition courses, one was a make up for a ninth-grade English class, one an 11th-grade American Literature course, and a U.S. History.

Even though schools have ample flexibility to design their school day however they feel is needed to maximize education for all students in the building, schools, as exemplified by LUHS, perform within the state and federal minimums, sometimes because of limited resources and sometimes school personnel simply do not know the options available to them (Cellante & Donne, 2013; Martin-Beltrán & Peercy, 2012).
From the many interviews done for this study, school personnel state that they have discretion over schedules and teacher assignments. School personnel function within a scope of things, but how that scope works or what details pertain to course arrangements and such are completely up the school. At LUHS, one school administrator seems to think that arranging courses in a certain priority order is set in stone and yet, another one, just next door to her, gives 10th-grade courses to ninth-grade students because these courses do not carry high stakes tests and to avoid content-laden courses for ELs with low English proficiency altogether until they form a foundation of English and American culture. The guidance counselor at LUHS feels that the school schedule has built in flexibility because it allows for more credits, 32 units, than the 23 credits required by the state. These inconsistencies are very common and the reason behind them is the individual school personnel’s own resourcefulness, ingenuity, and personal education and experience.

**ELs Do Not Understand Either High School or College Requirements**

The second theme that emerged from the data is that ELs do not understand the purpose of the courses they are taking, how each course fits into a high school program, and the effect of their high school accomplishments on their future opportunities. Although ELs understand that they will graduate at the end of high school, they do not know what is implied in that goal or how to achieve it. They stated in their interviews that they trusted their counselor and why she placed them in their courses. That may have been the reason why they did not participate in their placement or try to understand it. They were subliminally aware that there were not many freedoms when it came to course scheduling; though they were not able to explain them. When asked about what they got
when they graduated high school, they were unable to state that they got a high school diploma. When asked who decided on the courses they had to take, they stated that it must have been the principal or maybe the state. When asked about how many courses and what courses needed for each grade level of high school and ultimately for graduation, they were unable to answer the questions. The data in this theme are closely linked to both Research Questions 1 and 2. The rationale for scheduling students is mostly high school graduation in four years and the implications for those courses are great, which possibly pave the way for the implementation of an EL cohort.

Specifically, Student A understood the coursework needed to build on in the future, but she also appeared to be naïve in her approach towards achieving her high school education. She emphasized the importance of being placed in the correct science course, such as, biology or anatomy as a foundation, because she wanted to go to veterinary school, but at the same time admitted that she failed ninth-grade math and was at the time failing 10th-grade math too. When asked if she knew what the state of Georgia meant by requiring that all students to take and pass certain core academics, she was not able to respond coherently.

The themes above emerged out of data analysis and are directly linked to both research questions 1 and 2. LUHS’s primary student placement is high school graduation, which is the rationale for scheduling students in the different courses offered at LUHS. The guidance counselor follows certain procedures within her control to manipulate EL placement, but all within required boundaries set up by CCRPI and GaDOE. Since schools, including LUHS, are trying to close the achievement gap between ELs and their general education peers, scheduling them in mainstream, academic courses with no
consideration for English language proficiency may work against that goal (Lessow-Hurley, 2003; Li, 2016). GA CCRPI intends to increase all student readiness for college or career; however, the state may need to look into giving schools more flexibility in adjusting CCRPI’s goals for ELs, such as a five-year graduation plan, additional resources for summer school, or other measures to increase the students’ English language proficiency in order to level the playing field for them (Karathanos, 2010; Li, 2016). If LUHS implements an EL cohort, then it may establish a school-based EL learning community that would lead to building trust and partnerships between the school and the families and find ways to adapt classroom instruction to improve language instruction and proficiency (Kipnis et al., 2012; Minaya-Rowe, 2015).

There are many reasons why ELs are not completely cognizant of their educational state at LUHS. Li (2016) and Stevens (2012) point out that although formal schooling has contended with immigrant populations since early 20th Century, current ELs are usually overwhelmed by the experience of going to American schools in the first place. Stevens (2012) points out a very interesting angle that many educators may be subconsciously targeting their education to ELs because,

[They] can focus solely upon concepts and practices that are relevant to language learning. Some scholars have pointed out that this framing is problematic because it is both overly simplistic in its understanding of immigrant populations' needs and inaccurate in that many native-born populations are also second-language learners of standard English. (p. 2)

The EL as a person is very complex and sometimes that name itself may be problematic because school personnel may see the student as in need of learning English only;
whereas in reality, the student has deficiencies in a variety of school aspects, such as participation in framing his/her own educational outcomes by participating and inquiring about his/her school schedule. Native English-speaking students and their parents participate in these tasks seamlessly. ELs and their parents are not aware of such components (Minaya-Rowe, 2015; Stevens, 2012) or lack the tools, such as language itself, to inquire about school structures that affect them and their children. Stevens (2012) goes on to affirm that, “for immigrant student populations, learning a new culture, a new culture of schooling, academic content, as well as the particular complexities of the language of science, history, math, and the language arts present myriad challenges. [...] Most scholars in language learning think that the needs of immigrant students extend beyond learning the dominant language code” (p. 3). That “code” extends beyond language into other areas of schooling that are crucial for ELs’ success in school.

