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In translation: An examination of ESL policy on paper as it relates to the realities of implementation

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Implementation

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Abstract

This honors research project explores the features of Title III requirements as they relate to the actual experience of students and their families. This paper synthesizes my experience researching English as a Second Language (ESL) specific supports and policy to inform my time spent accompanying an upper-level administrator for the Harrisonburg City Public School (HCPS) system, and interviewing professionals at an area school. In this paper I outline the results of interviews with 13 service providers. Interviews examined the "letter of the law" and the subsequent "spirit of the law" through application of a social work lens to the different ESL supports available to HCPS.

For the purpose of this research, policy broadly refers to the ways in which Title III addresses English Learners' (ELs) academic achievement and English language proficiency, as well as language instruction educational programs (LIEPs) for teachers (Virginia Department of Education, n.d.). The general aim of the study is to investigate how service providers make use of/implement policy requirements in order to effectively reach their students. The significance of this research includes gaining a deeper understanding of the intersection between policy priorities, and the realities of implementation.

Keywords: ESL, policy priority, policy implementation, immigrant, mental health, community

Introduction

   Language matters. Language operates as a powerful tool that shapes the mundane, everyday interactions one has with the larger extended community in which they live their life. Additionally, language also cultivates an individual's culture, identity and sense of belonging. In regards to ESL policy in the United States, while there has never been an official language for the United States nor a law declaring English as the official language, English serves as the unofficial official language of the country as it is the language employed in courts, hospitals, schools, etc. As a result, success and prosperity in the United States necessitates proficiency in English. Relevant legislation supporting the notion of English as the unofficial official language of the United States can be seen in the 1906 passage of the Nationality Act which required immigrants to learn English in order to become citizens (Escobar & Potowski, 2015). Following the passage of this law, a decree in 1919 established English as the sole language of instruction in all schools across the country, something that did not change until the Bilingual Education Act in 1968 (Escobar & Potowski, 2015). However, more current legislation emerged in the form of the 2001 No Child Left Behind law, negating the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 and changing the federal office title from the "Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Affairs" to "Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited-English-Proficient Students" (Escobar & Potowski, 2015, p. 231; Wilkinson, Callahan, & Frisco, 2005, p. 4). Accordingly, Title III of the No Child Left Behind law shifted emphasis toward "English Only" instruction, emphasizing deficiencies of bilingual populations (Malsbary & Appelgate, 2016, p. 30). Since language does matter, this change in name within the federal government from one of focus on the provision of resources for bilingual/minority students to

that of deficiency is an important aspect to consider when regarding ESL policy priority and its

barriers to implementation.

Therefore, this study aims to explore policies geared toward the acquisition of English for

individuals learning English as their second language. The significance of this study ties to the

concept of America frequently bearing reference to a Melting Pot. Additionally, alongside the

greying of the nation, the population demographics are changing rapidly with an increase in

minority populations. As an example, of foreign-born immigrant children, 40% are Limited

English Proficient (LEP), while U.S.-born immigrant children cut this number in half

(Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000, as cited in Wilkinson, Callahan, & Frisco, 2005). In terms of an

increased minority population, solely among individuals with limited english proficiency,

Latinos represent 75% of this population (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000, as cited in Wilkinson et

al., 2005), demonstrating a need for comprehensive language supports for those members of our

nation that may completely deviate from what mainstream America looks like, feels like, tastes

like, and sounds like historically speaking. Deconstructing the Constitution and exploring

phrases such as: "Liberty and Justice for All" is central to my desired area of research. Do our

policies provide for equitable experiences in our schools? In our education system? At the very

base level that we claim sets us all up for success? Moreover, this study aims to explore how the

individuals involved in providing ESL services feel about Title III policies and their ability to

implement them successfully and remain in compliance with policy priority. From this

information, I will be able to extrapolate data related to the experiences of students who receive

ESL instruction and services.

      Goals for the project include examining the role ESL policy plays in the Virginia public

education system, the Constitution, and the core values of Social Work in order to explore the

implications of ESL education on High School Students in need of ESL services. In addition to

policy exploration, the input from teachers and administrators at the school related to

implementation will construct an image of policy effectiveness and relevance in relation to the

classroom environment and the realities of ESL policy implementation. An additional area of

study linked to policy and its successful implementation will concern the resources, skills, and

tools used by High School Teachers to reach ESL students.

Literature Review

In conducting a literature review related to the implementation and effect of ESL policies,

several themes emerged: (1) teaching methods, (2) teacher perspective, (3) effective programs,

(4) student perspective, and (5) policy priority. In terms of teaching methods, the literature

revealed that useful teaching methods for acquiring a second language included varying

vocabulary exercises (Mohd Tahir & Tunku Mohtar, 2016), often built upon scaffolding (Vance

& Fitzpatrick, 2007), and practical opportunities for application and use of the target language.

Additionally, literature continually stressed the importance of motivation, citing games as an

incentive to participate and as aiding in retention (Mohd Tahir & Tunku Mohtar, 2016),

(Nesselrodt, 2007). Related to the importance of motivation and participation when learning a

second language, one method proven to increase student engagement was enabling students to

talk about topics they felt passionate about or had ownership over (Morales & Biau, 2009),

particularly with students suffering from fear and anxiety of English. Furthermore, group work

promotes collaboration and makes the learning process student-centered rather than

teacher-guided (Vance & Fitzpatrick, 2007). Opportunities for students to be creative, whether it

be through role play, acting, songs, spontaneous presentations, art or journaling exercises aids in

language acquisition (Fallon & Rublik, 2012), (Kouritzin, 2004), (Nesselrodt, 2007) (Morales &

Biau, 2009), (Sartor & Hill, 2013). An example of this can be seen in the involvement of ESL

students from an area high school in a creative writing class (HCPS top-level administrator,

personal communication, October 24, 2017). The use of technology and different technological

supports also play a crucial role in teaching ESL students (Andrei, 2017; Careless, 2000), a

support that continues to grow and evolve.

In policy context, available programming for ESL students include a multitude of instructional methods. Program options for the English Learner population include: English as a Second Language, English Language Development, Structured English Immersion, Sheltered English Immersion, Transitional Bilingual Education or Early-Exit Bilingual Education, Bilingual Maintenance programs such as Dual Language or Two-Way Immersion programs ("English Learner Tool Kit," 2016), (Escobar & Potowski, 2015). English learners (ELs) are identified through an English language proficiency test of the student, completion of which helps to determine the most-fitting services and programs for that individual. Factors taken into consideration for services alongside ELP assessment results include: "…(2) grade level, and (3) educational background, as well as (4) language background for bilingual programs…[additionally], the student's native language literacy; acculturation into U.S. society; and age he or she entered the United States" ("English Learner Tool Kit," 2016, p. 1). Furthermore, the determination of a program and the effectiveness of policy implementation must take into consideration the complexities of teaching newcomers and non-newcomers, and being ready for that turnover when newcomers transition into higher level ESL courses and/or the general population.

Building off of teaching methods and available programming and supports, a second overarching theme is teacher perspective. Teacher perspective and experience inevitably impacts their teaching and implementation of policy. The role of teachers poses an important consideration in the examination of policy for a number of reasons, one being that the duration average of any teacher in the United States as a working professional is eleven years (Belmonte, 2006, as cited in Farrell, 2016). This statistic reflects a relatively short-lived career, something

compounded for TESOL professionals by the additional barriers, demands, and variance in

teacher language education programs, "both in length (from a weekend course to an MA degree)

and in content," (Farrell, 2016, p. 98; Malsbary & Appelgate, 2016, p. 31). In terms of barriers

and demands made on teachers of ELLs, a consistent stressor for teachers and a hurdle to

successful policy implementation includes inadequate funding, resource allocation, and

inconsistencies in the time granted to ESL instruction across schools (Fallon & Rublik, 2012).

