Building quality ESL programs: two Central Iowa case studies

Shaeley Q. Santiago
Iowa State University

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Building quality ESL programs: Two Central Iowa case studies

by

Shaeley Quinta Santiago

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has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signature redacted for privacy

Major Professor

Signature redacted for privacy

For the Major Program

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For the Graduate College
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION
- Background on ESL Education
  - ESL in Iowa
  - Immigration in Iowa
- The Role of School-Community Partnerships
- Objectives of the Study
- School Districts Studied
  - Perry
  - Urbandale

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW
- History of LEP Education in the U.S.
  - Legal Background
  - Funding
  - Program Types
- Demographic Information
  - Immigration to the U.S.
  - LEP Students Across the U.S.
  - Midwestern Immigration
  - LEP Students in Iowa
- Struggles and Challenges for Immigrant Students
  - Acculturation Processes
  - Socioeconomic Level
  - Social Support and Network
  - Educational and Employment Background
  - Language Proficiency
  - Immigration Status
  - Social/Political Standing in Mainstream Culture
  - Resource Perspective vs. Cultural Deficit Perspective
- Effective Practices for LEP Education
- Critical Factors for Building School/Community Relationships
  - Parent-School Relationships
  - School-Community Partnerships

## CHAPTER 3. METHODS
- Sample Population
- Data Collection
  - Observations
  - Interviews
  - Documents
- Analysis of Data
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Description of the Cities in the Study

Perry
Urbandale

Characteristics of the ESL Programs

Student Population
Type of ESL Program
Personnel and Resources for ESL

Attitude of the Educational Community

Administrative Support

Perry
Urbandale

School Vision

Perry
Urbandale

Welcoming Environment

Perry
Urbandale

Attitudes of the Larger Community

Perry
Urbandale

Role of the ESL Personnel in Affecting Attitudes

Parent Opinions about Community Support

Perry
Urbandale

Suggestions for Other ESL Programs

Focusing on the Positives
Publicity
Serving as Advocates for ESL Students
"An Attitude of Gratitude"

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings
Limitations
Recommendations for Future Research

APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

APPENDIX B. CONSENT FORMS
 CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION  

Background on ESL Education  
In recent years, increasing research has been related to Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in the public schools. This is due in part to a growing awareness of LEP students as their numbers increase not only in areas such as California and Texas which have traditionally had LEP students, but also across the nation (Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, 1990). In particular, Midwestern states such as Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska have seen a large increase in LEP students in the past ten years (Mithen, 1999). In Iowa, the increase has been dramatic, with an overall increase of nearly 77% in the number of ESL students who qualify for additional state funding in Iowa public schools from the 1993-94 school year to the 1998-99 school year (Iowa Department of Education, 1999).  

ESL in Iowa  

The needs of these students are sometimes quite diverse. In Iowa, the largest number of LEP students are Spanish speakers (60% in 1998-99) with Vietnamese, Bosnian, and Laotian the other native languages spoken by more than 5% of LEP students (Iowa Department of Education, 1999). Besides native language difference, students can also be differentiated on the basis of why their families are in the U.S. (Flores, 1996). In Iowa, three basic categories are apparent: parents who are in graduate school, parents who are refugees, and parents who came for jobs (economic reasons). When the parents are graduate students, the ESL students tend to learn English very quickly in part because they
have a strong educational background and receive support from their parents. When the parents are refugees, the families work hard to become a part of the community. Educational backgrounds of the students vary depending on the situation of their home country, but the parents are often well educated and supportive of their children's education. When the parents come to the U.S. for work, they are often leaving behind poor living conditions. In many cases, the students do not have a strong educational background and the parents themselves may have a lower educational achievement. Although the parents want their children to receive a good education, there are often language, cultural, and social barriers which limit parental support in this group (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).

Often, the problems of ESL students from immigrant families become even more pronounced at the secondary level. Minicucci and Olsen (1992) list several reasons that secondary immigrant students struggle based on their study of LEP programs in California. School attendance is a problem because teens are often expected to work or care for younger children to help the family get by. Frequent moves are also common as the parents follow job availability or in the case of undocumented immigrants, move often to keep from being exposed to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The new culture and language of the school often produces culture shock for immigrant teens. Although this is a problem for any newly arrived ESL student, it is even more difficult for teens who are usually already accustomed to a completely different system of education and who are already struggling with issues of adolescence. Another problem for new immigrants is that they enter the school with a very low social standing in many cases (McCarty First & Willshire Carrera, 1998; McLeod, 1994; Minicucci & Olsen, 1992). Sometimes, anti-
immigrant sentiment is so strong that students may be subjected to violence because of their racial group (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992).