ELs rely on their guidance counselor to decide their courses for them and to work to keep them on track for graduation without their fully understanding the details or participating. It was not clear if the students wanted to participate in their course scheduling but felt overwhelmed or lacked the knowledge for the inner workings of a high school. Or if the students trusted their ESOL teachers and guidance counselor to know and do what is best for them. The EL participants were unaware of the implications of grades on their educational present and future. Many of the participants emphasized having the desired coursework as important, but they were unaware that equally as important were making good grades in required courses and keeping high or adequate GPAs (Breland, Wilder, & Robertson, 1986; Gordon & Lane, 1970; King, 2000; Sawyer, 2013). Although most universities claim that they base their college admissions decisions
on holistic measures, including, test scores, high school coursework, high school grades and other demographic information (Breland, Maxey, Gernand, Cumming, & Trapani, 2002; Sawyer, 2013), most universities admit students with high GPAs, though that factor is not stated on college and university applications. All student participants interviewed for this case study can benefit from conferences with their guidance counselor so that they may understand thoroughly what is involved in their high school education, how their courses are chosen for them, and what flexibilities, if any, may be there. From all the follow-up questions during the interview, the participants did not know much detail about graduation requirements, course loads, consequences of not passing or making poor grades, and their options in deciding their academic outcomes at LUHS. The students lacked understanding of college preparation as well as the role of GPA in college prospects.

Though college/university admissions have become very competitive and diverse in their criteria of potential students, they remain academically focused, prioritizing high GPAs and/or even students who have taken advanced placement (AP) courses, participated in dual enrollment (DE), or have international baccalaureate (IB) courses (Breland et al., 2002; Kretchmar & Farmer, 2013; Smith, 2006). The ELs who participated in this research may need to consider applying to junior/community colleges before they would be able to transfer to a more traditional college/university setting (Rance-Roney, 2011). Though this choice may be wise for the majority of ELs at LUHS, and elsewhere, and may lead to a successful postsecondary school education, the students are not adequately informed on their options and why they are available to them. The students need to learn more about their schedules, the limited choices they have at the
high school and why, and what options are available to them once they graduate high school.

**Participants See Value in Introducing a Cohort Scheduling Model to Address ELs’ Unique Learning and School Community Needs - Data linked to Research Question 2**

Part of the data collected for this dissertation was about a new scheduling model, cohort, based on linguistic diversity and ELs’ English language proficiency status. Figure 7 from Chapter 4 presented a visual of the high school groups, minus the EL cohort. Upon examining the graph, the research participants all saw value in introducing the model in their school. When asked about its implementation, the guidance counselor, the two administrators, the ESOL teachers spoke positively of having a system that would address the logistics of scheduling ELs and forming an EL community of teachers, a school counselor, an administrator, parents, and students at their school. Currently the guidance counselor relies on her discretion and her own personal resourcefulness and ingenuity to do what she feels works best for ELs, particularly the newcomers who may not possess any or low English language proficiency. Once the cohort is implemented at LUHS, the students’ needs may be addressed more systematically and more consistently. Systematic approaches to complex educational situations, such as educating ELs, reduce program inconsistencies and may assist schools in offering more than the bare minimum of EL service and compliance with national and state rules (Li, 2016; Wilson, 1986).

Higher education institutions have implemented cohort scheduling models to address the needs of adult students who do not fit the traditional definition of a student, either because they are already professionals and are looking to change jobs or enhance
their employment opportunities, have families and juggle too many responsibilities, or start their higher education much older (Cags, 2009; Fenning, 2004). LUHS can use some aspects of the cohort model used in higher education and also introduce new structural aspects to fit high school students who are mostly language minority and their families to support their education appropriately (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Karathanos, 2010).