These programs very rarely address ways in which teachers ought to operationalize the content

they have learned within the classroom. The manner in which teachers interpret and understand

policies pertaining to ESL instruction, such as best methods for language acquisition and the

impact of age on language acquisition, impact policy implementation and the structure of their

classroom environment (Fallon & Rublik, 2012). Interpretation of intended curriculum posed by

policymakers is influenced by classroom and political realities which result in divergent

execution of policy by teachers constrained by their understanding, expertise, skills, and both the

human and financial resources available to faithfully implement policy (Wang, 2008), (Silver &

Skuja-Steele, 2005). Similarly, teachers' beliefs and goals often foster enduring influences on

their methods of instruction and policy implementation (Rashidi & Moghadam, 2014; Silver &

Skuja-Steele, 2005). These beliefs often center around self-efficacy teachers' feel they possess,

as well as the assumptions they make regarding their capacity to execute necessary tasks and

behaviors, which translates into the efforts they make and levels of enthusiasm they display

(Rashidi & Moghadam, 2014; Hao, 2016). Indirectly related to teacher efficacy, Farrell's study

(2016) focused on novice ESL teachers in a school who gave them little to no support and their

employed methods to improve their practice and cope with the transition into the classroom. The

value of reflecting on teaching practice and taking into account their teacher reality, beliefs and

values aligns with the notion of policy implementation. Teachers shared that engagement in

exploration of the issues affecting their role within the classroom and the broader society entailed

thorough development of understanding surrounding issues of a social-nature, those of moral and

ethical concern, and the politics that inform the manner in which they live their lives and conduct

their teaching. This critical analysis of teacher reality, beliefs and values, as well as the material

highlighted in their TESOL education aid in the formation of successful teaching strategies and

creation of classroom community (Morales & Biau, 2009).

A third pertinent theme within the literature which integrates the two aforementioned

concepts would be effective programs. In the formation of effective programs,

research demonstrates that language teaching ought to emphasize a student-centered approach

that minimizes the amount of time teachers speak within the classroom, and promotes student

participation, as this positively shapes learner satisfaction (Rashidi & Moghadam, 2014; Wang,

2008; Mori, 2014). The literature emphasized effective, comprehensive ESL programming

consisting of a need to organize the educational experience around the student in a holistic

manner (Ngo, 2007). Ways in which effective programs achieved this focus on teaching English

in conjunction with recognizing and validating the feelings, life experiences, cultural and

spiritual components that composed the students' realities included a variety of tactics. One

teacher cited getting to know students personally by way of private, informal conversations

outside of the classroom setting as a way of minimizing student anxiety and aiding in teacher

understanding of student need and desire (Morales & Biau, 2009). The involvement of

community stakeholders also emerged as a crucial element of quality ESL programming in order

to establish a collective view surrounding the future of ESL students (Ngo, 2007; Silver & Skuja-Steele, 2005). This recognition of need for a collective vision concerning the creation of effective ESL educational policy highlighted other important factors to consider in relation to ESL learners: "psychosocial factors such as trauma, illiteracy, low self-esteem, social alienation, and challenges to cultural identity" (Ngo, 2007, p. 10). These different potential intersecting facets of ESL student identity addressed the need for certified personnel to assist with ensuring cultural competence and the needs of students being met, including needs existing "outside" of the school environment (Kouritzin, 2004, p. 492). For instance, the presence of bilingual Spanish teachers in a classroom where the primary first language of ESL students is Spanish alleviates negative effects of some psychosocial factors a student may be facing. Integration of students' native cultural backgrounds into the education of ESL students demonstrates cultural competence through appreciation for their diversity and serves to validate their experiences (Nesselrodt, 2007). An aspect of effective programming for ESL students includes the incorporation of first-language skills and understanding in order to build upon and make connections with existing knowledge possessed by students (Ngo, 2007). Positioning ESL to be seen from a strengths-based perspective in terms of acquiring a new language, set of skills and sense of self as opposed to modeling instruction around a deficit mentality aimed at eroding a language barrier also contributes to effective ESL programming, as does hiring culturally diverse staff members (Ngo, 2007). Examples of strengths-based approaches to working with ESL students can be seen through respectful inclusion through community involvement and the opportunity for students to adopt leadership roles through peer tutoring in their native languages and math. Family involvement and student understanding of their progress also serves as crucial

to effective programming (Kouritzin, 2004; Nesselrodt, 2007). Meanwhile, the role of

administrators in schools with effective ESL programs adopted a stance of "lead[ing] from

behind" (Newman, 1987, as cited in Kouritzin, S. G., 2004, p. 486). This stance allows teachers

to effectively do their job by way of responding to their concerns, needs, suggestions and

demands surrounding ESL students. For instance, teachers from Kouritzin's 2004 study

illustrated the importance for them to have opportunities to attend conferences related to ESL

instruction. Additionally, effective programs are cognizant of the timeline surrounding the

acquisition of English as a second language to a level on par with that of native speakers, as

necessitating five to ten years of ESL instruction (Kouritzin, 2004; Nesselrodt, 2007), requiring

advocacy to mitigate interference of funding caps. Advocacy and preparation for funding

allocation once available also serve as crucial roles for administrators, contributing to positive

regard for ESL instructors and students, thus increasing their productivity and motivation to learn

(Kouritzin, 2004). Positive regard and awareness surrounding the ESL population and

community within the school environment and the larger surrounding community is further

facilitated by upholding high expectations for student success alongside the offered educational

and emotional supports (Nesselrodt, 2007). The literature illustrated that successful programming

requires school-wide collaboration and community-wide engagement in order to cultivate

cross-cultural understanding and respect, in addition to a clear and focused vision for ESL

programming.

　　　　Student perspectives detailed within the literature deal with issues of identity, language

background, motivation, anxiety and the influence of English on students learning English as a

second language. Student perspectives from Puerto Rico highlight the difficulties felt by many

ELs in terms of being caught between cultural identities and selves. Not only does the political

context that informs the crafting of educational policy and its subsequent implementation require

consideration, but so too does the political context and relationship between different countries

and cultures dealing with ESL acquisition. Language learning is inherently political. In Puerto

Rico, the relationship with English and the mainland United States is decidedly complicated; in

1898 the United States gained control of Puerto Rico and imposed English on the island

(Morales & Biau, 2009). As a result, Puerto Rico currently exists as a commonwealth obliged to

pay federal taxes to the United States despite its citizens lacking the right to vote unless they

move to one of the 50 states. This demonstrates the importance of the political context that

shapes the realities of ESL students and the relationship they may have toward the English

language and its use. Furthermore, students indicated increased motivation to learn another

language when their native tongue and culture receives respect by way of methods of instruction

that incorporate aspects of student identity. ESL students appreciate the use of text and film with

cultural relevance in order to support positive associations with their identity while speaking

another language (Morales & Biau, 2009; Sartor & Hill, 2013). Conversely, when fear dominates

a student's perception of ESL acquisition due to a deficient status or sense of devaluation of their

native tongue in an English-dominant society, socio-cultural resources deplete between ESL

students and their communal and family systems (Wilkinson et al., 2005; Malsbary & Appelgate,

2016). In the same vein, ESL students belonging to the second generation of immigrant families

experience unease surrounding their identity and position in society due to the push and pull of

loyalties to two different cultures; in this sense, the reception of supports by ESL students and

the beneficial impact of ESL instruction will vary depending on generational status (Wilkinson et

al., 2005). Furthermore, linguistic, social, cultural and economic capital, or lack thereof, interfere with the identity experiences of ESL students. Student perspective revealed internalized inferiority of their English language use and capabilities due to the pressures of English monolingualism, thus relegating themselves to adoption of substandard habitus within an English-dominated society (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Internalized inferiority and learned discrimination felt by ESL students living in an English-dominated society also relate to the accents of non-native speakers when communicating in English, with students identifying native pronunciation as greatly desirable (McCrocklin & Link, 2016). Therefore, language beliefs and self-concept held by students emerged as a significant influence in their approach to language learning, as did their tendency to grant more respect to teachers they considered competent, further increasing their desire to participate with class material (Hao, 2016; Cho, 2015). Additional supports identified by students aiding in second-language acquisition was own-language use (Shvidko, Evans, & Hartshorn, 2015). The role of students' primary language in the classroom of second language instruction for both Polish and Norwegian students proved to be a valuable form of cognitive support (Scheffler, Horverak, Krzebietke, & Askland, 2017). A consistently reliable support identified by ESL students included use of their native language background in helping to maintain sense of self, identity, and create links between the target language and existing skills.

