IT'S A BUCKET WITH HOLES IN THE BOTTOM:

A STUDY OF BICULTURAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of LESLIE DIANE HUFF find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Chair

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“IT’S A BUCKET WITH HOLES IN THE BOTTOM”:

A STUDY OF BICULTURAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Abstract

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In the United States, English language learners (ELLs) are failing to achieve. The literature indicates that among a variety of probable causes, a students’ development of a bicultural identity could be key to fostering success. However, the examination of cultural identity development, specifically the opportunities available within the school context for bicultural identity development is under researched. This article addresses this gap by examining how the school context provides and prevents opportunities for ELLs to develop their identities biculturally. Findings indicated that despite good intentions opportunities for bicultural identity development in the negotiation of linguistic, cultural, social, and academic components of the school context were largely unavailable to the ELL in the study.

“It’s a bucket with holes in the bottom”:

A study of bicultural identity development

Classrooms in America’s schools are becoming increasingly diverse, particularly with regard to language minority students. For example, between 1979 and 2006 the population of five to 17 year olds in the U.S. who spoke a language other than English at home increased from 3.8 million to 10.8 million (NCES, 2008). Furthermore, according to the Pew Hispanic Center, immigrant students enter U.S. schools in later grades than they previously did, resulting in greater challenges for them to meet grade level expectations in both language and content knowledge (Fry, 2005). Many of these language minority students are experiencing academic failure in school. The recent increased focus on standardized testing in public school provides one assessment of this population’s lack of academic achievement. The Washington Assessment of Student Learning provides an example of how students with limited English perform on standardized tests. Of students who took all three exams, reading, writing, and math, for grade ten, only 8.1 percent met the standard on all the exams while 41.6 percent failed to meet the standard on any of the exams (OSPI, 2008). This trend can be seen across the nation. A report issued through the Pew Hispanic Center indicated that 71 percent of eighth grade English language learners (ELLs), a subset of language minority students, failed to achieve basic grade level reading and math scores in 2005 (Fry, 2007). Also of concern is the dropout rate among ELLs. In Washington State high schools during the 2004-2005 academic year, an average of 6.5 percent of ELLs in each grade (9-12) dropped out (OSPI). Fry (2005) asserts similar trends nationally stating that while students born outside the U.S account for eight percent of the

student population, they make up 25 percent of the dropout rate. These and other statistics indicate that U.S. schools are not currently meeting the needs of their language minority students.

The needs of many language minority students naturally include language learning. However, educators must recognize that they also have needs outside of those associated with language that influence their performance and achievement in school. It is important to look past the language needs of this population to discover what individual students also need academically, socially, and culturally to succeed. Although there is not a simple, standardized process to assess and meet the needs of this population, it is necessary to do so if language minority students are going to experience success in their education.

Understanding students' cultural identity—who students are and how they relate to the world— could be a valuable tool in addressing the needs, expectations, and perceptions of individual language minority students. This potentially significant influence on students' lives, in particular their school lives, has not been extensively researched as a way for teachers and schools to better reach their students and understand their needs.

In order to better understand the cultural identity of ELLs, teachers and researchers must avoid depictions of ELLs as the uniform group they are often portrayed to be in research, educational settings, and the media. In reality, their language development need often ends their similarity. ELLs, like all of us, are individuals with unique ideas, emotions, expectations, and goals. They have different ideas about learning and school. Teachers and other school officials need to discover ways to not only teach these students English, but to engage them in learning through their individual interests, strengths and needs (Alvermann, 2002; Meltzer & Hamman, 2004).

Given the changing U.S. demography, ELLs' lack of academic success, and the impact that cultural identity is posited to have on students' engagement in learning and academic achievement, addressed in the following section, more research is needed. Educators must begin to understand cultural identity development in school contexts at a deeper level. The study outlined in this paper provides an in depth examination of how the school context of one school shaped opportunities for the bicultural identity construction of an ELL. In exploring existing understandings of cultural identity, I first describe theories and concepts of identity I drew on to develop and inform this study. The second section illustrates the method and findings of the study. The final section focuses on the limitations of this study and presents implications for pedagogy and future research in understanding the influences school contexts have on the opportunities ELLs have to construct their bicultural identities.

Understanding Cultural Identity

Accessing ELLs' cultural identities could lend insight into many aspects of learning. For example, teachers who understand a student's academic strengths, culturally informed expectations of school, and familial roles and obligations start from an advantageous position in grasping what it is a learner needs to succeed. However, the ways students identify themselves and, in view of that identification, describe their needs, is under-researched.

Definitions

In attempting to understand cultural identity we must first clarify and define what cultural identity is. The literature often arranges people's identities into neat, distinct categories, for example, by race, gender, and age. (e.g., Akos & Ellis, 2008; Zubair, 2007). Pavlenko (2001) identifies additional identities (e.g., social, sexual, ethnic, and linguistic) that tend to be addressed as distinct or isolated in the literature. Cultural identity has also been viewed as an

independent category in research. Although many different definitions of cultural identity have been used to ground research studies, researchers have generally defined it as the way an individual relates to a group (their own native culture group(s) or a new culture group) that shares a common history, language, and world view (e.g., Ferdman, 1990; Norton, 1997). These categorizations, while convenient, oversimplify the variety of factors influencing the identity construction of individuals, particularly ELLs. As Pavlenko (2001) and others suggest, while it is simple to talk about the separate identities as if they were independent of one another, in reality, an individual's identities are highly intertwined. For example, one's ethnic identity often informs social and racial identities, which provide foundations for linguistic identity, which in turn may be highly influenced by one's gender identity. Because of the tangled nature of identities, all these categories should be included as components of cultural identity. In this paper, cultural identity indicates a person's sense of who she or he is and her/his place in the world and includes whatever other components matter to that individual's sense of self. In other words, each identity is constructed of a changing combination of components.

Identity Construction

Research on identity— where it comes from, how it develops, and what influences it— has been ongoing. Social identity theories cover many strands of identity inquiry. For example, social psychologists such as Stryker and Burke (2000) have spent decades exploring the internal processes (e.g., behaviors and expectations) that together with external social structures (e.g., interactions and relationships) influence a person's identity. Poststructuralist views of identity emphasize the active role individuals play in constructing their own identities. From this view, identity is a constructed part of the self (Weedon, 1987); the active participation of the individual in identity construction is essential to the development (and redevelopment) of identity.

Weedon (1987) asserts the importance of *subjectivity,* or the active participation of the individual, in the construction of identity. He also emphasizes the role language plays in the construction of both identity and subjectivity, noting, "Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed" (p. 21). Lippi-Green (1997) placed a similar importance on language in the identity construction process. In her analysis of the forced assimilation of indigenous tribes in the United States, she noted that the attack on indigenous populations focused on the eradication of indigenous languages because language is "the most salient way we have of establishing and advertising our social identities" (p. 5). In other research as well, language plays a key role in the development of identity. Duff and Uchida (2007) note, for example, that "identities and beliefs are co-constructed, negotiated, and transformed on an ongoing basis by means of language" (p. 452). Because language and identity are so tightly woven together, the complex linguistic terrain ELLs traverse can have a significant impact on their construction of cultural identity.

For ELLs, the role language plays can be complicated by the fact that their native language might be stigmatized by the dominant society or only partially developed and their comfort level in English low. Research points to a critical relationship between the level of language development and one's sense of membership in a group (Brunn, 1994; Heller, 1987; Weisman, 2001). Because of the partially developed nature of their language skills, ELLs may not have yet learned certain language functions that could impact their images of self and senses of place. This leaves suboptimal conditions for them to successfully navigate the social interactions that aid in the ongoing construction and reconstruction of their cultural identities. This is problematic because, along with language difficulties and possible gaps in content

knowledge, fragmented or contradictory cultural identities could lead to confusion and frustration for ELLs, resulting in compounded obstacles for them to surmount in order to succeed academically, as discussed in the next section.

A Model of Cultural Identity

In understanding the construction of cultural identity in ELLs and the potential influences cultural identity has on academic achievement, three poststructural and socio-cultural conceptions of identity can be employed. These three concepts— the bicultural construction of identity, the multiple influences in its construction, and its constant evolution to fit the needs of the learner— are explained below and provide insight and support for the project design and methodological decisions made in this study.

Bicultural Possibilities

First, cultural identity can be constructed biculturally (Bosher, 1997; Kanno, 2003; Lee, 2001; Zarate, Bhimji & Reese, 2005). Bicultural, in this sense, means the maintenance of one's traditional or native culture(s) as well as the acceptance of one's new culture. Bicultural identity (BCI) construction is essential in the development of academically successful ELLs (Lee, 2001; Zarate, Bhimji & Reese, 2005) who, by definition, must function in at least two cultures—that of their own or their parents' origins and that of their new residence. The use of the term "bicultural" is not meant to exclude those who have roots in more than two cultures, but rather is used to express the intertwining of ELLs' home culture(s) with their English-speaking culture. Often bicultural individuals more strongly identify with one culture in certain situations, but the key to biculturalism is one's "ability to cope successfully with more than one cultural worldview" (Weisman, 2000, p. 206). Specifically, the valuing and internalization of aspects of both one's native and new culture(s) represent biculturalism.

While the possibility of biculturalism is hotly debated, scholars seem to reflect the idea that not only is BCI construction possible, but those who develop such an identity are more successful and functional in society (Bosher, 1997; Kanno, 2003; Lee, 2001; Zarate, Bhimji & Reese, 2005). In the educational arena, ELLs who are bicultural are more likely to succeed not only in their language learning, but in more general academic goals (Norton, 1997; Weisman, 2001; Zarate, Bhimji, & Reese, 2005). For example, Lee (2001), in her ethnographic study of Hmong-American high school students, analyzed the combinations of influences that led to greater student achievement. She found that students who, along with their parents, accepted American values such as educating girls and also maintained traditional Hmong values such as a respect for parental authority had greater success in school. Alternatively, students who either assimilated completely, rejecting Hmong culture, or clung to Hmong culture, rejecting American culture, were more likely to be truant and less successful in school. Similarly, through interviews with Latino/a students and measurements of academic achievement, Zarate, Bhimji and Reese (2005) found that a BCI was significantly correlated to academic achievement. Bicultural identities were determined to exist based on students selecting more than one ethnic label from a list provided during the interviews. While this study offers interesting findings, it is limited because it does not incorporate factors outside of ethnicity as influential in the results.