**Implications for Practice**

The participants for this research study do not know what courses they need, why they need them, whether they have any choices, and how to go about requesting them. The guidance counselors and the administrators give out large group course orientations, usually by grade level, to students and relay to them what course requirements are needed without going into specifics, such as implications of high school GPAs, failing/making up credits, and whatever flexibilities the school may have. But the students still are fairly uneducated on course selections and other high school high stakes aspects. When it comes to ELs, typically large group communications with no one-on-one explanations or facilitations via native language and visuals, the students do not understand what is going on in a large auditorium or a cafeteria, usually where these course presentations are given, and they simply tune out, leaving them in precarious situations that have great implications. the guidance counselor, may, for example, give out print out of the 23-course grid (Figure 10) and have the students keep it in their agendas or somewhere they can refer to it from time to time. She can have the students put check marks in front of courses they complete and then work with them to select new courses for each semester.
The students need to see visuals and understand the process. Currently the students are not aware of what is required to be promoted from grade to grade or graduate at the end. LUHS can bridge such a divide by allocating one guidance counselor and one administrator to EL course registrations and choices. Currently the guidance counselor who was interviewed for this study already implements, out of her own accord, whatever leeway she has over the schedule, such as sparing newcomer ELs from taking courses with high stakes tests and heavy language and content demands, like biology and literature courses. Innovative ideas, such as this one, are better served in a closed system, such as a cohort, because individuals within the cohort would have more flexibility and would focus their energy and ingenuity on serving ELs in new ways. The guidance counselor and I can work together to present the cohort model, using the visual designs (Figures 4 and 7) as a starting point to the school’s faculty and administration. The participants in this research showed great inclination towards implementing the program. So the hard part, buy-in, is already bridged. Currently schools follow unusual approaches only when the students have a learning disability and the IEP committee decides the best interests of the student. An EL cohort can be viewed similarly and can decide a more practical path for graduation for ELs, all within what is required by the state and the school district. There are also course considerations for students who are in the Gifted and Talented Program (TaG) or Advanced Placement (AP).

The counselor at LUHS can use her experience in these situations and make her practice more overt to the school to get everyone on board and to get more scheduling consistencies, not just at this high school, but possibly throughout the district. The issue of inconsistency in practice was apparent during data collection when the two
administrators spoke of strictly placing students by grade level no matter their English language proficiency status, but at the same time, the guidance counselor revealed that she worked with the ESOL teachers and if an EL had low English language proficiency, that student gets spared high stakes courses at least the first year he/she is at LUHS.

Another current practice that the guidance counselor practiced at LUHS was placing new ELs or those with low English language proficiency in classes where there was at least one other EL, preferably from the same language background. The guidance counselor’s own practice would pave the way to implementing a fully, organized cohort model of scheduling of ELs at LUHS. There was already buy-in on the part of this counselor so making a structural change was possible. This counselor, through her own ingenuity, knowledge, and experience, was setting up the stage for introducing cohort scheduling by making the ELs’ needs very real. What she has been doing would be part of a working cohort scheduling model.

High schools in Georgia are course credit based, though the state designates certain courses to certain grade levels (refer to the high school course grid, Figure 10). LUD’s Strategic Plan states, “Students in high school progress toward graduation on a course-by-course basis. Students take courses based upon academic performance, academic needs, graduation requirements and previous credits earned” (p. 5). Students can mix credits and still graduate in four years, which is what the state’s ultimate goal for CCRPI is. The implementation of a cohort at LUHS is experimental at this stage. After a few years, I would like to go back and do an action research project to assess the way it is working, learn from its success and shortfalls, and improve the model for more established success.
The cohort scheduling model presented in this study suggested grouping ELs together as a structural component to make it more feasible for teachers to help the students and to streamline resources, tangible and intangible, such as teacher training, classroom materials, and home-school communication. LUHS is poised to implement an EL cohort: it has a guidance counselor who is willing to work with ELs only; it has a well-informed administration of the special needs ELs require; and it has an A/B alternating block schedule that allows for flexibility and innovation.

If ELs are grouped together in courses, they can rely on each other and their native language to build content knowledge and pass classes with better grades (Baker, 2001; Brulles & Winebrenner, 2011). Cohort teachers would either be licensed, endorsed in ESOL, or at least take courses in teaching English as a second language and linguistic and cultural diversity. The cohort would be comprised of students, teachers, parents, one administrator, one guidance counselor, and any other support staff and establish a self-sufficient, inter-reliant community within the high school (Brulles, & Winebrenner, 2011; Crandall, 1992).