The final theme explored throughout the literature focuses on policy priority. Challenges presented by policy priority include allocation of resources and funding for the teaching of ESL (Fallon & Rublik, 2012; Dooley & Furtado, 2013). Available resources and policies may inadequately reflect student need and ability, lacking rigor and relevance (Malsbary &

Appelgate, 2016). For instance, one teacher revealed that while positives of No Child Left

Behind (NCLB) underscores the needs of disadvantaged students, in the case of ELs it does so at

the expense of the student, painting them as deficient and lacking (Malsbary & Appelgate, 2016).

Moreover, the literature highlights the importance of English language acquisition as a necessary

component to ESL individuals' success and functionality in the United States (Silver &

Skuja-Steele, 2005). Through heightened emphasis on student output and achievement scores

(Silver & Skuja-Steele, 2005), both student and teacher reality become ignored. Conversely,

challenges presented to policy formulation and implementation include the continual increase in

globalization and need for quick response and programming (Fallon & Rublik, 2012). Of

particular importance in relation to policy priority and its standards for successful

implementation is an awareness surrounding how "language ideologies can serve to undermine,

challenge, or support particular political alignments and social identities" (Mori, 2014, p. 154).

     Disjunction between policymakers and implementers can be seen in the dichotomy

between expectation and classroom reality, with ESL learner identity further exemplifying the

language learning process as complex and multifaceted. The literature demonstrated that policy

influence and priority first confronts the realities of the classroom, which then reveals different

structural realities: used and available resources, assessments, time, etc. (Silver & Skuja-Steele,

2005). Overall, the literature highlighted the restrictions that policy priority placed on

implementers. Teachers' reinterpretation of policy is dictated by and filtered through the more

immediate classroom, demographic, and fiscal realities, and demonstrated through their methods

of instruction.

Limitations and drawbacks to the relevance of the literature include numerous out of country studies, and the age of ESL learners as subjects of research. A gap in the literature exists regarding the effect of policy on elementary or middle school aged students or programs due to the complications related to research concerning minors, an element further amplified by the language component. High schoolers are also often difficult to find as subjects of study, meaning that student perception of ESL programming is often lacking. College students are subject to more regular research due to the ethical components requiring an individual be of legal age to consent, but gaps still exist regarding ESL student success and supports while in college, especially when compared to research on other underrepresented populations. Difficulty securing the consent of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to interview parents of ESL students highlights this research gap. Due to the need to protect vulnerable populations, using non-native speakers of English as research subjects was considered too risky, especially since there exists the potential for interaction with individuals lacking documentation.

There is disagreement among researchers, policymakers and implementers regarding student's own-language use when learning English as a second language, meaning that programs, experiences, visions and goals for ESL students are not uniform. The goal of this research study is to explore the following areas of interest: How do classroom realities affect the degree to which policy can be implemented?; What is the feasibility of implementing policy in providing for effective instruction experiences and outcomes for ESL students?; How do funding and resource limitations, along with differing language backgrounds and levels of english proficiency impact the ability to faithfully implement policy?; What constitutes "successful" implementation of policy?

Method

IRB approval was initially sought to conduct informational interviews of indirect and direct service providers throughout the HCPS system and individual parent interviews, as identified by their attendance in an adult ESL class held at an area school on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. The researcher was approved to conduct informational interviews with indirect and direct service providers at an area school.

One public city school within Harrisonburg, Virginia was selected as the sole research site based upon information revealed in the literature review, in addition to the fact that 57 languages are spoken within the school system (Harrisonburg City Public Schools, 2017). The school selected had established itself as having successful ESL programming and student outcome. Indicators of success that qualify the research site as such include extensive supports available for students in response to substantial demographic statistics related to students who speak languages other than English as their first language. An example of this can be seen in a recent look at Harrisonburg's language learner services and programming for Dual Language Learners (DLLs) reported upon by New America. Children engaged in English language learning alongside that of their home or native language qualify as DLLs and receive established supports within HCPS. These supports are presented as lessons by New America, holding Harrisonburg up as an exemplar model for successful instruction of ELLs/DLLs:

> "Lesson #1: Invest to expand DLL access to early childhood education programs.;
>
> Lesson #2: Create welcome centers, hire liaisons, and build partnerships to increase family engagement in schools.;
>
> Lesson #3: Differentiate programs to meet the diverse needs of DLLS.;
>
> Lesson #4: Prepare all teachers to work effectively with DLLS.;

Lesson #5: Explore strategies to increase collaboration among schools.;

Lesson #6: Incorporate DLLs' needs at the outset of all policy formulation and reformulation"

(Garcia & Carnock, 2016, p. 34).

As previously indicated, Harrisonburg serves as a commendable model for students

learning English as a second language. In positioning language as a resource through promotion

of own-language use and bilingualism rather than as a barrier for success in an English-dominant

society (Ruiz, 1984, as cited in Waters, 2001), education more holistically addresses students.

The methodology for this qualitative research study includes the use of informational

interviewing. Prior to engaging in the interview process, the researcher spent time shadowing an

upper-level administrator who works for HCPS, and observing various locations where ESL

programming takes place (i.e., The Welcome Center, area schools, various faculty/staff

meetings, planning committees, advisories, and district leadership team meetings, etc.), and

becoming acquainted with individuals who provide support services to ESL students, and to gain

understanding of the context for program functionality. Under the guidance of this upper-level

administrator, the researcher was extended invitations to attend various meetings and sites,

provided with reading materials, as well as granted access to the interviewees. During this time,

the researcher took notes for her own personal reflection and to support the development of a

greater understanding of the program supports offered by HCPS.

The two main research strategies include the use of observational data that will contribute

to field notes to be used by the researcher only to orient herself to the community in which she is

conducting research, followed by the collection of qualitative data by way of informational

interviewing. Interview candidates are categorized as either "direct service providers" or

"indirect service providers." Direct service providers include ESL teachers: newcomer, sheltered immersion, advanced, etc., and a mental health professional that works specifically with the newcomer population. Indirect service providers include administrators, social workers, home school liasons, school counselors, school safety officers/police officers, etc. involved in providing services for ESL students.

Throughout the course of this research project I spoke with 15 total service providers, 13 of whom signed consent forms and whose responses subsequently contribute to this research study. The composition of these 13 service providers included 6 direct service providers, and 7 indirect service providers. Each of these individuals elected to either an audio recorded interview ranging from 30-60 minutes, or a non-audio recorded interview wherein I took notes by hand. Results from these informational interviews were then typed into Word documents by the interviewer and coded for themes; these transcriptions are saved on a flashdrive dedicated solely to this research project and accessible only to the researcher. To further protect the identities of my respondents, service providers have randomly been assigned a number that in no way corresponds to the date or order in which they were interviewed. Data was therefore attributed to individuals in the following manner: DS1 through DS6 signifies a direct service provider, while IS7 through IS13 signifies an indirect service provider. Emergent themes from these interviews will be discussed in the Analysis section.

Expected Results

Based on the review of the literature and the researcher's interest in policy, the following

research questions were crafted to guide interactions with service providers:

1. How do classroom realities affect the degree to which policy can be implemented?

2. What is the feasibility of implementing policy in providing for effective instruction

   experiences and outcomes for ESL students?

3. How do funding and resource limitations, along with differing language backgrounds

   and levels of english proficiency impact the ability to faithfully implement policy?

4. What constitutes "successful" implementation of policy?

The original hypotheses for this study are as follows: (1) classroom realities and funding

allocated to schools/districts handicap the ability to stringently follow the policy put in place,

resulting in failure to successfully implement the policy in its totality. And, (2) policy priority

differs substantially from the needs and actual lived experiences of ESL students and their

families, classroom reality, funding and subsequent policy implementation. Based on these

hypotheses I expected findings to reveal a gap or disconnect between policy-makers and

implementers (i.e., direct service providers: teachers).

Analysis

        The interview process and subsequent analyses of the interviews yielded serendipitous findings. These serendipitous findings resulted from the time spent cultivating a relationship with the top-level administrator who was granting me access to the interviewees. Additionally, the nature of the responses given by the interviewees, direct and indirect service providers alike, demonstrated more similarities than differences, and often countered my expectations for the research; policy was overshadowed by other themes despite being the focal point of the research.