Immigration in Iowa

Although racially-motivated violence has not been a problem in Iowa schools, recent mass media ads on television and radio highlight the existence of anti-immigrant sentiment in Iowa. The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), who sponsored the ads, cited a decline in "quality of life" in some Iowa cities which have experienced a large influx of immigrants in recent years. The ad mentioned increases in crime, additional public school costs, and overburdening of medical services as examples of the decrease in quality of life (Dukes Lee, 2000). Response was mixed with some television stations and newspapers eventually pulling the ads because they were seen as "inflammatory and misleading" and "bordering on the outrageous" (Dukes Lee, 2000; p. 1A).

Renewed efforts to pass English-only legislation can be seen as another sign of negativity toward immigrants. In the spring of 1999, the Iowa Senate passed an official language bill. The House narrowly defeated the bill later that year. Several counties in Iowa have already passed English-only resolutions, though (Siebert, 1999). Some feel that an English-only bill sends a message to immigrants that they are not welcome in Iowa unless they already speak English (Buttry, 1999). However, political leaders including Former Governor Terry Branstad and current Lt. Governor Sally Pederson have recognized the economic benefits of immigration to Iowa (Rood, 1999; "Welcome to Iowa", 1999). Like many other Midwestern states, Iowa has a shortage of workers. Immigrants provide a much needed source of labor which has helped maintain economic and population growth in
Iowa (Bolten, 2000; Buttry, 1999; Rood, 1999; “Welcome to Iowa”, 1999). So, there are mixed attitudes toward immigrants in Iowa.

Indeed, Iowa has experienced an increasing minority population in the past few years. Iowa was in the top ten states for percent increase in immigration from 1995-1996 with a 34% increase (“An increasingly diverse,” 1999). Although many minorities tend to settle in urban areas, there are an increasing number of Hispanic and Asian minorities settling in smaller communities. Some researchers suggest that this trend may be related to job opportunities in the meat packing and processing industry (Grey, 1999). In Iowa, the top employer of immigrants is food and kindred products with retail trades, services, and other manufacturing as other major employers of immigrants (Huffman & Miranowski, 1996). The result is small towns, particularly those with meat packing plants, experiencing big changes in their population demographics (Beaumont, 1999). In some cases, the communities are open and accepting of minority families, but in other cases resentment and negative feelings abound.

These kinds of feelings have an impact on the school environment for LEP students. Flores (1996) hypothesizes that the mainstream teachers often reflect the feelings of the community toward the ESL students. In her study on the needs of ESL and mainstream teachers in Iowa, she found that ESL teachers are concerned about the attitudes of mainstream teachers, administrators, and the community toward the LEP students. Many times the negative attitudes arise primarily out of ignorance or misunderstanding about the needs of LEP students and their families. Sometimes ESL teachers can work to alleviate these feelings. For example, Flores cites one situation where an ESL teacher took an active
role in promoting the cultures of her ESL students. The result was a greater appreciation for their backgrounds and increased support from the community for them (Flores, 1996).

The Role of School-Community Partnerships

Researchers have noted the importance of community partnerships and the involvement of parents for student success (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Epstein, 1987; McGroarty, 1998). Some researchers go so far as to say that parental involvement is a key component for an effective program for non-native speakers (Lucas, Henze & Donato, 1990; Mace-Matluck, Alexander-Kasparik, & Queen, 1998). School-parent partnerships have become common as educators have realized the role parents play in the education of students. Yet, forming partnerships with parents of LEP students can be very difficult. Besides the language barrier, cultural differences, including parental expectations about the role of schools, can negatively affect parental involvement (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; McGroarty, 1998). In addition, teachers often lack training for developing partnerships because many teacher education programs do not deal adequately with this topic (McGroarty, 1998). Iowa mainstream and ESL teachers are also concerned about this issue and ranked effective communication with students and parents as the most useful area of knowledge (Flores, 1996). August and Hakuta (1998) suggest that this challenge requires specific research efforts:

Involving families of English-language learners and engaging community resources on their behalf pose special challenges for schools. More focused research is needed to provide information about the challenges to such involvement and engagement, the potential benefits, and successful approaches. (p. 86)
Although guidelines are readily available for successfully involving LEP parents, not much literature exists about actual programs (Olsen et al., 1994).

In some cases, this idea of partnership with parents has been extended to include a collaboration with community organizations, particularly those that serve youth and families (McGroarty, 1998). This is an area of partnership that is probably even more underdeveloped than parent-school partnerships (Adger, 1996). The challenges for such partnerships can be even greater than the challenges of encouraging parental involvement in schools.