**Future Research**

One area that needs investigation is for a researcher to carry out a study in the area of grade level and subject specific learning communities, cohorts, to find out if homogeneous grouping is beneficial to ELs in the area of academic achievement and educational logistics. Faris (2009) did a study on homogeneous and heterogeneous class groupings to study student performance in a ninth-grade science and he found that, “The heterogeneity factor had a negative effect on the achievement of the students. The students in the mixed ability classes scored less than the students in other groups.
However, when the “same ability” groups contained students from different cultural backgrounds, the results were the most favorable” (p. 2). Chávez-Reyes (2010) argues that collaborative grouping between parents of similar backgrounds works better for minority students or students of immigrant background. She explains that traditional, Caucasian middle class parents seem to expect different involvement in school cultures and their behavior is different too, which may unintentionally alienate language minority or economically disadvantaged parents. She explains this phenomenon as “the traditional unidirectional program design disenfranchises parents from nontraditional backgrounds (i.e., other than White, educated middle class)” (p. 474). The cohort model, as presented in this dissertation would include a parent community in order to communicate with them regarding their children's school progress and needs.

ELs have not been grouped homogeneously in different content areas apart from the ESOL classes where the students work on English language proficiency. So one would need to see if ELs would perform better and if their needs would be served better if they are scheduled in groups. If LUHS implements a cohort model for ELs in the future, then I would like to go back in a few years to document its results, its milestones, and its challenges. This could be a large quantitative study to track and document trends in student performance in all aspects. A researcher could also do a quantitative longitudinal study where he/she could study the participants in and out of the cohort over a long period of time to document student performance. Another topic of research could be qualitative in nature to study the school personnel’s attitudes towards the implementation of a scheduling cohort for ELs at LUHS because they seemed to be apprehensive about scheduling ELs together in most classes for fear of students using
their mother tongue more frequently and thus delaying their English language proficiency.

Much attention is needed in educating ELs on the process of their education. In doing research for this dissertation, the student participants proved that they lacked even basic ideas about their education, apart from passing classes and having some preliminary ideas on what to study after high school. They did not know how their classes were chosen for them, why, and what implications were in place for their lack of involvement in the process of their course schedules. The students also did not know why they were in school, or what they were getting at the end of the four-year period at LUHS. They knew that they would graduate but did not know the name of their diploma or even that there was diploma to be had at the end of their education at LUHS. When students are involved in the process of their own education, they take ownership of the process, which translates into empowering them to put more effort into their education and be more cognizant participants (Educating the Whole Child, 2007; Smith, 2006). Students who are active participants in their education not only try hard to succeed, but also make sound decisions based on whatever knowledge they have (Chávez-Reyes, 2010). Research is still needed in the area of ELs’ involvement in their education and in being cognizant of institutional processes that affect them in the short and long term. As documented at LUHS, ELs needed to be educated on their course requirements, minimum requirements for college admissions, and the choices they have, even if they are limited.

**Research Limitations**

The study proved to be very challenging to me, especially in the area of bias because of my personal and professional involvement in the material and the field. I have
struggled to keep myself out of my work from the start of the project. I have strong passions and opinions about my work and the direction it should go, and that seemed, at times, to be too tangled up with my research. Having to work very hard to keep my three personas, the teacher, the EL, and the researcher, separated is possibly one of the greatest achievements of this dissertation. The research methodology I chose, case study, has allowed me to take an in depth look into a particular situation rather than do a sweeping statistical survey. Case study is used as a method to narrow down a very broad field of research into one easily researchable topic. The topic here is how ELs are scheduled in high school, if they know why, and if a new model for scheduling would offer a different way of approaching schedules for ELs at LUHS in LUD.

Case study was in a way the right methodology for this study because of its capacity to zoom in on a particular situation or a small group of people, the ELs at LUHS in this case, and study it in depth. In hindsight, participatory action research (PAR) appears to be more suitable for my activist action-oriented tendencies. PAR would have given me greater satisfaction if I had used it as a research methodology for this dissertation. PAR “is a unique form of inquiry that involves studying participants as researchers in order to produce knowledge that might help stimulate social change and empower the oppressed” (Pierrette, 1993, p. 56). PAR combines practical knowledge with theoretical considerations to bring about the increased well-being of people and their environments, which would lead to a more equal and just world (Pierrette, 1993; Schiau & Biră, 2018).

In participatory action research, the researcher leads a community where members are integrated in research, education, and political or social action. For this dissertation,
the participants who were interviewed for case study would have made the community for participatory action research. That community, led by me, would have identified and diagnosed ELs’ educational situation as it pertains to course scheduling. Then we could have acted to change the status quo by introducing a new scheduling model, cohort. After a semester or so, we could have measured its effects on the students and the school as a whole. The final step would have been to reflect on the process and what we learned from it and define our next steps.