        The process of analysis included transcribing each audio-recording into a Word document; the data from interviewees who did not consent to be audio-recorded was transcribed from a spiral notebook into a Word document. Each interview was reflected upon afterwards by the researcher wherein she took notes about what stood out to her, and Word documents were then read over extensively to identify themes of the research.

        In my interactions with direct and indirect service providers at the school serving as the research site, there are 5 identifiable themes that continued to crop up in response to my interview questions: (1) community, (2) individuality, (3) expectations and supports, (4) mental health, and (5) policy knowledge. Important to note throughout the process of identifying the aforementioned themes and selecting responses to capture them in this paper, is the researcher's bias about which individuals most clearly articulated themselves, as well as did not reveal identifying information.

        The foremost theme is that of community; the employees of the school consistently demonstrated high-levels of investment in their work and in the students with whom they work. Furthermore, while my main focus was that of ESL students, the responses I received were more integrative in nature and focused on holism in terms of populations reached and in attending to

all aspects of the individual student when creating community culture. In regards to the ESL

population, DS2 had the following to say about their place in the larger school community:

> I feel like they're [administration] very supportive of us and they see us as an important part of
>
> the school…just the fact that we have actual classrooms in the center of the school, and not
>
> everyone's in the trailer. I mean from the beginning it wasn't like "oh you get this closet or you
>
> get this trailer, I think that's not the case in all ESL situations."

This support and positivity held by administration toward the ESL population is an element of

successful ESL programs reflected in the literature. This equity in treatment and value of

different populations coinciding with conscious efforts to be culturally sensitive to ESL students

parallels to what DS4 shared about work with this population:

> I think that students need to understand the rules and the consequences, they need to be treated as
>
> if everybody else. I don't think it's okay to be like "well they're an immigrant they should just let
>
> things slide." I want them to know they are just as valuable and just as capable as everyone born
>
> and raised here so if everybody else has to dress up for P.E. so do my kids and I will tell them that
>
> that's what they have to do and they will have consequences. This school has been great at
>
> understanding and having some deeper conversations and kind of meeting them in the middle.

Holding all students to the same standards, while taking into account cultural considerations,

demonstrates that ESL students are not relegated to this label, but rather are integral members of

the the school community.

In relation to consequences, the school has recently begun to implement restorative

justice disciplinary practices which has received mixed reviews from staff members. On the one

hand, DS2 recognizes the intent and progressions being made by restorative justice efforts but

expresses that it has also served to remove "a lot of natural consequences, which makes

everyone's job harder," a sentiment echoed by DS1, DS5, and DS6. Similarly, I8 has noted that

the language of restorative justice holds immense power as a community concept and in

solidifying for students that their individual actions impact their wider community. However, IS8

also noted that these efforts must be proactive:

> There has to be a restorative foundation to the school to begin with in terms of how students feel
>
> in the school, what the school climate is like, how teachers treat students and how students treat
>
> teachers and how we understand ourselves as a community...yeah, if restorative justice is forced
>
> too much on people it loses one of it's, like essential I think, pieces…it has to be something that is
>
> natural and voluntary. Yeah, it can't be forced.

This response speaks to the transitional period that accompanies attempts to change the culture of

the school so that it reflects, as DS3 states, "the welcoming relationship-based people that work

here." Operating in a way that was relationship-minded dominated much of the discussions I had

with my interviewees. IS10 qualified the importance of being a school that uses

relationship-focused/community-based approaches to education with the following statement:

"kids can have better success and teachers can have better success when the whole system

operates under protecting relationships," while IS11 related it to the community's parents and

families. IS11 affirmed the importance of tying families in to the the school community to ensure

student success by maintaining cognizance of barriers to engagement that accompany students

and their families, but particularly paying attention to those that exist for the ESL population and

finding opportunities to hear their voice and pull them further into the community. IS11 states

that:

> Every family comes with wisdom, with knowledge, with expertise regardless of their educational
>
> background...regardless of what country they come from and they have a lot of value that we need

to consider..well no, we don't need to consider...we need to *know* that we're gonna be better with

them on board. And it's not just [that] you come to the table, but no it's that you come and you

have a voice, and we honor you, and we value what you bring to us.

Conversely, navigating a highly diverse community, particularly an ESL population as

multitudinous as this school's, comes with the need to attend to cultural differences that requires

flexibility on part of the community in terms of supports and resources. IS8 notes that from a

service provider standpoint to this population that challenges arise in determining where one

individual's responsibilities end and another person's begins because "most people genuinely

care about the students and so people want to be involved and people want to support in any way

they can…um, so some of that just goes beyond any job description and it's just kind of the

human part of working with students." DS2 embodies this humanistic aspect of working with

students, being relational, and community-minded in a way that also ties in to individuality by

professing that "it's a great honor to be the first teacher that student has in the country," which

serves to introduce the second theme that stood out in my interviews: individuality.

In discussing the importance of community one must consider the individuals that make

up that community. The school contributes to the construction of a healthy community culture by

attending to its community members in an individualized manner. IS8 shares how they celebrate

the individuality of an overgeneralized population of ESL students:

One really basic thing is learning their names. That sounds super basic but I think it's a lot more

significant than what people might realize. I think it's a big step in helping them feel like they

belong here and that they…they're not invisible, that they're a part of the community and they're

worth a lot to us and we value them as people. And then I think just showing an interest in who

they are, asking them questions about themselves, what they like to do, what they're interested in,

asking them where they came from um and just kinda maintaining that contact from day to day,

from week to week and building a relationship from there. And then...being willing to share

things from your own life I think helps them feel that they can also do the same with you…um

yeah, and then I think just helping them in different ways..in terms of yeah I think it can be hard

to ask for help if you wanna play sports, or you wanna talk with your school counselor or you

want to know what bus you have to ride home in the afternoon.

In a similar vein, DS4 shared how attempts made to get to know students on an informal basis by

sitting in on classes served as a wonderful engagement strategy and way to build trust, which

caused the disclosure rate to spike halfway through the school year. Meanwhile, DS1 discussed

how they employ various teaching methods in order to best reach students, stating that "we

accomplish the same stuff but not in the same way," which not only recognizes individuality but

also serves to ensure student success in the classroom. Both IS9 and IS10 echo this sentiment,

with IS10 asserting that "one of the strengths of ▮▮▮ [the school] is individualizing the plan," an

example of which can be seen in IS9's mention that ESL students can receive foreign language

credit for their home language. Additionally, IS9 emphasized how the inherent diversity of

English Language Learners creates an atmosphere where we must constantly be careful not to

overgeneralize or oversimply their experiences and/or needs. In fact, IS11 often feels that "we

fall into the trap of believing we know what they need and believing that we know what is better

for them or best for them." This notion ties directly into the idea of expectations and supports for

students.

Many service providers felt that the expectations for students were too rigid and rote in

nature. IS7 shared that "there's a wide array of needs and I think one piece of my vision would

be meeting the needs of ELLs who have full time jobs and families in a different way," to which

DS3 agreed:

> I have some students and I'm like "hey you gotta graduate, you gotta graduate" and from their
>
> point of view their parents are working ya know wherever and they're living in what we would
>
> consider not that great of a place but their parents are saying "we have more here than we've ever
>
> had anywhere else" and the kids are saying well I can just go work at the poultry plant why do I
>
> need to do this High School thing….so I think sometimes we have to realize maybe what's best
>
> for them isn't what we think is best for everyone…I hope that in the future we kind of develop
>
> these different paths a little more like with MTC, a technical center where trades are taught, but
>
> yeah like different paths for different people instead of pushing everyone into our one "go to high
>
> school, graduate and then go to college or you suck." Hopefully we move away from that and I
>
> think getting rid of the standards would be a step in the right direction.

This desire for the school to provide alternative options for students, particularly those classified

as ESL, in non-traditional situations is widespread among service providers, with IS8 stating

that:

> I think some of our students came-- in terms of the immigrant population-- came to the United
>
> States with the desire to work, with no intention of studying. But now they have the opportunity
>
> to study but there's kind of sort of like, I don't know, they feel obligated to study because the law
>
> says they have to study but they also feel really obligated to work and so they're kind of pulled in
>
> different directions...a different model sort of of education where they could do those things but
>
> without having to yeah I don't know work themselves to death…in a way that has more dignity
>
> and is more sustainable for themselves as people. I think it's really disorienting for students just
>
> to come and be thrown into a system where there's all this talk of graduation and "what are you
>
> gonna do after school ends?" and there's all these acronyms and there's a new language and

> people are constantly asking you all these questions that nobody has asked you before and it's
>
> hard to even have a concept of like "okay, yeah just what does all this mean?" You sort of have
>
> this one identity in your home country and then you come here and I think that identity can be
>
> questioned a lot and you ask yourself sort of, "who am I and where am I headed?"