Multiple Influences

The second concept in cultural identity development, multiple influences, indicates that identities are constructed in response or relation to a vast array of influences (e.g. Harklau, 2000; Katz, 1996; Lee, 2001). Some of these influences include various aspects of an individual's background (e.g., economic, familial, educational), previous life experiences, and previous and current social interactions. Although they are often looked at discretely, the array of factors

influencing the development of cultural identity is well-documented in the research literature (e.g. Duff & Uchida, 1997; Igoa, 1995; Lee, 2001; Morgan, 1997; Vandrick 1997). Another important influence is the social context. For example, in the process of identity construction, ELLs are reconciling the meaning of stereotypes of ELLs that are accepted by schools and peers (Bosher, 1997; Harklau, 200; Lee, 2001) and dominant culture stereotypes of ELLs' native culture and language (Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Weisman, 2001). Harklau (2000) provides an example in her research about ESL students who were transitioning between high school and community college. She found that a college label of "ESOL student," and the connotations of "lacking intelligence," "slow," or "unsuccessful" embedded in the label had a significant influence on the identities of ELLs who had been considered "the good kids" in their American high school. The students in Harklau's study excelled in a high school where teachers admired their dedication and perseverance; unfortunately, upon entering a more hostile climate at college where less was expected of them, the students, for unclear reasons, lost motivation and failed to achieve as they had in high school.

In addition to these influences, ELLs' perceptions of reality also influence how ELLs construct their cultural identities (Spencer, 1999). Reyes (2007) tells the story of a Cambodian-born high school student who rejected the label "Asian American" because he perceived the label to represent Chinese or Japanese Americans' entrepreneurial motivations for coming to America. For them, America is a land of opportunity. Reyes' student felt that neither he nor his culture was represented by the label. He considered himself "Other Asian." This label, for him, represented the involuntary nature of his family's departure from their homeland and arrival in America. This student came to America looking for freedom, which he perceived as being absent in his home country, at least partially because of political and military actions of the U. S. Perceptions and

beliefs such as these must be uncovered by teachers in order to understand the cultural identity of their ELLs and effectively meet their needs.

In addition to the above influences, Matute-Bianchi (1986) identified a student's access to successful role models as influential in BCI development. She found that, while many high school students have occupational goals, those who have family, friends, or acquaintances who hold similar positions are more likely to be successful in reaching their occupational goals. Matute-Bianchi proffered that a role model could be influencing success by establishing better access to and understanding of processes that lead to employment.

Another influence addressed in the literature is perceived similarities to the dominant culture or language (Lee, 2001; Thompson, 2006). Thompson (2006) explains how the similarity of one Korean woman's name with the English word "sunny" helped the woman avoid ridicule and taunting as a child while two other women suffered such a high level of harassment in school that they adopted English names. The woman with the English-sounding name was able to use her Korean name for all aspects of her adult life while the other two women lived binominal lives, reserving their Korean names for interactions within the Korean-American community and their adopted American names for academic and professional activities in the dominant culture.

These factors affect individual ELLs and the construction of their identities in different ways, but, to reiterate, schools and educators who make the effort to understand the strong influences in the lives of their ELLs could help their students traverse the difficult landscape of these multiple influences and their impact on identity construction in ways that lead to academic success.

Constant Evolution

In addition to bicultural possibilities and multiple influences, researchers and educators must acknowledge that identity is not a stagnant construct. It is continually constructed and adapted to meet one's needs (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Reyes, 2007; Toohey, 2000). The reconciliation of multiple influencing factors into a BCI is not the end product for most individuals. In poststructural and socio-cultural theories as well as in applied linguistics, individual identities are conceptualized as fluid entities constantly evolving to fit new and changing environments (Reyes, 2007); bicultural identities ebb and flow as well. Anthropological research also finds that identities are not fixed attributes of an individual, but rather evolve as a result of interactions and experiences (Reyes, 2007).

The Influence of Context

The three aspects of cultural identity do not operate in a vacuum. ELLs construct their cultural identities in context. The environment in which students learn is highly influential in their school performance (Wahlberg, 1970). Fraser (1994) went further saying that not only do learning environments influence achievement, but they also influence affective outcomes in school. Perceived equality, organization, and structure of the learning environment are some of the aspects of the learning environment that influence students' in their academic pursuits (Wahlberg & Anderson, 1968). It is important to remember that the learning environment, while influential in students' academic achievement, is not limited to the academic lives of students, but rather linguistic, cultural, and social, components of the school context need also to be considered.

The three aspects of cultural identity in school contexts; its 1) bicultural possibilities, 2) multiple influences, and 3) constant evolution, need to be considered when attempting to

understand the cultural identities of ELLs. Figure 1 is a model of BCI development that illustrates how the aspects are integrated within the school context.

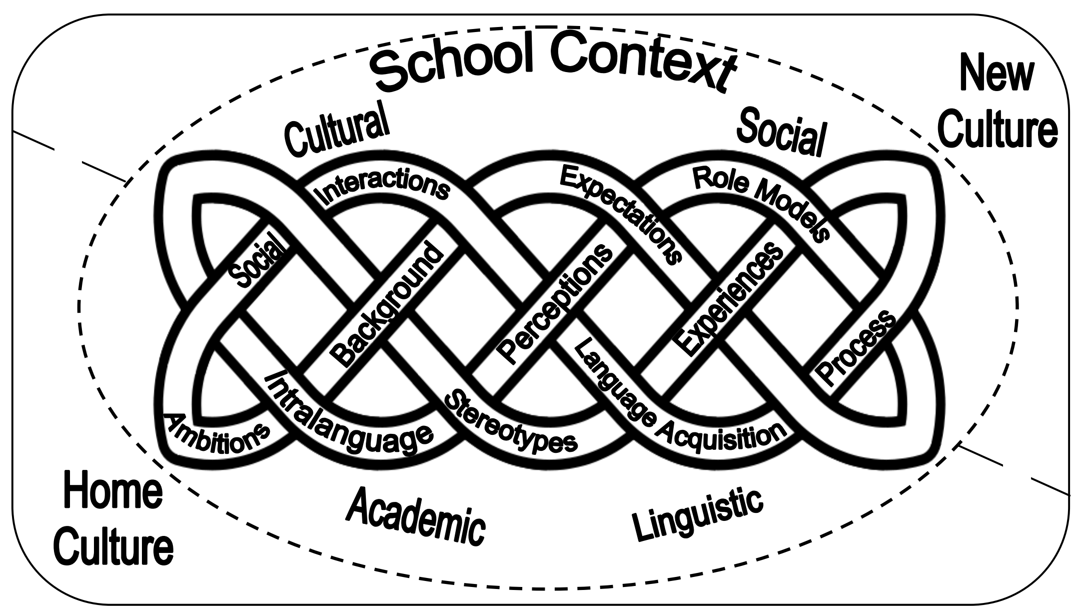


Figure 1: A Model of Bicultural Identity Development in School Contexts

This model was constructed from a review of the literature and a pilot study. The outside frame of the model shows that a learner's understanding of her/his home and new cultures is influential in all aspects of the school context within which she/he operates. For the purpose of this study, the school context is seen as the overarching structure within which the cultural, social, academic, and linguistic components develop. In the school context, each component interacts with the other components of the school context, combining with others to influence identity development. The permeable boundaries between home and new cultures and between the cultures and school context represent the influential relationship between these aspects of identity. Finally, the Celtic knot, which has no beginning or end, contains the multiple influences that can impact an

individual's identity construction and represents the fluidity of components and the constant evolution of an ELL's cultural identity. This model of BCI development grounds this study by providing a visual framework through which to explore the ways school context provides and prevents opportunities as ELLs develop their cultural identities.

Methods

The goals of this project were to gain greater insight into the cultural identity of the participating student and to develop a sense of the contexts within which he was constructing his cultural identity at school. The study focused on a single student and the complexities of that student's functioning within his daily environment. The method of analysis centered on uncovering patterns in both the individual and the contexts within which he operated to better understand how and why the individual operated in the way that he did at school and how and why the school context provided and prevented opportunities for BCI development. This study was bounded by the high school, within which the focus was on the experiences and perceptions of actors who had an impact on the opportunities offered to ELLs.

In conducting this study, I sought to show how the school context provided and prevented opportunities for bicultural development. In looking at an individual in this context, I could extrapolate how these opportunities might influence bicultural development. The following section describes the participants, data sources and findings of this study.

Participants

This study centered around Yu-Ming (a pseudonym), a Chinese immigrant freshman in the ESL program at a high school in a rural Pacific Northwest town. He attended a school of 700 students where he was one of 12 students receiving services in the ESL program. He spent two periods a day with the ESL teacher, who split the rest of her time every day between the middle

and elementary school ESL students in the district. Yu-Ming came to this town three years before the study began. He lived with his parents, while his aunts, cousins and grandparents lived across town. His mother ran a jewelry and décor shop and his father worked at his aunt's restaurant. Yu-Ming's participation in this study was a continuation of his involvement in an exploratory study on cultural identity construction conducted the previous semester.

In addition to Yu-Ming, other participants in this study were chosen because of their importance in and understanding of the school context. Because of the multiple influences that could impact BCI development, it was necessary to include participants representing a variety of perspectives and experiences in the data. Participants fell into three categories. The first category included Yu-Ming's teachers. His ESL, agricultural science, art, and information technology teachers were all interviewed face-to-face about both the school and their experiences working with Yu-Ming. Yu-Ming's math teacher was unavailable for an in-person interview, so an abbreviated interview was conducted over e-mail. The second category of participants included other teachers and school personnel. These participants, including the school principal, a guidance counselor, and two teachers, were interviewed for their input on school contexts. Both of the teachers in this category were chosen because they represented departments, math and humanities, that were not represented in interviews of Yu-Ming's teachers. The third category was students. Six American students were interviewed for this study in order to develop a more complete picture of the school context. Three of the students had attended school in the current district since kindergarten. One transferred from a nearby private school in fifth grade, and two came from another district in seventh grade. Three freshmen, two juniors and a senior were included as participants in the study. The freshmen participants had had classes with Yu-Ming the previous year, or were currently in at least one class with him at the time of the study.

The physical environment of the school included a variety of posters, flyers, and announcements contributing to a language-rich environment. Signs were taped around the school on brightly colored paper advertising a variety of club, social, and sporting events. One in particular advertised a debate to be held on whether the Olympic Games in Beijing, China should be boycott.

Data Collection

I conducted the study over a three month period. The three month timeframe provided adequate time for Yu-Ming to work on a personal video production project and sufficient time to get a snapshot of the school context and Yu-Ming's developing cultural identity.