Conclusion

Currently, secondary school practices regarding serving ELs are limited to the bare essentials that are called for by federal law or by state policies. Even though schools have ample flexibility to design their school day however they feel is needed to maximize education for all students in the building, schools perform within the state and federal baseline, sometimes because of limited resources and sometimes school personnel simply do not know the options available to them (Cellante & Donne, 2013; Martin-Beltrán & Peercy, 2012). From the many interviews done for this study, school employees state that they have discretions over schedules. They function within a scope of things, but how that scope works or what details pertain to course arrangements and such are completely up the school. At LUHS, one school administrator seems to think that arranging courses in a certain priority order is set in stone, and yet, another one, just next door to her, gives 10th-grade courses to ninth-grade students because these courses do not carry high stakes tests and to avoid content-laden courses for ELs with low English proficiency altogether until they form a foundation of English and American culture. These inconsistencies are very common and the reason behind them is the individual school personnel’s own
resourcefulness, ingenuity, and personal education and experience. Ultimately the overarching rationale behind course scheduling at LUHS is high school is graduation in four years, but the process by which this goal is achieved is not set in stone.

The administrators and the guidance counselor interviewed for this dissertation showed care for their jobs and their passion for serving their students was evident in their interviews. They appeared open-minded and cared genuinely about their students and school. A few things get in the way of their doing a job to the degree that would serve the students maximally: (1) their caseload is too big, putting them in a situation where they have to prioritize certain students over others to where they are only aiming at the big picture, graduating students in four years; (2) They can benefit from further education, possibly getting a degree or some courses in second language pedagogy, multicultural issues, multilingual family backgrounds, and topics in how school building structures may unintentionally disenfranchise language minority students and how to work to remediate that situation; (3) There exist ripe conditions for implementing a grade level and subject specific open cohort at their school to educate the ELs and address their unique educational needs and family backgrounds more wholesomely.
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Appendix A
Observation Protocol Example

At the top of the protocol, I included information for the observation’s location, date, and time of day. The observation protocol can be any page length. It will have columns at least for “descriptive notes” and “reflective notes”

It will include details like:
what is directly observed and sensed, and any impressions or questions

The diagram can be simple, like the picture fit into the column below. Or it may be complex, drawn separately, with greater detail and from multiple views or exemplifying spatial changes over the observation period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Date: xx/xx/xx</th>
<th>Time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Activity: 90 Minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General: What are the experiences of graduate students as they learn qualitative research in the classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See classroom layout and comments about physical setting at the bottom of this page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Overhead with flaps: I wonder if the back of the room was able to read it.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximately 5:17 p.m., Dr. Creswell enters the filled room, introduces Dr. Wolcott. Class members seem relieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Overhead projector not plugged in at the beginning of the class: I wonder if this was a distraction (when it took extra time to plug it in).&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Creswell gives brief background of guest, concentrating on his international experiences; features a comment about the educational ethnography “The Man in the Principal’s Office.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateness of the arrival of Drs. Creswell and Wolcott: Students seemed a bit anxious. Maybe it had to do with the change in starting time to 5 p.m. (some may have had 6:30 classes or appointments to get to).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Wolcott begins by telling the class he now writes out educational ethnography and highlights this primary occupation by mentioning two books: Transferring Qualitative Data and The Art of Fieldwork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drs. Creswell and Wolcott seem to have a good rapport between them, judging from many short exchanges that they had.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While Dr. Wolcott begins his presentation by apologizing for his weary voice (due to talking all day, apparently), Dr. Creswell leaves the classroom to retrieve the guest’s overhead transparencies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seemed to be three parts to this activity: (1) the speaker’s challenge to the class of detecting pure ethnographical methodologies, (2) the speaker’s presentation of the “tree” that portrays various strategies and substategies for qualitative research in education, and (3) the relaxed “elder statesman” fielding class questions, primarily about students’ potential research projects and prior studies Dr. Wolcott had written. 

The first question was “How do you look at qualitative research?” followed by “How does ethnography fit in?”

Figure 7.5 Sample Observational Protocol Length of Activity: 90 Minutes

00:00 AM/PM

143
The goal is to be detailed enough so that I and the readers understand the setting, the use of space, who/what is in it, and the general environment for context.

If a drawing can’t be generated, I’ll try using a computer program or camera, making sure I follow ethical rules when taking pictures.