Expectations and pressures that students will conform to a typical graduation pathway adds stress

to an already overtaxed population of students. However, the ESL students do not come up

against these educational expectations without supports. Examples of supports include first

language support in the form of interpretation, the use of concrete content such as terms and

pictures to deliver basic English language skills to newcomers and discourage so much first

language support. In fact, first language supports often concern service providers because it can

be tricky to discern when students need or are able to fend for themselves. In regards to this

conundrum, IS8 states that:

> It's hard to find a balance between giving too much help or support, um or not enough..I think
>
> with language learners I think at what point do you stop um interpreting for a student when
>
> they're sick and need to go to the nurse, and at what point do they know enough English that they
>
> need to try to use their English, and at what point do you continue giving them that support, the
>
> language support…that's a hard, hard thing.

In attempting to better understand this issue, I began questioning everyone about their feelings

toward monolingual ESL teachers and whether that helps or hinders students in comparison to a

bilingual ESL teacher. Additionally, since the population of Spanish speakers is so large and the

majority of supports available are for Spanish speakers I began probing about how ESL students

that speak less dominant languages, or are a minority population within the ESL community fare

in comparison. Responses to these questions varied, but the consensus was that when students

have an ample amount of first language support and readily available staff members, interpreters, and peers that speak their language that they lack the urgency to communicate in English. Conversely, service providers felt that since students with less supports must use their English more out of sheer necessity that they progress faster.

In relation to supports, the fourth theme that presented itself was mental health. The implications of mental health issues among ESL students include the intersection of culture and language that often complicates the service delivery process and creates a less than ideal situation for students, especially when trauma histories are involved. This is hugely concerning due to the fact that counseling is often a very intimate and vulnerable experience, with trauma adding a whole other layer. Furthermore, when there is interpretation present for a counseling sessions it adds yet another element. IS7 struggles with this fact, illustrating this concept by sharing that interpreters are often members of the community themselves:

> Some of our Eritrean or Ethiopian families are really tight-knit so there's all sorts of drama within that and considerations and then you have this interpreter who's a part of that community but also becoming privy to all of their personal business and struggles and some people…some of our interpreters consider themselves cultural ambassadors and get more involved in the cultural translation of something that um they're gonna handle it in their way sometimes, they're not just translating word for word um and I have mixed feelings about that..I don't think it's all bad or all good…sometimes I'm so grateful that they have that insight to do that and at the same time they're coming from their own lens and their background and religious community, family community…and it's complicated…especially when you're dealing with counseling and mental health…and family concerns and social concerns…it's a lot of cultural consideration.

Perhaps even more concerning is the fact that no counselors in the school system speak Spanish. When coupled with the realities of home country violence, immigration/journey stories, political rhetoric, and separated-reunified students, DS4 shares that Spanish speaking students exist in a vacuum where they "hold their trauma" until they have developed the language skills to process it verbally with a mental health professional. Since mental health often presents as a significant concern for ESL students at the school it is important that direct and indirect service providers alike take into account the cultural considerations of the students, with IS7 describing the efforts to be culturally sensitive and culturally responsive as something that is not discusses in isolation, but rather "it's just a part of everything we do." In fact, part of the effort to implement restorative justice stems from the realization that an acting out behavior may actually be a pain response manifesting itself, or a response to post-traumatic stressors. According to DS1, the interrelated nature of maladaptive behavior, emotional needs, and discipline often challenge the classroom environment.

Building off of the classroom environment, the final theme encountered was policy knowledge. Although policy was situated at the forefront of my research project, it was the aspect of my research on which I received the least amount of information. In taking the pulse of direct service providers about policy priority, mandates, and the difficulties of implementation that I had read about in the literature, I only accumulated responses of limited awareness. The most explicit articulation of policy was given by DS2:

> Um I'm really fortunate that I don't feel like a lot of things directly affect me..eh, but that's not true…ESL is funded through federal funds partially and so I have a job because of that so that's cool and um I mean I don't feel a tremendous amount of pressure from like federal or state laws or NCLB [No Child Left Behind] anymore…um I think when I worked with elementary school

> those students were expected to be taking SOLs very soon after entering and so it was really hard,
>
> but at this level the expectation isn't the same. I mean it's expected that they will take SOLs and
>
> things like that but I don't have to be preparing them for that this year.

As mentioned in the previous quote, potential reasons for this lack of policy awareness could be

attributed to the uniqueness of the school and the saturation of diversity and ESL students in

attendance, in addition to the education level that students are in (i.e., high school). DS6

mentions division as well in their statement:

> Fortunately I feel like um a lot of the policy is not placed on me so much...because in other
>
> divisions that I've worked in we did not have a coordinator or we had a coordinator that had other
>
> responsibilities and a lot more responsibility was placed on the teacher…I kind of feel like I'm
>
> oblivious to most of the policy stuff and not in terms of not doing what I'm supposed to or not
>
> complying but just that I don't have to worry about..cuz I am doing the teaching.

Meanwhile, DS1 admits that they "probably don't know as much as I should about policy," but

concurs with DS6 about the fact that they do not feel restricted by mandates.

Conclusions

My research questions and hypotheses (listed in the Expected Results section), despite being based on the results of my literature review, turned out to be irrelevant to the discussions that I had with service providers. Instead, it was the research process itself that led to the discovery of information regarding ESL policy, not the interviews. The top-level administrator who provided me with access to relevant sites, supports, and service providers, buffered and bolstered the teachers/direct service providers in their interactions with ESL students.

The research process revealed that this particular site and school system was structured in a way that was counter to the norm/typical experience of ESL instruction. The navigation of policy priority and demand did not fall solely to teachers as it appeared to have been built into the ESL program structure at the school. As a result, both of my hypotheses were disproven and I did not find a gap or disconnect between policy-makers and implementers (i.e., direct services providers: teachers). Rather, indirect and direct service providers alike expressed a sense of holism and a comprehensive approach to the ESL program, which contributed both to its success and the lack of policy related knowledge and frustration on behalf of direct service providers.

In reflecting on this experience, from reviewing the literature to making observations of various sites wherein ESL services and supports are either located and/or distributed two things stand out to me. First is the iterative nature of research. My ideas about this research project transformed many times before I came to settle on interviewing adult service providers about ESL policy, both due to feasibility and what was deemed permissible by the Institutional Review Board. As such, my goals changed substantially throughout this process. The second aspect of this process that stands out to me is the impact of serendipitous findings on research.

Observations contributed to a broader picture of the functionality and governance that takes place within the HCPS system in relation to ESL services and programming. Informational interviews with school personnel in frequent contact with ESL students or involved in ESL policy implementation/instruction provided tangible support for the challenges and successes of the ESL programming at the school. As a result of these interactions, the information gained resulted in serendipitous findings, contrasting with what I set out to find.

The nature of my relationship with the top-level administrator with whom I was shadowing, and the conversations that we had throughout the research process informed the results of the research. Due to the way the IRB protocol was written and the extended amounts of time that we spent together, the researcher was unable to document the information gained from this upper-level HCPS administrator. Nonetheless, the information gained from the administrative mentor throughout the research process resulted in serendipitous findings due to the clarity that the relationship brought to systems, procedures, and relationships concerning ESL supports, programming and policy.

Biases

The literature revealed difficulties felt by direct service providers with policy implementation (Farrell, 2016), so I began the research process with a mindset that policy was the most difficult aspect of working with this population, but policy rarely emerged as a defining factor of the work being done at the school, rather, the concern was more socio-emotional, and holistic. Due to the lack of overt discussion of policy, the information that I received deviated from my original interests based on what people knew, thus resulting in serendipitous findings.