Within the three month timeframe, I conducted eight weekly 90-120 minute data collection sessions during Yu-Ming's ESL study hall and after school. The focus of the sessions was a video production project during which Yu-Ming organized pictures, narration, music and any other effects in a video about himself. The video production project was conceived of as a way to help Yu-Ming express himself in a less language-based avenue. I designed the activities and tasks during the sessions to help Yu-Ming think about aspects of himself that he would like to include in the video. I employed several data collection sources and techniques to enhance the credibility of this study. During sessions with Yu-Ming, the data collected included seven hours of semi-structured and informal video recorded interviews, conversations, drawings, written tasks, homework assignments, cultural continua graphics, and a culture comparison survey. I also observed Yu-Ming's content courses to glean a deeper understanding of Yu-Ming's academic life outside the ESL classroom. These observations were useful in developing topics for Yu-Ming's interviews and tasks and also extrapolating how his identity might adapt or change to fit different learning environments. I included the field notes from these observations in the data.

These data sources provided insight into the experiences, perceptions, anxieties, and feelings that Yu-Ming expressed toward school.

In addition to the data collection sessions I conducted with Yu-Ming, I videotaped semi-structured interviews with the other participants in the study. Interviews, which are particularly useful in exploring participants' perceptions, expectations, perspectives, and insights (Maxwell, 1996) were used to understand aspects of the school context from a variety of sources including the principal, counselor, teachers, and students. Due to the time constraints of teachers and the comfort level of students, the students were interviewed in groups while the teachers, counselor, and principal were interviewed individually. I videotaped and transcribed verbatim 10 hours of interviews with participants other than Yu-Ming. These interviews explored participants' perceptions, opinions, and experiences with regard to ESL students, the ESL program, and school context. I conducted follow-up interviews with some participants to clarify meanings or expand ideas from the original interviews.

Data Analysis

Because the current study sought to build meaning from the data inductively, the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was chosen to analyze data. This data analysis process results in data collected early in a study being influential in the shape the study takes thereafter. Yin (2003) notes that analyzing data while it is collected is meant "to develop ideas for further study" (120) rather than conclude a study. Since I expected the dual focus on Yu-Ming's experiences and the contexts of the school to uncover both independent and converging patterns, it was important to employ a method of data analysis that provided for an evolution of the research direction as data began to take shape and point to additional participants and themes.

Once categories such as the social and academic components of the school context and themes such as making friends and teaching strategies were identified in the data, salient patterns were uncovered across themes and analyzed in relation to the greater context of the study. Four components within the school context arose from the data as prominent influences on the opportunities available for Yu-Ming to develop his identity biculturally. These were the linguistic, cultural, social, and academic components noted in the model and discussed below.

Findings and Discussion

The findings within these components and their relevant themes are presented and discussed below in light of the model of BCI development that grounds this study.

Linguistic Component

The first component, linguistic, is based on the language attitudes and expectations of school personnel. The data show that language was a dominant influence in Yu-Ming's life and his BCI construction. In line with the overlapping influences of components illustrated in the model of BCI development, Yu-Ming experienced the influence of language across components. Because of this convergence, many aspects of the linguistic component are addressed in the discussions of the cultural, social, and academic components of the school context. The attitudes and expectations of participants toward the use of native languages and English among ELLs formed a pattern in the data and are discussed in this section.

Second language acquisition research supports the continued development of students' native languages as they learn a second language. (see for example, Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 1986). Cummins (1986) and others posit that developing a rich home language increases the rate and accuracy of second language and content knowledge acquisition (Cummins, 1986). Despite

these findings, at Yu-Ming's school the use of non-English languages was seen as detrimental to the acquisition of English and was not encouraged by the majority of participants.

A common theme in the data was participants' expectations that ELLs would use English in all aspects of their lives. For example, a science teacher expressed her disappointment with an ELL when she "caught her reading a Chinese book." The teacher continued, "No wonder she struggles. She goes home and speaks, reads, and writes in Chinese all day long and she only does [English] in class, and so she is really struggling." This teacher was a proponent of speaking English at home as well, saying, "if you're just speaking English to your teacher and you don't even talk to the other kids in your class, you're probably not going to learn it as fast." The counselor also recommended parents speak English to their children in order to foster their linguistic acclimation to the school. "I encourage families to speak in English at home. So, not only do my kids have to be learning English, I encourage parents to be practicing English at home, too." In other words, teacher participants appeared to devalue students' native languages at this school.

Students at the school also appeared to see ELLs' native languages as obstacles to their linguistic and academic progress. One junior said, "I don't like it when people don't speak English . . . I don't understand them, and it's not making anything easier for them because nobody else understands them." Another student had similar concerns about ESL students hanging out with friends with whom they could speak their native language, noting, "They're all connecting with each other. They're not learning the language as fast as they could be if they were to hang out with someone who speaks the English language fluently . . . so they're not really making as much of a progression . . . [to] speak the American language well." In addition

to teachers, students also seemed to devalue ELLs' native language by assessing it as an obstacle to learning English.

The only space in the school where students' native languages were valued and used as a tool for academic and social development was in the ESL classroom. The ESL teacher provided opportunities for content discussion in students' native languages and encouraged them to help each other with science, history, and math homework in their native languages during their ESL study hall. The ESL classroom provided the only opportunity for students to combine their knowledge of two languages to positively affect their school lives. This was the space students had at the school where both their home and new languages were seen as resources and used to help them achieve. Therefore, the ESL room was the place for ELLs to develop aspects of their identity biculturally.

Yu-Ming agreed with the dominant perspective that he should be using English in and out of school. He felt that his language learning process was frustratingly slow. Despite almost total immersion in English at school for three years, Yu-Ming felt his knowledge of English did not improve as it should have. However, while he spent his school day functioning in English, he had little exposure to English outside of school. He said, "At home, we are only three. My parents don't speak English, so I speak Chinese there." After school, Yu-Ming worked out at a local gym or went home. Their TV received only Chinese channels, and Yu-Ming spent no time outside of school with English-speaking peers. He said, "I don't [do] any sport activity . . . so just nothing because I have the home, my grandparents' house . . . and the shop. That's what I can go, nothing else." At the shop he occasionally spoke English with customers, but the shop was going out of business and this opportunity to use English would end when it did. The expectation to speak English in all aspects of life, led him to think twice about sharing his

hobbies, such as playing Internet games, with others because he expected people to think he was lazy for playing games on the weekend instead of studying English. Although he was very interested in improving both his English skills and the rate at which he learned English, he felt his opportunities to use English outside of school were limited. Since he felt he was not improving as he perceived other ESL students to be and was unable to use English at home like he had been advised by well intentioned teachers, he blamed himself for being lazy and not studying more on the weekends to improve his English.

While the acceptance of Chinese in the ESL room allowed for an integration of languages at school for Yu-Ming, the general pattern of both students and school personnel to seemingly devalue the importance of native languages provided little other opportunity for Yu-Ming to develop a positive space for his native language in his school life. In light of Yu-Ming's circumstances, the attitudes toward language expressed in the data provided little opportunity or support for Yu-Ming to successfully integrate the linguistic aspects of both his home culture and American culture in developing a BCI at school.

Cultural Component

The second component of the school context that was salient in the data was the culture. This included both the school culture (the expectations, traditions, procedures, etc. of the school) and the home and new cultures of individual students' at the school. The data demonstrated the ways that these cultures were and were not integrated in the context of the school. As was the case with the linguistic component of the school context, the lack of distinct boundaries between components resulted in some of the cultural issues discussed in the data also holding culture to be influential in the social and academic components of the school context. Cultural themes

arising from the data include ESL student acclimation and the valuing (or non-valuing) of ELLs' home cultures.

Acclimating

The patterns salient throughout the data in this theme were the expectation of students to quickly acclimate to the school and the perception that the responsibility for facilitating the transition fell on others. Adults at this high school recognized that ELLs probably experienced a cultural transition when entering the school. As the principal explained, getting ELLs "acclimated to expectations and the way things happen in our school" was seen as an essential part of an ELL's successful transition. Students acclimating quickly seemed to be especially important. According to the counselor, "they usually acclimate quite quickly, and if they don't then we need to look at if there is a learning disability." Other teachers made the same assertion; students need to be acclimated into the school's culture quickly or be assessed for a learning disability. No teachers made a comment that they should help with the acclimation process. Because of the importance they placed on acclimating, the teachers, principal, and counselor believed it was being addressed and that students were supported through the acclimation process.

The expectations and perceptions expressed by many teacher participants, however, were not compatible with the reality of the ESL program. These participants saw the quick acclimation of students as one of the primary responsibilities of the ESL program at the school. The principal noted that ESL students were seen to come into the school "at a deficit not because of cognitive or intelligence, but because of their language" and cultural understanding. According to the principal and other teachers, the ESL program was there to "help them make that transition" into the school society. Most teachers agreed with the math teacher who said that the purpose of the

ESL program was “to help students for whom English is not their native language adjust, you know, get acclimated into the school.”

In contrast, the ESL teacher said, “I don’t have units on culture, but we talk about things that are different in this high school and their own, but I wouldn’t say I teach culture.” She held that she addressed culture only informally with students as it came up, especially with regard to school holidays. To her, the purpose of ESL was not to help students understand the system so much as improve their ability to function in the language. In other words, the cultural support many study participants perceived to be a primary function of the ESL program was not addressed in any systematic way by the ESL teacher.

According to the data, this process was not being addressed. The consistent pattern found in the data included both an importance placed on student acclimation and a lack of responsibility for assisting in the process. In the model, this situation distorts the balance and fluidity of the central knot of identity by allowing expectations and misinformed perceptions to try to pull cultural identity completely away from the home culture to firmly secure it in the new quickly. However, with no culturally-relevant opportunities to assist students in moving toward the new culture or supporting the home culture, the background, ambitions, and experiences of an individual student may be constricted in a way that separates the home culture from the school context and leaves the individual without access to their past for assistance in acclimating to their new environment. This is a problem because, as the model shows, integrating the influences on identity fosters the development of bicultural identities which the research indicates promote success in schools.

The Value of Home Cultures

As noted above, the dual influences of home and new cultures are essential in the development of a BCI. However, the data present several indicators that although the school attempted to recognize and value students' cultures, the home culture of ESL students was generally not considered at the school. These indicators include a lack of understanding of why students are at the school, a lack of celebrations at the school, and a lack of understanding of both cultures and individuals within the school context.

The first indicator was participants' perceptions of the reasons for the presence of ELLs at the school. As the counselor put it, parents who brought their children here were, "giving their student something that their home culture can't or that their family environment can't." Although this view might describe the situation of some families in this town, it seemed to be contradicted by the ESL teacher's estimation that 90% of the ESL students come to this high school because their parents are somehow associated with a nearby university. In other words, they are generally the children of international graduate students or visiting professors. The perception by participants that the students' home cultures could not provide them with the kind of education they could get at this high school implied a devaluing of other countries' educational systems and/or a misunderstanding of students' backgrounds.