(Creswell, 2005, 2012)
Appendix B
List of Interview Protocols

Interview #_______________ Date_______/_____/_______

Interview Protocol Script

Welcome and thank you for your participation today. My name is Aziza Simmons and I am a graduate student at Kennesaw State University conducting a special study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Teacher Leadership. Thank you for participating in my study. This interview will take about 60 minutes and will include several questions regarding your experiences and what might affect your life and education satisfaction as a LUHS student. I would like your permission to audio record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you convey. Your participation is completely voluntary and with no consequence to you. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please let me know. All of your responses are confidential. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used to develop a better understanding of how you and your peers view your educational life satisfaction and what might influence it. The purpose of this study is to increase our understanding of the EL students and their education and how your course schedule affects you and your achievement at school. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission we will begin the interview.

Demographic questions:

1. What grade are you this year? (Check response):
2. Thinking about your educational satisfaction, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being low and 5 being high, how would you rate your CURRENT satisfaction with your education? (Circle response):

1  2  3  4  5

3. Thinking about your answer to my previous question, would you please explain why you rated your educational satisfaction at this level? (I will ask for clarification and probe for deeper answers by asking follow up and open ended questions when possible)

4. Thinking about your previous answers, what factors then would you specifically identify as influencing your educational satisfaction as a LUHS student? Please explain why you think these are important factors. (I will list responses, assess if positive or negative influences, reasons why, and as follow up questions).

5. What courses are you taking this semester?

6. How important is your course schedule to you? Elaborate and give me as much detail as possible.

7. Do you participate in choosing your classes? Explain the process.

8. Do you know why you are taking the classes that you are in this semester? If you
don’t know, what would you like to happen before you are placed in the classes that you are in now?

9. Think in terms of your education, what is your favorite class and why?

10. Do you know how many courses you are supposed to have every school year? How about before you graduate high school? Do you know who decides that?

11. Which course is the most difficult for you this semester and why? What would you like to see happen in that class to make it a better experience for you?

12. What grades do you make in your classes? Do you know how your teachers grade your work?

13. Your school has an A/B block schedule? Do you know what that means?

14. How do you feel about the process of learning English? What do you think should happen for you to learn faster and better English skills that help you do well in school?

15. Do you think that high school is preparing you for life after high school? Do you know what you will do after you graduate high school? (I will ask follow up questions based on the student’s answers.)

16. If you could be in the same classes as other ESOL students, would you prefer to have the same classes?

17. Do you know how other students in your school are scheduled? For example, do you know anyone who is taking advanced or honors classes?

18. Do you know what the word “cohort” means? Let me show you a graph and then tell me if you understand.
Guidance Counselor/School Administrator Interview Protocol Script

Welcome and thank you for your participation today. My name is Aziza Simmons and I am a graduate student at Kennesaw State University conducting a special study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Teacher Leadership. Thank you for participating in my study. This interview will take about 60 minutes and will include several questions regarding your experiences scheduling courses for English learners at your school. I would like your permission to audio record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you convey. Your participation is completely voluntary and with no consequence to you. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please let me know. All of your responses are confidential. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used to develop a better understanding of how you and your colleagues view developing course schedules for ELs. The purpose of this study is to increase our understanding of the EL students and their education and how your work regarding course scheduling is carried out and what considerations you have behind establishing a course schedule for your students. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission we will begin the interview.

Demographic questions:

Please tell me the following:

1. Your educational background.

2. The length of your work in years here and elsewhere.
3. Specify if you have taught in P-12 grades, what grades, what subjects, and whether you had ELs in your classes.

4. Describe your job’s responsibilities.

5. Describe the positive aspects and some challenges of your job.

6. Thinking about your professional satisfaction, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being low and 5 being high, how would you rate your CURRENT satisfaction with your job? (Circle response):

   1  2  3  4  5

7. Thinking about your answer to my previous question, would you please explain why you rated your professional satisfaction at this level? (I will ask for clarification and probe for deeper answers by asking follow up and open ended questions when possible).

8. Would you tell me how many course units each student must have before he/she graduates and list them by subject?

9. Would you describe in detail the process (current practices) of enrolling ELs in courses at your school? Do you meet with each student or do you do group enrollments?

10. What are some factors you consider when enrolling ELs in courses?

11. Are you aware of the students’ English language proficiency levels and does it affect your scheduling practices for ELs? How?

12. Please explain the rationale behind choosing courses for ELs at your school.

13. Please explain considerations you have in place when scheduling ELs.

14. Would you describe the differences and similarities between ELs’ and general
education students’ course schedules at your school?

15. How do you feel about ELs’ school achievement under the particular model of course scheduling that you have at your school? (Do you think that is affected by their course schedules/teachers?)

16. Have you had any complaints from your ELs or from their parents regarding their course schedules? If yes, how were you able to resolve/explain the situation to the parents/students?