In terms of personal bias, I pursued information related to Spanish speakers due to my own interest and connection to the language. Furthermore, due to the high percentage of Spanish

speaking ELLs within the school system-- 73% of of ELLs attending HCPS speak Spanish

(Harrisonburg City Public Schools, 2017)-- most supports available at the school were for

Spanish speakers, which resulted in a substantial amount of time dedicated to discussion with

service providers about the Spanish speaking ESL population.

The researcher also notes bias in determining which responses from the 13 informational

interviews to include in the write-up. Following the interview process, as the researcher began to

organize the material around the emergent themes, certain material was deemed more usable than

others due to the phrasing, clarity, and depth of response given by interviewees to avoid

redundancy and convey the material in an organized fashion. No information was purposely left

out. Rather, information from the interviews was simply consolidated and organized surrounding

the themes that emerged.

Limitations

Limitations of the research include having a top-level administrator serve as a

mentor/guide throughout the process. The manner in which the researcher's IRB Protocol was

written, as well as the desire to reduce bias within the research process limited the information

that could be used from the HCPS administrator in this study. The information gained by our

conversations provided insight into the ESL programming and functionality for the school, as

well as the HCPS system as a whole. Furthermore, time spent with a mentor in an upper-level

administrative position influenced the access I was given to providers and resulted in

serendipitous findings.

Aspects of my research findings that went against what I anticipated to find included a

lack of policy knowledge. The fact that teachers did not seem to be very aware of policy in their

everyday work nor did they feel terribly restricted by mandates was counter to what the literature

stated about the clashes between policy priority and classroom reality. Additionally, turnover did

not present as an issue like the literature review suggested (Malsbary & Appelgate, 2016, as cited

in Rance-Roney, 2009). Instead, all of the staff members that I encountered were highly

dedicated to their work, and often had multiple experiences that assisted them in their

interactions with the ESL population, such as time spent learning a language themself or living

abroad, immigrant status, teaching experience, administrative experience, etc. The presence of

this top-level administrator in the position to disseminate policy knowledge in a top-down

fashion may be a factor that alleviates the pressure felt by direct service providers to contest

policy priority and implementation in their classrooms, and creates the environment that sets the

school apart from the literature.

Implications

Aspects of the literature that were reflected in my research findings as beneficial when

attending to ESL populations included the use of culturally relevant learning supports (Morales

& Biau, 2009; Sartor & Hill, 2013), such as books written in a student's native language, peer

support groups/advisories, and creative outlets and experiences to encourage English language

development such as playback theatre. The responsiveness of indirect service providers,

administrators in particular, demonstrates the holistic viewpoint espoused by the school and

provides for an ever-evolving model of supports and service provision for ESL students.

Further implications of the information gained from this research project is the high need

for proactive mental health supports and comprehensive discipline/restorative justice policies, as

well as alternative opportunities for students so that they do not feel funnelled through an

education system wherein they cannot actualize their potential.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What is your role?
2. What is your native language?
3. How do the effects of policy impact teachers'/admins' ability to negotiate and contest policy? How is a teacher's negotiation and contestation of policy shaped by a specific policy context over time?
4. How has NCLB and Title III impacted the ESL/ELL population and your work with them?
5. How does policy priority translate into practice? (i.e., unfunded mandates; classroom realities vs expectations of policy)
6. How do classroom realities affect the degree to which policy can be implemented?
7. How do funding and resource limitations, along with different language backgrounds and levels of English proficiency impact the ability to faithfully implement policy?
8. How do teaching methods reflect and/or impact the crafting of education policy related to English language acquisition?
9. What do you find works best in terms of successfully implementing policy and reaching students?
10. What constitutes "successful" implementation of policy?
11. What presents as the greatest challenge in working with this population?
12. What is your vision?
13. What needs to be done?
14. What needs to continue?

*This list was compiled after completing my literature review and prior to beginning the interview process. As the interview process began, certain questions were omitted, added and/or reworded as necessary to best suit the interviewee. This was indicated as a possibility in my IRB protocol.

Appendix B: Informed Consent Document - *In Translation: An Examination of ESL Policy on Paper as it Relates to the Realities of Implementation*

Consent to Participate in Research– Direct and Indirect Service Providers

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Grace M. Cuevas from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to explore the policies geared toward the acquisition of English language skills for individuals learning English as their second (or an additional language) language within Virginia public schools. The research will place emphasis on policy priority; the ability for ESL educators and others involved in the provision of resources to the ESL population to successfully implement policy in the face of classroom reality and funding; and will explore the impact felt by ESL students and their families. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her senior thesis.

Research Procedures
Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. In signing this form you agree to be audio recorded by the researcher. Audio recordings will then be transcribed and analyzed for themes, with all identifying information removed. Should you not consent to being audio recorded, the researcher will take notes throughout the interview that will later be transcribed for themes. This study consists of a series of observations to provide context for the programming and to provide the researcher with an enriched understanding of the ESL programming functionality. Research will be conducted under the guidance of the ███████ ██; she will assist the researcher in identifying potential interviewees. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to policy priority or the "letter of the law" and its subsequent implementation "spirit of the law" in order to uncover the impact and success of ESL policy implementation in ██████████████████████████, with a focus on the effects felt by high school students attending ███████████████████.

Time Required
Participation in this study will require 30-60 minutes of your time to take part in an interview.

Risks
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits
There are no direct benefits from participation in this study. However, participation in this study will benefit the area of research as a whole. Potential benefits to the research as a whole includes an enriched understanding of the complexities of educational policy as it pertains to ESL

students and their performance in public high schools. Additionally, information obtained has the potential to affect legislation surrounding ESL policy through advocacy efforts undertaken as a response to results from this study.

Confidentiality

The results of this research will be presented at the JMU Honors Symposium in the Fall of 2018. The results of this project will be coded in such a way that the respondent's identity will not be attached to the final form of this study. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. While individual responses are confidential, unless given the express consent of the participant to be identified, aggregate data will be presented representing averages or generalizations about the responses as a whole. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up individual respondents with their answers will be destroyed.

Participation & Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Grace M. Cuevas, BSW student   Professor Cindy Hunter, MSW
Department of Social Work   Department of Social Work
James Madison University   James Madison University
cuevasgm@dukes.jmu.edu   hunterca@jmu.edu

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject

Dr. David Cockley
Chair, Institutional Review Board
James Madison University
(540) 568-2834
cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

I consent to an interview in which I am audio-recorded by the researcher. ☐

I do not consent to an interview in which I am audio-recorded by the researcher. ☐

_____

_____   _____

Name of Participant (Printed)   Initials (Printed)

_____   _____

Name of Participant (Signed)   Date

_____   _____

Name of Researcher (Signed)   Date

Appendix C: IRB Protocol No. 18-0371

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
James Madison University

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James Madison University
Human Research Review Request

FOR IRB USE ONLY:

Exempt: ☐	Protocol Number:	1ˢᵗ Review: _____	Reviewer: _____
Expedited: ☐	IRB: 18-0371	2ⁿᵈ Review: _____	Reviewer: _____
Full Board: ☒	Received: 02/08/18	3ᵈ Review: _____	

Project Title:	In Translation: An Examination of ESL Policy on Paper as it Relates to the Realities of Implementation
Project Dates: (Not to exceed 1 year minus 1 day)	From: 04/10/18 To: 05/22/18 MM/DD/YY MM/DD/YY

Responsible Researcher(s):	Grace M. Cuevas
E-mail Address:	cuevasgm@dukes.jmu.edu
Telephone:	(804) 337-0819
Department:	Social Work
Address (MSC):	4043
Please Select:	☐ Faculty ☒ Undergraduate Student ☐ Administrator/Staff Member ☐ Graduate Student

(If Applicable):	
Research Advisor:	Cindy Hunter
E-mail Address:	hunterca@jmu.edu
Telephone:	(540) 568-1737
Department:	Social Work
Address (MSC):	4043

Minimum # of Participants:	1
Maximum # of Participants:	20

Funding:	External Funding: Yes: ☐ No: ☒ If yes, Sponsor: _____
	Internal Funding: Yes: ☐ No: ☒ If yes, Sponsor: _____
	Independently: Yes: ☐ No: ☒
Incentives:	Will monetary incentives be offered? Yes: ☐ No: ☒
	If yes: How much per recipient? _____ In what form? _____
Must follow JMU Financial Policy:	http://www.jmu.edu/financemanual/procedures/4205.shtml#_304IRBApprovedResearchSubjects

Institutional Biosafety Committee Review/Approval:	Use of recombinant DNA and synthetic nucleic acid molecule research: ☐ Yes ☒ No
	If "Yes," approval received: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Pending
	IBC Protocol Number(s):
	Biosafety Level(s):

Will research be conducted outside of the United States?	☐ Yes ☒ No
	If "Yes," please complete and submit the International Research Form along with this review application: http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/forms/irbinternationalresearch.docx.