Cultural celebrations were the second indicator of the lack of consideration the school made of other countries' cultures. Participants saw that the school attempted to value the home cultures of students when they were invited to participate in cultural celebrations. The counselor addressed the value placed on students' home cultures when she talked of the educational exchanges that happen in the community. "We have an ebb and flow of which cultures are in our program . . . they're celebrating their uniqueness of their culture and bringing that to us. And our community supports that." She continued "there are cultural celebrations that we're invited to be

a part of, and we're invited to learn about their countries and what their norms are and how they navigate their world." However, these cultural celebrations were not celebrated by or at the school, and there was no indication in the data that anyone from the school actually attended the celebrations. Aside from the presentations students made in some classes on aspects of their home culture, students' cultures did not seem to be of much consideration at the school.

Misguided attempts to value the home culture were also clear in the third indicator, a seeming lack of understanding of cultures and individuals. Most participants talked about the cultures represented at the school. The participants in the study agreed that the school was culturally diverse. According to the counselor, for example, 47 different cultures are represented at the high school, including "Asian," "Hispanic," "Croatian, and Russian." It is interesting to note that dominantly Caucasian countries were separated in this short list of cultures while non-Caucasian regions were grouped together; in the data, rarely did the participants make distinctions between the cultures of students from different countries in Asia or those representing "Hispanic" culture. ESL students were occasionally referred to as Korean or Chinese, but there was not a distinction made between the two by others except by the ESL teacher and Yu-Ming, to whom the differences were great. In fact, on a number of occasions, teachers and students assigned countries of origin to ESL students incorrectly. For example, Yu-Ming's science teacher still thought he was from Korea after having taught him in class for seven months. Similarly, when a student told me that she had ESL students in her statistics class she said, "one is from China, and one is from North Korea." The ESL teacher said that to her knowledge a North Korean student had never attended this school.

Yu-Ming acknowledged this separation of cultures and showed that the separation was a problem in the tasks and interviews he completed during the data collection sessions. For

example, in the task presented in Figure 2, Yu-Ming thought of himself as bicultural to an extent. In this task, Yu-Ming marked where he thought he saw himself in each category and included a percentage label. The left side of each continuum is American (labeled “A”) and the right Chinese (labeled “C”), with the percent indicated by the numbers he included on each continua.

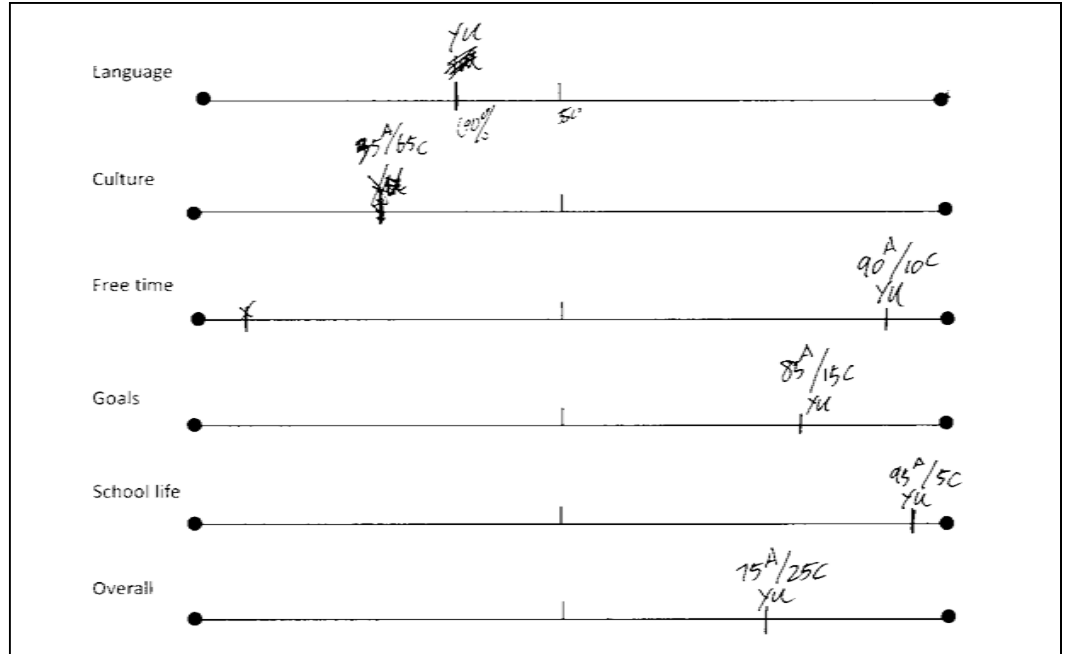


Figure 2: Yu-Ming’s cultural continua task.

Figure 2 shows how he placed himself culturally on various continua. In this exercise, he saw no aspect of his cultural identity as being fully Chinese or American. Yu-Ming occasionally talked about not knowing aspects of Chinese culture, saying “I just know about three years ago the culture, but I don’t know what’s right now. I’m not live there.” He thought his time in America had influenced his identity greatly. When he plotted his perceptions of where he stood between the cultures in the figure, he placed his free time, goals, and school life between 85 and 95 percent American. Overall he considered himself 75 percent American. However, linguistically and culturally, he felt he was still on the Chinese side of the continuum. Interestingly, he wanted to end up with a “50-50 balance” between the two cultures, as research shows is optimal.

However, his life at school, to him, had almost no space for Chinese, which left few opportunities for BCI development.

As the model shows, the concept of BCI construction rests on the ability of individuals to maintain and value both their home and new cultures. It is the integration of aspects of both cultures in an individual's life that helps to foster BCI development and impacts achievement. In the school contexts, this would imply that the home culture, in addition to the dominant culture at the school, should be valued. The data indicated a pattern in the lack of consideration for ELLs' home cultures through an absence of celebration and understanding and a corresponding paucity of opportunities to integrate aspects of the home culture at school.

Social Component

The third component of the school context was social. At the high school, fitting in socially was perceived by teachers and students alike to be of high importance for students. The data show that, this high school was very difficult for Yu-Ming to navigate socially, but he expressed a strong desire to be social and make friends. Five dominant themes arose from the data in this category. They included in-class socializing, the social atmosphere of the school, opportunities to make friends, ESL student peer groups, and knowing how to make friends. The various perspectives on these themes provided interesting insight into the contradictions and obstacles that might normally remain under the surface, but nonetheless made social adaptation difficult for Yu-Ming in this high school.

In-Class Socializing

The model includes the importance of social interactions on individuals' BCI development. However, the data indicate that the social interactions ELLs experienced in the classroom did not transfer to social situations outside of class. For example, in class, data showed that ELLs managed better socially than they appeared to in other areas of school. While a few

students made comments about not knowing the ESL students in their classes “because they don’t really talk, and they don’t even really speak English,” many teachers and students talked about classroom interactions they had with ESL students in a positive light. Yu-Ming’s science teacher described him as a social student; “he talks to the other kids and comes and asks questions a lot.” A classmate of his added that he is “pretty outgoing [and] a lot of people like him. In one of our classes he was kind of like the class clown. . . He’s just cool.” Yu-Ming did not feel that he was as popular as these comments made him out to be, but he agreed that he was more able to talk to people during class than at other times during school. Other ELLs seemed to experience social interactions in class as well. One American said, “I talk to Mi-Son (a Korean ESL student) all the time in PE. It’s great.”

Unfortunately these interactions did not seem to cross over into friendships outside of the classroom. Students offered descriptions of their interactions with ESL students, noting: “During class we chitchat, but that’s about it”; “Usually in class you’re working in groups or just talking up a storm . . . but we don’t really hang out outside of class”; “I’ve never really hung out with any of them outside of class, but in school they’re cool.”

Teachers were also aware of the gap between in-class and outside of class social behaviors. The math teacher expressed her concern that “when they’re in the class with me they interact with others, but when I go out in the cafeteria, it just seems like they are all eating lunch together, not all, but quite often they group together . . . it’s natural, I understand that. I just sometimes wonder, could we be doing more to help?”

Yu-Ming indicated that the social leap from casual in-class chatting to hanging out seemed to be insurmountable. This led to the divergence rather than the convergence of social and academic components of the school context. Yu-Ming often talked about his lack of friends

and asked how people made friends. A number of people in his class would say “Hi, Yu-Ming” in the halls, but there was no ELL or American student with whom he felt he could get a slice of pizza or hang out and watch a movie. The data indicated that social interactions for Yu-Ming were solidly located within the academic component of the school context with very little meaningful overlap with the social component. The disproportionate influence of the academic component over the social would limit Yu-Ming’s ability to develop social opportunities for BCI development at school.

The Social Atmosphere

The next theme in the social component of the school contexts was the social atmosphere. The data indicated that an influential element on social interactions was the social atmosphere in which they occurred. In this school, the atmosphere was defined by contradicting perceptions expressed by participants. Some participants perceived the student body as welcoming while others identified racist and xenophobic tendencies that created a social atmosphere that was difficult for ELLs to fit into.

One perception expressed by participants was of a friendly student body that was welcoming to all. The counselor described students at the school as “very warm to foreign students. Students from different cultures are accepted easily.” Some students agreed, saying that new students could make friends easily if they are “outgoing,” “smile,” and refrain from being “standoffish” or “trying too hard.” These students and some of the adult participants seemed to be fairly certain that making friends was easy at this school. One student described the process of making friends for ELLs this way: “we have a really diversified student body, and so, I’m sure as soon as you get there, the person who can speak both of those languages will introduce you to their friends, and it just snowballs.” Despite these descriptions of the student body, fitting in

socially and making friends was very difficult for Yu-Ming. He blamed his lack of English fluency and his lack of a clear understanding of how to make friends for his social difficulties.

However, contrary to the perceptions expressed above, many participants expressed less positive views of the student body. While participants often described the student body as diverse, one teacher explained that the diversity of the school lies more in socioeconomic status and academic ability; he did not consider the school ethnically or racially diverse. Demographics provided by the counselor and principal supported the perception that the school was not racially diverse. They said the student body was about 80-85 percent Caucasian, 10 percent Asian, with the remainder consisting of African, African-American, Latino and Native American students. One way these demographics played out in the school was racially. One freshman expressed concern for ESL students' coming into the school. He said, "By what I've seen there is a little bit of racism in our school, and I think it is hard for people to come in and make friends and really go through school normally here, and I think the language is a big part of it because people see that they're not speaking their language . . . our language, so they're not really worthy of fitting in."

In addition a science teacher recognized a xenophobic tendency in the student body, saying "The kids (American students) tend to shy away from them (ESL students) because they're not Americanized. They're too different." This aversion to difference was also recognized by others students and cited as a key obstacle to the social progress of a new student, particularly a new ESL student.