17. What are areas of improvements in course scheduling that could assist ELs achieve better school success and acquire English language proficiency faster?

18. Would you consider implementing a different model for scheduling ELs that might yield different results?

19. Do you know what the word “cohort” means when it applies to course scheduling?

20. Higher education around the US has implemented cohort scheduling models in mostly teacher and school leader education programs. How do you feel about setting up a similar model for course scheduling at your high school for your English learners?

21. Would you be willing to assist in the introduction of a cohort model for ELs at your school?

22. Do you have anything to add that I may have neglected to address?
Appendix C  
Example of Document That Outlines High School EL Accommodations

### High School English Learner (EL) Strategy and Accommodation Plan

**J7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Student is classified as:**  
- EL Y  
- EL Monitored

**U.S. Entry Date:**

**Primary Language:**

#### Current English Language Proficiency Assessment

- [ ] W-APT
- [ ] ACCESS for ELs

**Test Date:**

**Test Tier:**  
- [ ] A  
- [ ] B  
- [ ] C

*Proficiency Level Scores: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Overall*

#### Major Goal for the Year:

English learners will develop their social, instructional, and academic English language proficiency in the language domains of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension while acquiring the State-required academic content through standards-based instruction in all subject areas.

#### Mainstream Teachers:

Listed below are suggested classroom strategies and accommodations for the indicated EL student above.

The suggestions are based on current ACCESS (W-APT) scores, standardized test scores, and academic performance. For further information about the student, please refer to the ACCESS score report and Appendix K, which provides specific example behaviors for each language proficiency level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparing Lessons</th>
<th>LANG ARTS</th>
<th>MATH</th>
<th>SCIENCE</th>
<th>SOCIAL STUDIES</th>
<th>ELECTIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clearly state and write (print) content and language objectives <em>(i.e. CCGPS Standard, essential question)</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilize supplementary materials <em>(i.e. audio tapes, concrete objects)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adapt texts, assignments, and assessments to all levels of student proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Use preferential seating towards the middle of the room</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>*Supply/allow dictionaries <em>(bilingual, regular, or word-to-word)</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Building Background**

- Emphasize key vocabulary — introduce and repeat through activities such as word walls, words sorts and games
- Assess prior knowledge using KWL charts, graphic organizers, questioning, etc.

**Comprehensible Instruction**

- *Paraphrase, explain, repeat directions*
- Model all activities
- Incorporate hands-on activities in instruction
- Use visuals, props, gestures, and technology

**Learning Strategies/Interaction**

- Design questions on assignments and assessments that are appropriate for the student’s language proficiency level *(see the WIDA Can Do Descriptors chart)*
- Design leveled study guides, “chunk” information
- Use peer tutoring or partner student with a buddy
- *Implement one-on-one/small group instruction*
- Provide an outline or guided notes during instruction
- Highlight key words and important concepts in text
- Increase wait time for students to respond
- Use cooperative grouping *(i.e. learning circles, jigsaw, etc.)*

*Accommodations marked with a star (*) may be provided on standardized testing, if implemented in the classroom and included on the annual EL-TPC. Any accommodation provided on the EL-TPC MUST be marked here and MUST be provided on an ongoing basis.*
### ACTIVITIES FOR ACQUIRING NEW CONCEPTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LING. ARTS</th>
<th>MATH</th>
<th>SCIENCE</th>
<th>SOCIAL STUDIES</th>
<th>ELECTIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design lessons that include listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities for students to practice newly acquired concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace lesson appropriately for student’s proficiency level</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Design assignments to include fewer questions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Allow students to redo failed assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide extended time for activities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW/ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LING. ARTS</th>
<th>MATH</th>
<th>SCIENCE</th>
<th>SOCIAL STUDIES</th>
<th>ELECTIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utilize alternative ways to accurately evaluate student achievement and progress (i.e. demonstrations, portfolios, self/peer assessment, rubrics, projects, presentations)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Provide extended time on assessments, tests, &amp; exams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Read test aloud to student</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the number of items on a test</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly match study guide to test questions (when necessary, for students at lower proficiency levels)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a word bank for students at lower proficiency levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Administer test one-on-one</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design different testing formats based on language proficiency level (for example, a multiple-choice test instead of essay)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Accommodations marked with a star (*) may be provided on standardized testing, if implemented in the classroom and included on the annual EL-TPC. Any accommodation provided on the EL-TPC MUST be marked here and MUST be provided on an ongoing basis.

Please note: EL Monitored students should receive appropriate classroom accommodations, and may receive standard accommodations on standardized tests if needed.