Certain vulnerable populations are afforded additional protections under the federal regulations. Do human participants who are involved in the proposed study include any of the following special populations?

☐ Minors

☐ Pregnant women *(Do not check unless you are specifically recruiting)*

☐ Prisoners

☐ Fetuses

☒ My research does not involve any of these populations

☐ Elderly

Some populations may be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence. Does your research involve any of the following populations?

☐ Diminished capacity/Impaired decision-making ability

☐ Economically disadvantaged

☐ Other protected or potentially vulnerable population *(e.g. homeless, HIV-positive participants, terminally or seriously ill, etc.)*

☒ My research does not involve any of these populations

Investigator: Please respond to the questions below. The IRB will utilize your responses to evaluate your protocol submission.

1. ☒ YES ☐ NO Does the James Madison University Institutional Review Board ~~define~~ the project as *research?*

   The James Madison University IRB defines "research" as a "systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge." All research involving human participants conducted by James Madison University faculty and staff and students is subject to IRB review.

2. ☒ YES ☐ NO Are the human participants in your study *living* individuals?

   "Individuals whose physiologic or behavioral characteristics and responses are the object of study in a research project. Under the federal regulations, human subjects are defined as: living individual(s) about whom an investigator conducting research obtains: (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual; or (2) identifiable private information."

3. ☒ YES ☐ NO Will you obtain data through *intervention* or *interaction* with these individuals?

   "Intervention" includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered (e.g., measurement of heart rate or venipuncture) and manipulations of the participant or the participant's environment that are performed for research purposes. "Interaction" includes communication or interpersonal contact between the investigator and participant (e.g., surveying or interviewing).

4. ☒ YES ☐ NO Will you obtain *identifiable private information* about these individuals?

   "Private information" includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, or information provided for specific ~~purposes which the individual can reasonably expect~~ will not be made public (e.g., a medical record or student record). "Identifiable" means that the identity of the participant may be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information (e.g., by name, code number, pattern of answers, etc.).

5. ☐ YES ☒ NO Does the ~~study present~~ *more than minimal risk* to the participants?

   "Minimal risk" means that the risks of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. Note that the concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes psychological, emotional, or behavioral risk as well as risks to employability, economic ~~well-being~~, social standing, and risks of civil and criminal liability.

CERTIFICATIONS:

For James Madison University to obtain a Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) with the Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, all research staff working with human participants must sign this form and receive training in ethical guidelines and regulations. "Research staff" is defined as persons who have direct and substantive involvement in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research and includes students fulfilling these roles as well as their faculty advisors. The Office of Research Integrity maintains a roster of all researchers who have completed training within the past three years.

Test module at ORI website http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/irbtraining.shtml

Institutional Review Board (IRB)   Page 3 of 10
James Madison University

Name of Researcher(s) and Research Advisor	Training Completion Date
Grace M. Cuevas, undergraduate researcher	September 17, 2016
Professor Cynthia Hunter (MSW), research advisor	November 7, 2015 *Certification will be renewed over the summer. Research will be completed before expiration.

For additional training interests, or to access a Spanish version, visit the National Institutes of Health Protecting Human Research Participants (PHRP) Course at: http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php

By signing below, the Responsible Researcher(s), and the Faculty Advisor (if applicable), certifies that he/she is familiar with the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human research participants from research risks. In addition, he/she agrees to abide by all sponsor and university policies and procedures in conducting the research. He/she further certifies that he/she has completed training regarding human participant research ethics within the last three years.

_____   _____

Principal Investigator Signature   Date

_____   _____

Faculty Advisor Signature   Date

Submit an electronic version (in a Word document) of your **ENTIRE** protocol to researchintegrity@jmu.edu.
Provide a **SIGNED** hard copy of the Research Review Request Form to:
Office of Research Integrity, MSC 5738, 601 University Boulevard, Blue Ridge Hall, Third Floor, Room # 342

Purpose and Objectives

Please provide a lay summary of the study. Include the purpose, research questions, and hypotheses to be evaluated. (Limit to one page)

The purpose of this study is to explore the policies geared toward the acquisition of English language skills for individuals learning English as their second language within Virginia public schools. The research will place emphasis on policy priority and the ability for ESL educators and others involved in the provision of resources to the ESL population to successfully implement policy. Special attention will be paid to factors that work to either assist or hinder the experiences of ESL students and their families: student background; teacher background; classroom reality/composition; funding and resources; and administrative support.

The following research question has been formulated:

1. In what ways does Title III encourage and/or provide barriers for effective teaching of ESL/ELL students from the perspective of teachers, parents, and indirect service providers (e.g., administrators, counselors, etc.)?

The hypotheses for this study are as follows: (1) The federal policy (Title III) when implemented in the classroom, along with the funding allocated to schools/districts, both assists and hinders the ability to effectively implement policy. And, (2) Policy priority differs substantially from the needs and actual lived experiences of ESL/ELL students, the classroom reality/composition, and funding guidelines
I expect findings to reveal a gap or disconnect between policy-makers and implementers.

Procedures/Research Design/Methodology/Timeframe

Describe your participants. From where and how will potential participants be identified (e.g. class list, JMU bulk email request, etc.)?

Participants will be individuals involved in the provision of services to ESL/ELL students, or those who regularly interact with this population and/or oversee the implementation of policy. These individuals will not be randomly selected but rather will be identified based on their role, knowledge base and proximity to ESL policy and its subsequent implementation. Data will be gathered from at least three direct service providers (e.g., teachers); at least three indirect service providers (e.g. counselor, administrator, school social worker, home school liaison, Welcome Center Staff, etc.).

How will subjects be recruited once they are identified (e.g., mail, phone, classroom presentation)? Include copies of recruitment letters, flyers, or advertisements.

Once subjects are identified they will be approached in person/recruited via word of mouth.

Describe the design and methodology, including all statistics, IN DETAIL. What exactly will be done to the subjects? If applicable, please describe what will happen if a subject declines to be audio or video-taped.
I intend to shadow ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
throughout the remaining days of April until May 22nd, connecting with various ESL/language learner personnel throughout the duration of the research process. Under her guidance, I will be working concurrently to evaluate the effectiveness of her program. My research will be localized to ▮▮▮▮
▮▮▮▮, with a focus on the effectiveness of policy implementation on high schoolers (grades 9-12). Additional exposure to other ESL resources throughout the community and within the Harrisonburg Public School System will be considered as well, but data and the exploration of policy priority and its subsequent implementation will be considered through the lens of ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ and the effects had on ESL students in attendance. This information will be demonstrated through the results of the informational interviewing with both direct and indirect service providers.

The study is designed to employ an emergent design and basic structured interviewing; this research project is qualitative in nature and reliant on data drawn from informational interviews.

If a subject declines to be audio recorded, I will capture data physically by way of paper record-keeping in a spiral bound notebook journal. Options to decline or consent to audio recording will be provided on the consent forms.

Emphasize possible risks and protection of subjects.

As a macro-level minded project focused on a holistic view of ESL policy and its implementation, with specific focus on ███████████, potential risks are minimal. The researcher does not perceive more than minimal risk from involvement in the study (that is, no risks beyond those associated with everyday life) due to the fact that none of the information sought will entail interaction with vulnerable populations. Key informants will include administrators, ESL teachers, counselors, school social workers, and other relevant individuals involved in the delivery of ESL services, ESL policy, in addition to those in frequent contact with this population. Individuals involved in either indirect or direct provision of services to this population will not be identified. However, the school district will be identified. The researcher plans to broadly categorize these individuals as either direct or indirect providers, after having described what those categories could entail, but not mentioning their specific role. Participants will sign a consent form allowing for the researcher to audio record the interview sessions. Any information with the potential to upset confidentiality will be excluded from the manuscript. Also, any information with the potential to impact/infringe upon FERPA protections will not be annotated, and if captured on audio recordings the information will be excluded from the manuscript.