Several students expressed opinions that the student body was judgmental and, in general, avoided people who were different. One student said, "You can be outgoing and a nice person, but overall a lot of people are extremely judgmental in high school and that's kind of the way it

is." This student's interview partner added, "We're all pretty outgoing here [at] our school . . .and that's why I think we judge people because if they're not, then we're not going to like them because they're not like us. I know it sounds bad, but . . ." "But it's kind of true," her friend finished. Another student said, "I think they fit in with friends that speak their same language. I'm never mean to them . . . I just think they fit in better with people who speak their language." In a different interview, a student expressed her perceptions of student responses to ELLs this way: "Some people from other countries wear some really awkward things, in my opinion, and people would make fun of that. I don't. I kind of keep my mouth shut because I don't really care, but a lot of people would make fun of that." Apparent in the data was a pattern of expecting ELLs to leave their home cultures behind and adapt to stereotypical American expectations of personality, language, and dress in order to fit in.

Yu-Ming's data showed that he felt the effects of these perceptions. For example, the ESL teacher reported that Yu-Ming was very perceptive and able to tell when people were putting him down. In her assessment, this might have made him less willing to try socially. From his own perspective, Yu-Ming felt that some students were nice, but some students were "very rude." Their rude behavior included talking loudly, saying bad words, and not being nice. Yu-Ming was often greeted in the halls by other students, but American students did not make efforts to befriend him. He often talked of the difference between people being friendly and people being friends. However, Yu-Ming also attributed his social failures to his own inadequacies, including an unclear understanding of how to make friends and a lack of English fluency. Contrasting perceptions of the student body provided by other participants, though, might shed light on additional aspects of the social atmosphere that influenced his lack of social success.

The experiences and perceptions of students at this school indicated a pattern of social avoidance of students who were different. This seemed to contradict the perceptions of some participants that the student body was welcoming and created a social atmosphere that made it easy for ELLs to fit in. The aversion manifested itself in a paucity of opportunities for ELLs to develop a BCI within the school. These experiences and perceptions together with Yu-Ming's own feelings of inadequacy made social failure almost certain.

Opportunities to Make Friends

Similar to the conflict found between the perceptions and experiences of the social atmosphere, the perceptions of the opportunities students had to make friends were not realized in Yu-Ming's lived experiences. From the teachers' and students' perspectives, extracurricular sports and clubs provided a prime opportunity for all students, including ELLs, to make friends. They emphasized that the wide range of clubs and sports, as one student put it "everything from knitting to football," offered something for everyone. Clubs and sports at the school were open to all students and like at many public schools, the sports programs followed a no-cut policy, implying that every student could participate. However, despite the perception of these clubs and teams as spaces for ESL students to begin to fit in socially, both teachers and students expressed doubt that they actually did. Participants mentioned obstacles including ability, language, academic requirements, and cultural differences.

Obstacles—Abilities. Michelle, a high school freshman who participates in multiple sports, told the story of a Chinese student on her basketball team for whom participation in the sport did not lead to friendship, despite Michelle's belief that "all the sports and all the clubs" are good places to make friends. She explained "[Chao] was really really sweet and really nice and everything, but she had a really hard time at basketball because we had to practice with the

varsity and everything, and so they would always get mad at her for not doing it right and stuff like that and so she ended up quitting, which was really sad because she could have had a lot of fun. It's kind of a sad thing, you know, people just make people quit things and not be friends with them." She continued, "it is just harder with high school sports because . . . it gets really competitive in high school and stuff and if you're not good at it, you're going to feel like 'oh, I shouldn't be playing this.' That's probably why some of them (ESL students) have a hard time because I know I'm quitting a sport because I feel intimidated about it. . . That's probably how they feel and that's why they quit too. And that's kind of sad. They're really nice people." Chao's experience seemed to contradict the perception of sports as an opportunity for ELLs to make friends.

Yu-Ming, like Chao in Michelle's story, also felt a level of intimidation about joining clubs. Although he enjoyed drawing, he said he would not join the art club because when people in the art club create something, "people look at it it's very good." He thought art club was a place where "they draw big things with lots of detail." Yu-Ming preferred to draw comics. His drawing skills, he thought, were not good enough for him to join the art club. Yu-Ming was also intimidated about joining the football team because he felt he was not good enough to be on the team, being on the team would negatively impact his school work, and his English skills were too low.

Obstacles—Language. The ESL teacher pointed out that in eighth grade, Yu-Ming enjoyed being on the football team, but he had developed a greater understanding of English, and although he might not understand enough to catch all the plays, he could recognize when other students were making fun of him. According to her, this could be a part of why he chose to abstain from sports in high school. Tyson, a freshman, relayed his knowledge of Yu-Ming's

difficulties on the football team in eighth grade. He had a "very tough time with the language things. I mean, because in football you have to know what play you're running and all that, and [he] didn't understand that." According to Tyson, Yu-Ming was athletically capable. "He could be good, but he just hasn't been able to adapt to the language good enough to play. . . That makes it really hard because I think he was trying to be connected, and just couldn't because it was too hard for him."

Obstacles—Academics. In addition to abilities and language, academics also presented an obstacle to ELLs using sports and clubs as opportunities to make friends According to the ESL teacher, "the goal of the international kids, I think, is to gain English, so clubs are not a priority; sports are not a priority for the majority. It's to get through academically." She continued, "It takes some of these kids twice or three times as long to do assignments." Yu-Ming saw sports as a bad influence on his academic progress. He asserted that he did not belong to clubs at least in part "because I can't finish my work . . . maybe it's not good for your grade. You doing very well in club does not mean you're doing very well in your class." From his perspective, Yu-Ming felt he could not afford to take time away from his academic pursuits to spend trying to make friends. The conflict he perceived to exist between extracurricular activities and academic work was another hurdle to his participation.

Obstacles—Culture. A senior girl expressed concern about clubs being a primary method of making friends for ESL students because "I think it would be difficult for them to just walk into a club and be like 'Hi, I'm here to join the club.'" The humanities teacher offered another perspective on clubs and club culture at the school, talking about Future Farmers of American (FFA), a popular club at this school. He said, "I would love to say to you 'Yes, there are lots of opportunities for ESL students to participate in FFA,' but that doesn't happen because there is a

culture associated with that that is kind of exclusive. Our ESL students do not go to FFA. The opportunity is there, but they simply do not go there. So, we could list all the opportunities, but whether they are real or not is very different." The principal also made vague reference to understanding this distinction when he said "They have all the opportunities obviously that any other student has, and I guess when you say that, you're hoping that they're taking advantage of those."

According to the data, a pattern of obstacles to making friends impacted the social context of the school for Yu-Ming, and thereby his BCI development. The perceived requirements of ability, language, and culture prevented Yu-Ming from taking advantage of what others perceived to be numerous opportunities to make friends. The obstacles associated with participation in extracurricular activities for ESL students, while recognized, did not appear to be addressed by many people at the school. From the data, the clubs and sports at this school were not providing the opportunities for ESL students to fit in socially that they were posited to.

ESL Student Peer Groups

Participants did not express concern that extracurricular activities did not provide real opportunities since participants' general perception was that ESL students chose to hang out with each other rather than make friends with American students. Many teachers made comments similar to that of a math teacher who said, "Our ESL kids are . . . all group together . . . and it is partially themselves doing that because they're going to be more comfortable talking with other people who speak their same language or at least know what they're going through, what they're feeling." A student expressed a similar sentiment when she said, "It seems like they are all friends with each other." However, Yu-Ming's ESL teacher qualified this perception of ELLs choosing to hang out together. She said that some students who have been here longer will

choose to speak their native language with newcomers. However, for newcomers the decision to hang out with other ESL students is not the result of a choice between American students and ESL students, but rather the option of either isolation or other ESL students.

In addition to perceiving ELLs as self-segregating, participants also seemed to express concern that ELLs' tendency to socialize with one another could impede their ability to integrate and socialize with their American peers by inhibiting their language development. A freshman expressed his views this way: "If they're with other ESL students a lot, they're all connecting with each other, they're not learning the language as fast as they could be . . .if an ESL student were to hang out with someone who speaks the English language fluently a lot, I think they'd pick it up a lot faster." Another student added that "talking is what friends do, so it's hard to be friends with someone who can't speak English." This perception, however, did not match some ELLs' actual experiences.

Despite perceptions, Yu-Ming's ESL teacher explained that Yu-Ming rarely hung out with other ESL students. There are no other Chinese males in ESL and both of the Chinese females claimed that they could not understand him when he spoke Chinese (maybe because of dialectical or regional differences in the language). Yu-Ming agreed that he doesn't hang out with ESL students. "The Korea will play with the Korea people and maybe with the America people and for me, I'm not really . . . hanging around with the Korea people. I just have to with the Chinese." Even though he said he could, Yu-Ming did not hang out with the Chinese students often.

While Yu-Ming does not fit the stereotype of ELLs at the school, he was affected by it. The stereotype created the impression for some that he did have friends, ELL friends. The counselor even asserted that other ELLs really took care of him and "protected him from being

left out." However, Yu-Ming felt left out and not a part of any group at the school, saying "I don't really have friends." The general perception that ELLs found peers within their own group cultivated the notion that they self-segregated themselves socially. This notion pushed the social component of the school, for ELLs, into the realm of their home cultures, disconnecting it from the greater school context. Once again a pattern of separating the home and new cultures within the school context was suggested by the data.

How to Make Friends

The final theme in the social component was how to make friends. Making friends was a constant concern for Yu-Ming. He expressed disappointment in his lack of friends and his inability to make friends. Data showed that other students in the school did not seem empathetic to the difficulties some students might have socially. One conversation with three girls showed their perspective on students who don't have friends; according to them, it's all about personal choices:

Junior 1: Most people have a group, but we're talking about people who don't.

Junior 2: These are either people who have no friends because they are mean . . .

Junior 1: Or because they do serious drugs or something.

Freshman: and those people . . .

Junior 1: That's all personal choice. It's *your* choice to do drugs. It *your* choice to be mean.

Freshman: I just think also sometimes people who aren't just mean or don't choose to do hard drugs . . . if they sit by themselves, it's their choice to sit by themselves.

General advice from these students on how to make friends focused on the *newcomer* needing to be outgoing and welcoming. One student asserted, “If you make the effort to make friends, you are *fine*.” The girls above wanted newcomers to be assertive in making friends, but they made a point of saying “I think for the most part, we make the first step” in making friends with new students and “[we] invite people to lunch all the time who are new.” When asked what advice they would give ESL students about making friends, these girls said,

Junior 2: Say “hi.”

Senior: Ya, Smiling is like an overall language. It doesn’t need a specific one, so just be nice.

Junior 2: Ya, you can smile in every language.

Senior: Just being outgoing and friendly, even through you’re in a totally new place and . . . don’t speak [the] language. . . Most people will go out of their way to try and understand you.