**DATE COMPLETED:**

**ESOL TEACHER SIGNATURE**

**Comments:**

---

### COMMON STANDARDIZED TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Accommodations such as</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Group</td>
<td>ESOL Classroom, Individual or Study Carrel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferential Seating</td>
<td>Individual Administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Accommodations such as</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain or paraphrase directions for clarity, in English only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color overlays or templates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the test aloud to the student, in English only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the test questions AND the Reading Passages, in English only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat the directions in English only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Accommodations such as</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark answers in test booklet</td>
<td>Point to answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a Word for Word Dictionary (translations only, no definitions)</td>
<td>Verbal response in English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheduling</th>
<th>Accommodations such as</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide frequent monitored breaks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow student extended time on tests / exams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Revised 06/2012*
Appendix D
Course Artifacts for American Literature Class Observed

Cornell Notes form used in the American Literature class to take notes, ask questions, and keep for further study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cornell Notes</th>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Period:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Marking the text.</td>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Question: What reading strategies do effective readers use to identify key concepts in a text?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions/Main Ideas:</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is marking the text?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Documents utilized by students during the American Literature lesson.

Guided Practice

A Dream Deferred by Langston Hughes

What does the author say? What does the author do?

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore—And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over—like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sits like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Pause and Connect.

1. What does the author want us to think about?

2. What idea stays with you?

3. What is the theme? Provide evidence to support from the text.
You Do

Can You See The Pride in The Panther?

By Tupac Shakur

Can You See the Pride in the Panther
As he grows in splendor and grace
Toppling obstacles placed in the way,
of the progression of his race.

Can You See the Pride in the Panther
as she nurtures her young all alone
The seed must grow regardless
of the fact that it is planted in stone.

Can You See the Pride in the Panthers
, as they unify as one
The flower blooms with brilliance,
and outshines the rays of the sun.

Pause and Connect.

1. What does the author want us to think about?

2. What idea stays with you?

3. What is the theme? Provide evidence to support from the text
Revenge by Sir Francis Bacon
(1591-1626)

Revenge is a kind of wild justice—the more a person seeks revenge, the more the law should weed it out. The first wrong breaks the law, revenge of that wrong destroys law itself. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man becomes even with his enemy, but in passing it over, he is superior, for it is a prince's part to pardon. And Solomon, I am sure, said, "It is the glory of a man to ignore an offense."

That which is in the past is gone and irrevocable. Wise men have enough to do with things present and future—therefore, they who labor in past matters do but harm themselves. There is no man who does a wrong for the wrong's sake, but to purchase for himself profit, or pleasure, or honor, or the like. Therefore, why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong merely out of ill-nature, why, it is but like the thorn or briar which prick and scratch because they can do nothing else.

The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which have no law or remedy and punish them. But then let a man beware: revenge on a man's enemy when there is a law risks two for one. Some, when they take revenge, desire that the party should know from whom it comes. This is the more generous way. The satisfaction seems to be not so much in doing the hurt, as in making the party repent. Base and crafty cowards who operate in secrecy are like the arrow that flies from the dark.

Cosimo de' Medici, Duke of Florence, had a saying about perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable: "You shall read that we are commanded to forgive our enemies, but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends." But the spirit of Job was never the truth: "Shall we take good at God's hands and not be willing to also accept evil?" And so it is with friends.

This is certain, that a man consumed with a desire for revenge keeps his own wounds open which otherwise would heal. Public revenges, for the most part, are good—as in the case of the conspiracies to murder Caesar, Pertinax, Henry the Third of France, and many more. However, in private revenges, it is not so. No, vindictive persons live the life of witches: they are mischievous and come to a bad end.

Pause and Connect.

1. What does the author want us to think about?

2. What idea stays with you?

3. What is the theme? Provide evidence to support from the text.
Appendix E  
Course Artifacts for Earth Systems Class Observed

Earth formations that the students will need to cut and paste into their notebook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plates that collide together</th>
<th>The Great Rift Valley in Africa occurs on land at this plate boundary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Himalayan mountains and Mt. Everest can be found at this plate boundary.</td>
<td>![Image of plate boundary]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plates slide by each other.</td>
<td>![Image of plate boundary]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plates that divide apart from each other.</td>
<td>The San Andreas fault in California is on this type of plate boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-ocean ridge and seafloor spreading happen at this plate boundary</td>
<td>This type of plate boundary is most often associated with earthquakes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Categories used in conjunction with the cards in this Appendix. The students were asked to cut the shapes above, glue them to their notes, and insert the correct definition cards into the correct category.