What are the potential benefits to participation and the research as a whole?

The potential benefits to participation and the research as a whole includes an enriched understanding of the complexities of educational policy as it pertains to ESL students and their performance in public high schools. Additionally, focus on policy priority and the realities of implementation allows for advocacy on behalf of restructuring policy to become more relevant and more effective at reaching the desired populations (e.g., ESL students).

Where will research be conducted? (Be specific; if research is being conducted off of JMU's campus a site letter of permission will be needed)

Research will be conducted throughout varying Harrisonburg City Public Schools. However, the ultimate focus will be on ███████████ and the supports that are available to ESL students from the 9th-12th grade. I will also observe and interview staff who work for the Welcome Center at Keister Elementary and will potentially observe, interview, and follow a family through the intake process. All data will be collected through interviews of individuals involved in the delivery of ESL services and policy implementation.

Will deception be used? If yes, provide the rationale for the deception. Also, please provide an explanation of how you plan to debrief the subjects regarding the deception at the end of the study.

No, deception will not be used.

What is the time frame of the study? (List the dates you plan on collecting data. This cannot be more than a year, and you cannot start conducting research until you get IRB approval)

The time frame of the study entails a 2-month period (April & May) in which I will shadow ███████████, to contextualize my understanding of the programming and service delivery through observations within varying levels of ESL programming and supports throughout Harrisonburg available for the Harrisonburg City Public School System. However, the ultimate focus will be on ███████.

Data Analysis

For more information on data security, please see:
http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/irbdatasecurity.shtml.

How will data be analyzed?

Data will primarily be analyzed by way of qualitative data analysis. Upon review of case notes and field notes acquired from observations; request for copies of different documentation (e.g., teacher syllabi) pertaining to the ways in which ESL policy is implemented, data garnered from informational interviewing of both indirect and direct service providers will be explored for different identifiable themes. Observations merely serve to contextualize the programming for the researcher, any information gathered in that time will not be included in the manuscript. Quantitative data analysis will look at available demographic data for ESL students in ███████████████ in addition to available performance statistics. I will be referencing Creswell in my qualitative data analysis and transcription, positioning the implementation of ESL policy at ████████████████ as a case study to be paired with informational interviewing, from which descriptions and emergent themes will be analyzed.

How will you capture or create data? Physical (ex: paper or tape recording)? Electronic (ex: computer, mobile device, digital recording)?

Data will be captured using an audio recorder before being typed up into a Word document on my laptop. In the event that a participant does not consent to being audio recorded, I will physically capture data in a spiral bound notebook. Case notes and field notes will be captured manually by way handwriting them into the aforementioned spiral bound notebook. In regards to the audio recordings, I will be checking out an audio recorder from one of the JMU libraries. I will record the data on the audio recorder and then download them onto my computer. They will then be transferred to an encrypted flash-drive reserved for this project before being deleted from both the audio recorder and my computer. Audio recording files will be encrypted to ensure protection and confidentiality of participants. Upon completion of the project presentation, all encrypted files will be destroyed using software with erasure-capabilities.

Do you anticipate transferring your data from a physical/analog format to a digital format? If so, how? (e.g. paper that is scanned, data inputted into the computer from paper, digital photos of physical/analog data, digitizing audio or video recording?)

No, I do not anticipate transferring my data from a physical format to a digital format. I intend to collect my data digitally by way of an audio recorder. Data will then be typed into a Word Document that I will save to my desktop and transfer onto a designated flash-drive before deleting the file on my computer.

In the event that a participant does not consent to being audio recorded, I will physically capture data in a spiral bound notebook. Data will then be typed into a Word Document that I will save to my desktop and transfer onto a designated flash-drive before deleting the file on my computer. Although I do not anticipate audio recording any field or case notes, in the event that I will need to transfer them from this format, I will follow the same process of transcription into a Word document before uploading them onto the flash-drive and deleting all other existing copies.

Additionally, as the researcher I am the owner of both the flash-drive and the single laptop, which is password protected. All transcribed files and audio recordings uploaded to the laptop will be deleted (from both the laptop and audio recorder) once they have been transferred onto the flash-drive.

Who will have access to data? (e.g. just me; me and other JMU researchers (faculty, staff, or students); or me and other non-JMU researchers?)

I will be the sole person with access to identifiable research data. Non-identifiable data will be condensed/compiled to be shared in the format of chapters that are written and organized into a final paper. This information will be shared among the members of my committee in addition to my research advisor and the ███████████████████ for Harrisonburg City Public Schools, with whom and under the guidance of whom I am conducting my research project.

If others will have access to data, how will data be securely shared?

In the event that I am sharing data with other members of my research committee I will be using a designated flash-drive to transfer files.

Will you keep data after the project ends? (i.e. yes, all data; yes, but only de-identified data; or no) If data is being destroyed, when will it be destroyed, and how? Who will destroy the data?

Yes, but only de-identified data. This is due to the fact that the information gained throughout the research process has the potential to be highly informative for future ESL programming, and could also have an effect on policy advocacy. In the event that I need to destroy data, it will be destroyed upon completion of my final thesis paper and presentation at the Honors Symposium in the fall of 2018. I will destroy data by way of shredding physical data collection strategies (e.g., notes: case, field, interview) and later deleting the typed up versions of these notes that had been stored on the flash-drive. Audio recordings will be deleted. Therefore, any non-identifiable data will be kept and all identifiable data will be destroyed upon completion of the final presentation.

Reporting Procedures

Who is the audience to be reached in the report of the study?

The audiences to be reached in the report of this study include individuals involved in the crafting of ESL/educational policy, as well as educators who serve to enact and embody policy priorities within their classrooms, and administrators who provide support for educators and allocate funding.

How will you present the results of the research? (If submitting as exempt, research cannot be published or publicly presented outside of the classroom. Also, the researcher cannot collect any identifiable information from the subjects to qualify as exempt.)

The results of the research will be condensed into a research paper that will serve to inform my presentation at the James Madison University's 2018 Fall Honors Symposium.

How will feedback be provided to subjects?

Feedback will be provided to subjects through letters that will be mailed to their homes detailing the results of the study, thanking them for their contribution, and reemphasizing that any identifying information will be coded (and later destroyed) within the research paper so that they remain non-identifiable.

Experience of the Researcher (and advisor, *if student*):

The undergraduate student researcher, Grace M. Cuevas, is conducting her first research study. However, relevant experience of the researcher includes completion of a community needs assessment for the town of Dayton, Virginia in the fall of 2016 for a Research Methods class through the Department of Social Work at JMU. Additionally, the researcher took a class called "Spanish in the United States," last semester for which she conducted two sociolinguistic interviews with native speakers of Spanish to better understand the

linguistic landscape of community members, explore the effects of English-contact on the Spanish language and its subsequent use, as well as the experiences of Hispanic/Latino members of Harrisonburg. Currently, the student is involved in running groups with post-incarcerated residents of the Harrisonburg community with the aim of inducing reflection and stories that can be utilized to create a song; huge emphasis is placed on self-guided narrative and songwriting to aid in reducing societal stigma surrounding this population.

My research advisor, Cynthia Hunter (M.S.W., Howard University) is Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work at James Madison University, where she teaches practice courses. Prof. Hunter is currently involved with research with the JMU music department under a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her undergraduate students are involved in running groups with post-incarcerated residents, generating reflection and stories to serve as the basis for writing song lyrics. Her research has focused on field education and immigrants and she is co-editor of a widely read book on best practices for social work field directors. Dr. Hunter has authored multiple publications in peer-reviewed journals (e.g., Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work) and books published by Lyceum Books and Columbia University Press. She serves on the research sub-committee of the Council on Field Education for the Council on Social Work Education. My research advisor, Cynthia Hunter, will be guiding me through this research process by way of periodic check-ins on my work and in serving as an available resource for questions and concerns.

*The Informed Consent Document and list of Interview Questions were removed from the IRB protocol in this formal write-up and placed in Appendices 1 and 2. The Site Letter of Permission was removed as well to further protect the identity of the research site, the top-level administrator, and the interviewees.