The girls’ advice for ESL students on how to make friends at school might not be as simple for ESL students to use effectively as the girls make it out to be. Obstacles the ESL teacher sees for her students include cultural norms such as Asians not being as forward as Americans and their reluctance to walk into groups uninvited.

A number of Yu-Ming’s classmates asserted, however, that he was outgoing and friendly. One said, “I don’t know what it was, but he just started coming to me and trying to figure out things. . . He’s hilarious. He’s just really cool.” The student continued, “he’s definitely social. It’s just a different kind of social.” According to his classmates, Yu-Ming made an effort, tried to be outgoing, and had a good sense of humor, but despite these things, he still maintained “I don’t have any friends.” He asked, “You just say ‘hi’ and that is friends? . . .No.” For Yu-Ming,

friends would “always talk with the friend, go to the class with the friend and maybe go to the party with the friend.” In contrast to his own image of himself, many teachers saw Yu-Ming as a social, engaging, pleasant kid, but from one teacher’s perspective, “he’s nearly given up on making friends with American students.” As the humanities teacher explained, “[this] seems to be a very social school, and for students [who] are really struggling with the English language it can be a very isolating experience as a whole.”

Salient themes within the social component of the school revealed patterns of separation between the home and new cultures. While social interaction with Americans occurred in the classroom, outside of class, students expected ELLs to be Americanized in order to fit in socially. Many participants saw ELLs’ social interactions as self-segregating and rightly located outside of the mainstream social component of the school context because of a perception that ELLs would be more comfortable with students who were like them. Unfortunately, the perception of ELLs befriending one another led some students to believe that ELLs were not making a strong enough effort linguistically to fit in with Americans.

In addition, the data suggested that opportunities for making friends were not real for Yu-Ming. Obstacles related to ability, language, academics, and culture all stood in the way of social participation. While participants recognized the existence of these obstacles, programs to help overcome them did not exist. The obstacles, along with an absence of a systematic approach for dealing with them, resulted in a lack of support at school for the social aspects of Yu-Ming’s BCI development.

Academic Component

The final component of the school context was the academic component. Four themes emerged from the data and contributed to the overall understanding of the academic component of this school for ELLs. The first is the assignment of classes—how and why ESL students are

placed in particular courses. The second theme is the academic expectations of the school and the goals of the students. Third is the various learning supports available at the school. Finally, the teaching strategies employed to help students access content during class is the fourth theme. These four themes are explained below.

Class Placement

Class placements, the first theme, centered on the counselor's perceptions of students' abilities and teachers' abilities and willingness to adapt their teaching. The courses in which the counselor placed ELLs upon enrolling were intended to guide and support their adjustment to American high school life. In the beginning, their courses were determined in large part by their interactions with the counselor, who used the following considerations in her assessment of ELLs: "Are they afraid to talk to me? Are they afraid to make me understand? I don't speak any other language . . . so they have to make me understand. . . That gives a gauge for me as to which classes they're able to kind of jump in and start." In this assessment the counselor, who has no formal ESL training, measured communicative ability and cultural knowledge as much or more than content knowledge and academic language students possessed. For her, students needed to be comfortable in English and assertive enough to make their needs understood in order to be enrolled in the courses that would challenge them academically. Academic challenge was not always part of the decision about where students were placed.

In addition to her interactions with students, the counselor typically considered the experience, teaching styles, and personalities of teachers in placing ESL students: she noted, "I have a couple of science teachers that are very experienced and they do enough lab that they can take non-English speaking kids and . . . take the curriculum that kids bring with them that's a science curriculum and with pictures and with labs help the kids to understand what it would be

in their home country and their native language. . . [Other courses are] entirely visual . . . [ESL students] can do well in the course just by observing, listening.” Teachers who scaffolded students’ learning were more likely to have ELLs enrolled in their classes.

The preference to place ELLs in classes with teachers who employed a variety of teaching strategies resulted in the funneling of “challenging” kids to those teachers. Yu-Ming’s agricultural science teacher claimed that “challenging kids,” including kids with learning disabilities, English language learners, and kids who had difficult lives outside of school, were concentrated in certain classes. These “challenging kids” made up about a third of her students and she welcomed them in her class, but said, “across the hall [the science teacher] doesn’t have a single special ed. kid.” The emphasis placed on teaching styles resulted in a neglect to recognize students’ backgrounds and previous experiences in learning. For example, in science, the ESL students were often initially placed in agriculture science classes because the teacher used strategies that were seen as helpful for students. However, as the ESL teacher pointed out, the agricultural science classes did not allow for previous knowledge to be transferred easily. She explained, “These kids come with very sophisticated lifestyles, big city lifestyles . . . but when I have them learning about the stomachs of a sheep, and they’ve never been on a farm . . . they just don’t relate.” She continued, “a lot of these kids have come with a background in their own country in biology and in physical science and in chemistry and when they have teachers who are not willing to modify and accommodate for their language, it is sad. It really is.” The ESL teacher perceived the problem as “a lack of patience” on the part of some teachers and an unwillingness to work with students who are not fluent in English. Because of this, the students were placed in courses that forced them to make bigger leaps in order to connect what they already knew about science with what they were expected to learn in agricultural science.

The difficulty of reconciling the gap between new and previous knowledge was sometimes compounded by ambiguous expectations of academic performance. The goal of course placements for ESL students coming into the school was, according to the counselor, to "get them comfortable because as soon as they've got some confidence they can navigate any of our classes." She put them in classes where they could "observe their environment." Their classes were "going to help them to acclimate more quickly and understand the system." Unfortunately, some teachers saw ESL students being placed in content courses for the sole purpose of developing English skills. One math teacher said, "I get students in geometry who are placed in geometry to learn English. They actually have higher math skills than that, but because of their limited English, they put them in geometry which is a language-based class. There's so much language." The counselor agreed noting that she sometimes put ELLs in a course "just to listen to the language and the expectation is that they're not going to be able to acquire the knowledge, content knowledge, but they're there to learn how to do conversation. How to navigate the system."

A pattern emerged from the data representative of this theme that indicated a well-intentioned neglect for students' previous knowledge, background, and experiences in learning when placing them in courses. The primary concerns were the willingness and ability of teachers to provide scaffolded information and opportunities to acclimate and learn English. However, the preference for acclimation and English acquisition over consideration of students' backgrounds and experiences disregarded students' individuality as represented in the model and again implied less than optimal conditions for BCI development. Rather than students' individuality, the data suggested that it was the style and strategies of teachers that were considered most important in the placement of ELLs.

Expectations and Goals

In addition to class placements, the academic expectations and goals of students and teachers were a common theme in the academic component of the school. Participants emphasized that the academic expectations and goals of the school were high. Citing the school's close association with a local university, at times referring to the high school as an "extension" or "byproduct" of the university, many teachers asserted similar expectations to that of the counselor who said, "This high school, academically, has huge expectations for our students. All our students." She continued, "National Merit finalists, semi-finalists, commended students, we have a lot." To emphasize the high levels of academic rigor at the school, the counselor said that a third of the junior class, 61 of 180 students, currently maintains a grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

According to the counselor, these high expectations are compatible with the expectations ESL students bring with them from home. In particular, ESL students are seen as valuing and excelling in math. The counselor explained "They do multiple high end math . . . they are pushed harder outside of our system than our students are, so they come in with expertise in math . . . we haven't gotten there yet. They're coming in with higher levels of education there. Better mastery I believe." For some students entering the American school system in high school, this might be true, but Yu-Ming, who completed only the sixth grade before leaving China, was not an expert in math. Although he understood algebraic functions, he barely passed the first semester of statistics.

Learning Supports

When students, like Yu-Ming struggled academically, participants said the school and individual teachers provided support for their learning. Two key supports for student learning

were salient in the data: the learning center and one-one-one help from teachers. Unfortunately, neither support was without problems, either from a teacher or a student perspective.

The Learning Center

Many teachers mentioned the student learning center that operated four days a week after school for 90 minutes. The principal described it as "a gold mine of [university] students who come up with expertise in their area, whether it is math, science, English . . . they come up and work with students." Students also mentioned that university student tutors were available through the counselor's office. A majority of teachers and students mentioned the after school learning center as a place to get academic support, and the students knew about available tutors, However, the students said they did not use it. When asked what they do when they don't understand, students said they asked friends, siblings, and teachers for clarification and help. Only Yu-Ming mentioned the learning center as a place to get help.

In addition, some participants questioned the value of help received there. For example, a humanities teacher reported that "they can do work down there (in the learning center), but I find that really unhelpful for understanding material. It's helpful for getting your homework done, but unless you are working with a group of people that are in the same class. . . that's not really helpful." Yu-Ming made a similar comment, saying that sometimes he finished his homework there but didn't really learn anything. The data suggested that the learning center might not have been as effective at fostering student learning as other supports were.

One-on-One with Teachers

The type of learning support that the humanities teacher and others seemed to prefer was working one-on-one with students outside of class time. Many teachers encouraged students to take the initiative and advocate for themselves by coming in before and after school to get help.

For Yu-Ming, this was not a realistic option because he needed help in all his classes, and he did not have time to go to all of his teachers after school. He could only make it to one class before the other teachers left. A freshman girl mentioned an additional problem with this kind of learning support when she expressed anxiety about admitting to her teacher that she didn't understand: "My science teacher, he's like in the military, so he just has that feel like ___(uncomfortable sound) . . . You can't just walk up to them and be like 'I don't understand this, help me.' It's like they expect you to already know it, and I don't."

The data indicated that an additional problem with this kind of support for ELLs was some teachers' inability to decipher the students' questions. One teacher reported that "if people ask, I can help them" but then admitted that "sometimes they (ELLs) have asked for help, and I cannot understand them." In Yu-Ming's comments about this teacher he said, "Lot of students ask her, and she will tell them, but I just don't get any help in the class." For another of Yu-Ming's teachers, the problem was not his language per se, but the fact that he spoke very quietly. She said, "He comes up and asks questions. He's hard for me to understand not because of his language but because of the volume of his voice." Teachers reported a preference for one-on-one support, but it too was not as effective as some teachers might have wanted it to be.

In line with teachers' preferences, asking for help from teachers was something Yu-Ming did regularly in class; however, his experiences doing this were met with various levels of success. He said his science teacher was too busy and that his information technology teacher did not help. He felt that he had to teach himself. His ESL teacher reported that, on a mid-term evaluation of his information technology class, he wrote, "You don't help me. You don't answer my questions. I raise my hand and you ignore me." In this class, Yu-Ming's attempts to get help were ineffective. Because of the varied results he got from asking questions of his teachers, Yu-

Ming said that he got help for most of his courses from his ESL teacher during his ESL study hall.

Math, on the other hand, was the class that Yu-Ming had to look for help with outside the ESL room because his ESL teacher was often unable to help him with his math homework. He reported that he turned to his cousin if he needed help or sometimes he received one-on-one help from the math teacher. At the semester break, his math class changed from a language-based statistics class, which focused on aspects of statistics such as sampling, to a more numbers-based statistics, which focused on calculations. Once the transition was made, Yu-Ming found math to be easier and he had fewer questions. However, during the first semester, he had asked the math teacher questions, but "because I have to ask a lot of the thing, but not that much time . . . She answered to me, but she can't answer me all the questions."

Despite the difficulty he had experienced with getting his questions answered, Yu-Ming felt it was his responsibility to ask for help if he needed it, and he preferred a one-on-one strategy for getting help. However, he saw a cultural difference in when questions should be asked here and when he would ask questions in China. Yu-Ming said that unlike in America, in China students did not ask questions when the teacher was teaching. For Yu-Ming, this cultural expectation was compounded by the time it took him to decipher the lecture and his inability to grasp concepts in class quickly enough to ask pertinent questions. In addition, the expectation that he come in afterschool for one-on-one help was logistically difficult. Yu-Ming would prefer for teachers to set aside a short time during class, after they were finished teaching, for questions.

To summarize, there were learning supports in place at the school to support Yu-Ming's academic achievement, but they were often incompatible with the time required and his cultural background. As was the case with course placements, the data indicated that teachers'

preferences for one-on-one help was the important consideration in the learning supports provided.

As the model shows, the influences on cultural identity interact and pressure each other in the development of a BCI. While the influence each component wields in the model is not always equal to the others, they are all influential in the development of BCI. However the lack of appropriate supportive focus on academics in this case negatively skewed the academic components' influence, allowing other components to take on stronger roles in Yu-Ming's BCI development.

Teaching Strategies

In addition to providing learning supports to students, many teachers employed strategies in their classrooms to help ELLs comprehend class work better. Some teachers said, and observations confirmed, that they provided multimodal instruction, using visual aids, texts, lectures, and videos to convey concepts and ideas. Others used modeling to help their ELLs understand the process and goals of a project. Additional strategies teachers tended to use to support ELLs in their classrooms were assigning group work, providing class notes, allowing extra time on tests, and allowing electronic translators in the classroom. Teachers used these strategies to various levels of effectiveness for Yu-Ming.

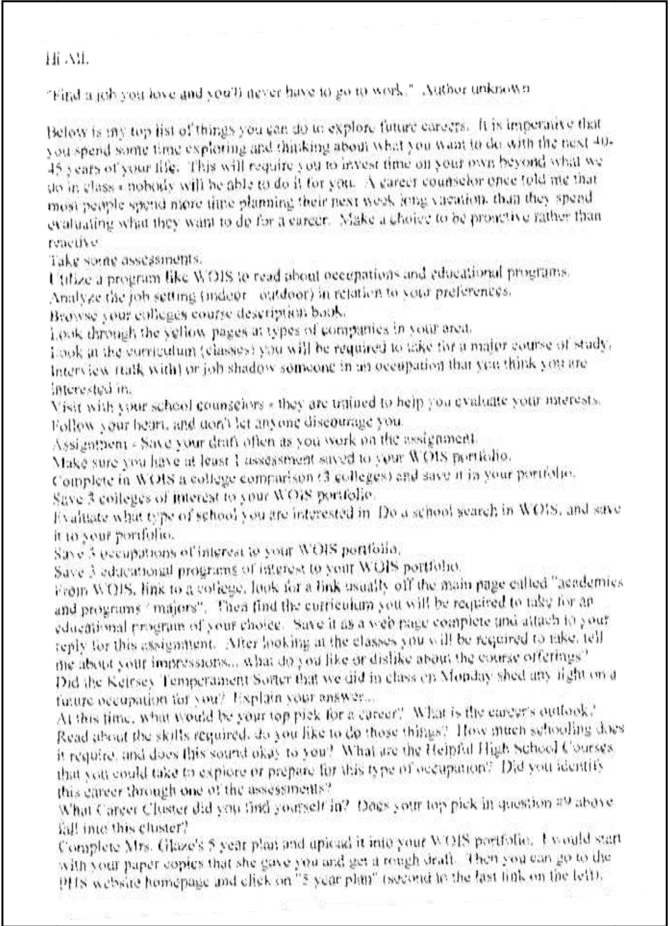
Some teacher participants used group and partner work time in their class as a strategy to foster students' understanding. For example, in the science classes many ELLs attended there were a number of labs where students constructed models or applied concepts to build their understanding. Pair and group work was common during these labs, allowing ELLs to check their knowledge with their peers. One student said about working with ELLs in class, "A lot of times they talk to each other, but if we are assigned partners it's not weird if we have to be

partners. It's just like anyone else." Another said, "The kids I have in my groups usually [participate], but sometimes they're just kind of there, but they're not there. [They are] in their own little world." When asked if he enjoyed working in groups during class, Yu-Ming replied "not yet" because he did not usually understand enough of the lecture to participate like other students, so he could just get the answers, but maybe not learn the information. He was more comfortable working with a partner than a group in class because it was "easier to talk to just one person."

To further support ELLs' learning, some teachers provided them with class notes. This strategy met with various levels of effectiveness for Yu-Ming. His science teacher provided hard copies of the PowerPoint slides that accompanied her lecture. They included all of the visual images used during class and "the important stuff you'll see on a test" was highlighted and underlined. The teacher gave her ESL, special education, and other struggling students a copy of the PowerPoint slides the day she began a unit. She said that she hoped providing the notes helped Yu-Ming understand the concepts by letting him focus on translating words he did not understand instead of trying to write everything down. Yu-Ming found this practice somewhat helpful, but still struggled to understand in his science class.

Like his science teacher, his information technology teacher also used a variety of strategies to help students understand her class. She provided notes to students in her class. The notes were located on the class Web site for all students to access. They included assignments and highlights from the class lectures but did not generally include visual or other aides to assist ESL students in comprehension. A problem this teacher discovered was that despite her regularly encouraging students to "be sure [to] look at the Web site in case you missed something," not all students were aware that class notes were available. According to the teacher, one ELL "said that

he wished things could be written down, but, see, he hadn't comprehended the class notes and my referring to them with his lack of English, and I pointed to them on the Web site, and I hope he can read it, but I don't know for sure." Yu-Ming commented that it was hard to know what was important in the notes because there were so many words. This teacher also sent e-mails to students reminding them of previous assignments and sometimes imbedding assignments in the text. Another problem Yu-Ming experienced was finding the assignment part of the e-mails she sent to the class. An example of an e-mail is provided in Figure 3. It shows the density of text Yu-Ming had to decipher to find the assignment. Providing class notes was a less effective learning support for Yu-Ming in this class as he found the notes and e-mails of little help.



Hi All,

"Find a job you love and you'll never have to go to work." Author unknown

Below is my top list of things you can do to explore future careers. It is imperative that you spend some time exploring and thinking about what you want to do with the next 40-45 years of your life. This will require you to invest time on your own beyond what we do in class - nobody will be able to do it for you. A career counselor once told me that most people spend more time planning their next week long vacation than they spend evaluating what they want to do for a career. Make a choice to be proactive rather than reactive.
Take some assessments.
Utilize a program like WOIS to read about occupations and educational programs.
Analyze the job setting (indoor outdoor) in relation to your preferences.
Browse your colleges course description book.
Look through the yellow pages at types of companies in your area.
Look at the curriculum (classes) you will be required to take for a major course of study.
Interview (talk with) or job shadow someone in an occupation that you think you are interested in.
Visit with your school counselors - they are trained to help you evaluate your interests.
Follow your heart, and don't let anyone discourage you.
Assignment - Save your draft often as you work on the assignment.
Make sure you have at least 1 assessment saved to your WOIS portfolio.
Complete in WOIS a college comparison (3 colleges) and save it in your portfolio.
Save 3 colleges of interest to your WOIS portfolio.
Evaluate what type of school you are interested in. Do a school search in WOIS, and save it to your portfolio.
Save 3 occupations of interest to your WOIS portfolio.
Save 3 educational programs of interest to your WOIS portfolio.
From WOIS, link to a college, look for a link usually off the main page called "academics and programs / majors". Then find the curriculum you will be required to take for an educational program of your choice. Save it as a web page complete and attach to your reply for this assignment. After looking at the classes you will be required to take, tell me about your impressions... what do you like or dislike about the course offerings?
Did the Keirsey Temperament Sorter that we did in class on Monday shed any light on a future occupation for you? Explain your answer...
At this time, what would be your top pick for a career? What is the career's outlook? Read about the skills required, do you like to do those things? How much schooling does it require, and does this sound okay to you? What are the Helpful High School Courses that you could take to explore or prepare for this type of occupation? Did you identify this career through one of the assessments?
What Career Cluster did you find yourself in? Does your top pick in question #9 above fall into this cluster?
Complete Mrs. Glaze's 5 year plan and upload it into your WOIS portfolio. I would start with your paper copies that she gave you and get a rough draft. Then you can go to the PHS website homepage and click on "5 year plan" (second to the last link on the left).

Figure 3: A sample e-mail assignment from Yu-Ming's Information Technology teacher

Another strategy some teachers at the school employed was allowing extra time for students to complete tests. Teachers who used this strategy often sent students' tests to the ESL teacher so students could finish them during their ESL study hall. The ESL teacher helped students understand what test questions asked and clarified meanings for students as they completed tests in her class. Teacher participants indicated that this practice was effective for students if language was the primary obstacle to finishing the test in class. However, if students did not know the content, the extra time did not seem to help them.

Allowing electronic translators was another strategy teachers used to foster learning. Many students, especially those from Asian countries, owned electronic dictionaries that they used to aid their understanding during class. The dictionaries provided direct translations, sample usage, grammar points and more, depending on the model of dictionary students owned. However, as Yu-Ming explained, the translators were really only helpful if you could understand what the teachers said. He said, "The teacher will be like if they talking something and you have to write it down, for the American people, they will know what teacher say, they can take the notes of it, but for me, I don't know how to write it. But some class the teacher will be write it down in the PowerPoint . . . and I can see what this is, so I can to translate to Chinese to my translator so I can see what is this, not just hear the teacher saying and don't know what is." While teachers expected their allowing translators in the classroom to be highly beneficial for ELLs, the data indicate that for Yu-Ming, this strategy alone was ineffective.

All of these strategies can be useful in helping ESL students get more out of their time at school, but despite his teachers making these efforts and adjustments, Yu-Ming said most of what his teachers said went "one ear in, one ear out." He talked about being in class and said, "I'm not mean not listen. Just look at [the teacher] and the teacher will just say [some things] and

some will be understand, some is not. So, if not understand it just pass through." Yu-Ming felt like he was mostly just "spending time" in school, but not learning much. When asked what teachers could do to help him understand more in class he responded similarly to some of the teachers: "For right now, I think I have to work better, harder, so I will understand the teacher talking. It's not the teacher's problem, it's my problem." As the data indicate, Yu-Ming saw himself as a failure linguistically, socially, and academically.

The ESL teacher recommended simple solutions to help teachers foster learning for ESL students. She advised teachers to focus assignments for ELLs on essential information, so they don't get bogged down in pages of questions. She also recommended that teachers slow down their speech and repeat important concepts "because processing, translating their language into English takes time." She said, even this, for some teachers, was asking too much. "We have an impatience . . . an inability to adapt by teachers to accept students who don't all speak English, and they are unwilling to work with them." The principal explained that it comes down to an attitude: "It needs to be all of our responsibility [to educate ELLs], not just the little ESL room." He added, however, that when some teachers would come up against a barrier with an ESL student they would say "go work with the ESL teacher." They think "you're the one with the language barrier, not me. . . everyone else in class is getting it." The ESL teacher explained it this way: "there are some teachers who cannot see behind that language that there is a mind in there."

This situation was only partially created by the teachers. Part of the problem arose from Yu-Ming's lack of academic English skills. Yu-Ming did not have the academic skills to help himself understand and show teachers what he knew. The ESL class covered the four traditional skills of language, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but not learning strategies associated

with these skills. For example, reading textbooks and note-taking were not part of the curriculum. Language acquisition was central to the ESL curriculum, with specific emphasis placed on academic language, but using the language they learned in ESL to read, write, speak, and listen academically in other courses was not covered. When combined with teachers not taking responsibility, Yu-Ming's lack of academic strategies made the outlook for success bleak.

While a handful of teachers tried to employ teaching strategies that would help ELLs understand and succeed in their classes, a pattern in the data relevant to teaching strategies uncovered a prevalent attitude that content teachers were not responsible for the ELLs in their classes. One teacher commented on the situation by saying "you can integrate them (ESL students) . . . but if there is nothing in place to help them when they get back to the ESL room, then [they] fall through the cracks," implying that it was not her responsibility to provide that help. A math teacher's experience at the school underscored this idea, as she added that "we all know that we have ESL students, but so often, we don't know what to do." She continued, "the classroom teachers often don't feel prepared, don't know how to help." One teacher described the learning situation for ELLs at the school as "a bucket with holes in the bottom." Despite or maybe because of the teachers not knowing how to deal with ESL students in their classes, the principal argued that "we [have to] get to the place where it is the responsibility of the regular ed. teacher to be just as involved with the ESL student and coming up with those strategies to deal with that, just as involved as the ESL teacher." The ESL teacher made a similar statement, saying "they are not *my* students . . . They are a whole school's students; they belong to the whole school. There is a responsibility by everyone to try to take care and guide them." While the data indicated that content area teachers were not taking responsibility for the ELLs in their

classes, the data also suggested that a lack of knowledge and experience, rather than unwillingness, accounted for much of the neglect.

Overall, the data indicated that academic shortcomings in attempting to meet ELLs' needs were a result of misinformed or uninformed perceptions. In addition, the cultural identities of individual students were not considered in academic decisions. Instead, the preferences and styles of teachers were more influential in the decisions made with regard to courses and supports offered to ELLs. Unfortunately, the neglect of ELLs' individuality as learners did not allow them opportunities for BCI development within the academic component of the school context.

Limitations of the Study

While limitations of the study exist, they do not suggest a lack of validity for the current study, but rather a path for the future of research on cultural identity development and ELLs. The limitations of this study include generalizability and breadth, discussed below.

A limitation of the research presented here is that the lived experiences of this ELL are not fully generalizabile to all ELLs in the U.S. Due to the uniqueness of individuals, they are not even generalizable to other Chinese immigrant high school freshmen. While findings of this study could inform contexts in other schools with other students, those contexts and students, like the student and context in this study, are unique. Therefore, generalizations should be made with careful consideration of the contexts and opportunities described here in light of the unique environment one is seeking to inform.

This study was also limited in some ways by the scope of the case. A focus on one student was desired and provided valuable, in-depth information concerning his perceptions of opportunities and how he saw himself. The dual focus of this study on a single student and the

school context provided a unique opportunity to see how the two interact. However, the exclusion of other ELLs' perceptions and experiences in order to gain greater depth of understanding with one was a limitation of the study.

Conclusions and Implications

Future Research

Future research on the model of BCI development can take a variety of paths and is informed at least partially by the limitations of this study. The first path for investigation is the applicability of the model to a more diverse range of students. In-depth research on ELLs representing different backgrounds and varied educational settings is needed to gain a better understanding of the complexities of BCI development and its implications for policy and pedagogy. Whether additional influences should be added to the model is another aspect of the model for future research to address. More research is needed to understand how the contexts and opportunities influencing the ELL in this study also influence other ELLs. Finally, a programmatic approach to analyze the effects of one context on multiple students could help provide a greater understanding of the ELLs in a particular school environment. A longitudinal study of the ESL program as a whole could provide a more holistic view of the experiences of all ELLs in a specific program and the effects of school contexts over time.

Pedagogical

Based on data from the study, there are steps schools can take to foster academic growth through the nurturing of the BCI development of ELLs. In order to provide opportunities that the model suggests are essential to fostering BCI development, the school can build more awareness

and provide resources for teachers, ELLs, and other students. These two suggestions are discussed below.

Efforts to gain greater awareness can focus on a variety of areas including the ESL program goals, responsibilities of content teachers, second language acquisition, and individual students to support the success of ESL students at school. Some strategies could require considerable amounts of both time and money. However, teachers can be made aware of ESL program goals through a summary of what the ESL program does and does not cover. Providing teachers with a greater awareness of the parameters of the ESL program will also help identify responsibilities for content teachers with regard to their ESL students.

Cultivating a greater awareness of second language acquisition theory and practice can help teachers to become more informed about the language acquisition process and teaching strategies. To foster BCI development, teachers could learn ways to use the home language of an ELL as an asset in learning English and content knowledge. For example, this could be done by matching willing native language partners when enrolling ELLs in classes. They could also participate in training that focuses on strategies for making information accessible for language learners, such as providing written notes and visual aids. Providing this kind of training and holding teachers accountable for teaching all learners in their classes might result in ELLs being able to take classes that allow them to more easily incorporate their previous knowledge, background, and experiences in their learning in their new school context.

Awareness of student experiences also needs to be fostered. School personnel need to gain better insight into the actual experiences of individual students rather than relying on general perceptions. In addition, students need support in understanding obstacles to social acceptance and to be involved in the process of eliminating them. One way to do this would be to

form a leadership team of students, teachers, counselors, coaches, and administrators who represent different groups and departments in the school. The team would assess concerns about the school and collaborate on developing and instituting solutions.

Developing these kinds of strategies provides ELLs with an authentic opportunity to bring their home cultures into their school lives. However, they also need authentic resources and supports to help them understand and access opportunities that are available at the school. For example, if clubs and sports were meant to be the prime avenue to social success for ELLs, then they need to be evaluated for how other components of the school context influence the accessibility and effectiveness of these programs for ELLs. The data indicate that these opportunities were not compatible with Yu-Ming's needs. It might benefit the school and its international population to make other avenues to social acceptance available. The school could maintain the current focus on clubs and activities as a means of integrating ELLs and others socially, but a system of informing students and inviting participation needs to be developed.

In addition to developing resources Yu-Ming and others can use to become informed and more inclined to engage socially, ELLs need to be provided with strategies that help them academically. For example, while the ESL room provides an essential safe haven for ELLs to be themselves, it needs to also provide them with more strategies on using their language skills to get the most out of their classes. Introducing learning strategies such as scanning, as well as social strategies such as small talk, that help ELLs apply language they have learned to other courses and social situations into the ESL curriculum could help them understand their lectures, labs, and peers. The ESL room needs not only to be a place where Yu-Ming can be, but one where he can grow.

These are only a few recommendations for increasing the opportunities for BCI development in ELLs. By engaging with ELLs and understanding their needs and concerns, schools can begin to adapt their contexts to better fit the needs of ELLs. This could take away some of the pressure on ELLs to assimilate completely into the school and give them more opportunities to adapt to their new environment while maintaining a respect and value for their home culture and language. Providing ELLs avenues to develop their cultural identity in this way could help them develop bicultural identities that lead them to greater academic success.

Conclusions

The data in this study indicated that participants were trying to adapt the school environment and provide opportunities to support ELLs. They had good intentions and wanted to see ELLs succeed as they navigated the various components of the school context. However, their views of the particular opportunities or strategies were often assumed to be positive, but they were not really evaluated or examined for effectiveness. While some teachers thought they were providing adequate and appropriate assistance, or that assistance was available elsewhere in the school, the data indicated that this was not the case.

The contradicting assumptions and reality arose at least partially from a lack of communication between teachers and students. While teachers hoped or assumed programs and strategies were useful and available to ELLs, talking with Yu-Ming would have shown that for him, they were not. Linguistically, culturally, socially, and academically, Yu-Ming could not or did not access opportunities that others believed were provided and used. The data suggested that personnel failed to assess the accessibility, appropriateness, and overall effectiveness of perceived opportunities, supports, and assumptions meant to foster ELLs’ acclimation and learning. This resulted in Yu-Ming not recognizing opportunities and supports as such and

therefore being unable to take advantage of them. Instead he often found his own way to get by, but he was unable to excel because of the lack of support.

Teachers and others did provide some support, but the level or type of support was insufficient to meet Yu-Ming's needs. Because he did not receive the support he needed in any component of the school context, opportunities for his BCI development were absent from his school life. In addition, assumptions and expectations of school personnel indicated a strong preference for complete assimilation to the school and failure to recognize the benefits of BCI development. The combination of these expectations and a lack of systematic support to meet them left Yu-Ming perceiving himself as a failure in most respects. Other participants also recognized his lack of success in school. As the model implies, the emphasis of some components and influences (e.g., new culture and perceptions of others) and neglect of other components (e.g., students' backgrounds and experiences) limit the way influences can function together to support the needs of an individual ELL. This was the case for Yu-Ming who was unable to negotiate opportunities for his own BCI development within the school context.

Nationally, ELLs' failure to excel in school or even to meet grade level expectations is clear. This study underlines the importance of understanding cultural identity and the way it is constructed by ELLs in order to better understand the needs of this population of students. Teachers, administrators and other school personnel would benefit from a greater understanding of how ELLs are and are not able to access opportunities for BCI development in school. Exploring the opportunities available at a school and their influences on ELLs can help schools become supportive environments for students' BCI development and in turn foster their success.

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