Connecting schools and outside organizations . . . may be particularly problematic when the goal is immigrant education and society is experiencing anti-immigrant sentiments and actions. In an atmosphere that is often filled with rancor and distrust, schools and the organizations they collaborate with may need to work hard to develop trusting and productive relationships. (Adger & Peyton, 1999, pp. 220-221)

Certainly the attitudes of the community play a role in how easily partnerships between the school and community can be established. Again, few studies have been done on successful school-community relationships, particularly in the context of programs which benefit LEP students (Adger, 1996). This study will look at schools in two different contexts which are successfully building ESL programs, including some of their strategies for gathering community support.

Objectives of the Study

The following research questions were investigated to see how the districts have faced the challenges and to provide a greater understanding of how partnerships can be built within the school and the community.
1. What are the characteristics of the ESL programs at these two schools in terms of a) the population they serve, b) the type of ESL program in the school (pull-out, sheltered instruction, etc.), and c) the personnel and resources designated for the ESL program?
2. What is the attitude of the educational community (mainstream teachers, school administrators, support personnel, etc.) to the presence of the ESL students and their families?
3. What is the attitude of the larger community (business leaders, city officials, service organizations, local charities, etc.) to the presence of the ESL students and their families?
4. What attempts, if any, have ESL personnel made to affect these attitudes?
5. Do ESL parents and students feel support from the school and the community? How has this helped or hurt the educational experience of the students?
6. What implications can be drawn for future ESL planning in the state?

School Districts Studied

In an attempt to better understand the challenges school districts with rapid LEP growth are facing and the process of building relationships between the school and the community in support of ESL students, I studied two central Iowa communities, each of which has seen a relatively large infusion of LEP students in the last decade. A brief introduction to the two cities is provided below, with a more detailed description in Chapter 4.

Perry

Perry, Iowa is a small but growing town founded in northwestern Dallas County. Since its beginning in 1869, Perry has been primarily an agricultural town, although the town’s history can be traced back to the railroad. Agriculture is still an important industry in Perry. However, Perry also has a strong industrial base including IBP, Inc. (formerly known as Iowa Beef Packers, Inc.), a pork processing plant.
With the arrival of the IBP plant in 1989, Perry experienced a tremendous growth in its Hispanic population. Consequently, the school system has also had a rapid growth in the number of ESL students in the district. Perry is a rural town with a relatively low median income. Yet they have managed to provide ESL services for a growing number of students.

**Urbandale**

Approximately twenty-five miles to the southeast of Perry is the Des Moines suburb of Urbandale. Located on the western side of Des Moines in Polk County, it is bordered by Clive, West Des Moines, and Johnston. Urbandale has experienced rapid growth since the construction of Interstates 80 and 35 around Des Moines in the early 1960's (Long, 1988). Per-capita income in Urbandale is higher than the state average (*Des Moines City Directory*, 1996). As in Perry, industry plays an important role in the Urbandale economy with several industrial parks in the city. Urbandale has also experienced a shift in demographics as more minority families move into the city. Along with the increase of minorities, the Urbandale school district has seen a large increase in its ESL population during the past decade (Jones-Vo, Fairbairn, & Frohock, 1999). The majority of ESL students in Urbandale are Bosnian refugees who are sponsored by various organizations or individuals. Urbandale has also been successful in providing services for a growing number of students.

Although these two Central Iowa cities are located very near to each other and have an increasing number of ESL students, the composition of their ESL students (primarily Bosnian refugees in Urbandale and Hispanics in Perry), the differing economic status, and the population of the cities make them unique. Both cities are worthwhile to study, though, because they have successfully dealt with the rapid growth of their ESL programs.
Characteristics of the two ESL programs will be identified in this study that might benefit superintendents, school administrators, and ESL teachers who are facing an increasing number of ESL students.

The descriptive nature of this study will provide a useful picture of the two ESL programs and their environments for school personnel, teacher training institutions, and the Iowa State Department of Education. This is particularly useful since certain districts are unprepared for the sudden growth in LEP students. Unlike states such as California which has a long history of educating LEP students and spends a great deal to do so, states such as Iowa may be less prepared on several levels. How have districts met this challenge and what are the implications for what we know will be a growing LEP population in this state?

Upcoming chapters will provide more background on the education of immigrants while making connections with the two case studies conducted in central Iowa. Chapter 2 will provide a brief overview of the history of LEP education in the U.S., report demographic information about immigrants and ESL students with a focus on Iowa, discuss struggles and challenges that are unique to immigrant students, and review critical factors for building school/community relationships. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of this study. Chapter 4 is a report of the findings from the study including a description of the two ESL programs. Chapter 5 discusses the findings with a focus on factors that will be helpful for other schools trying to build stronger community support for their ESL students in the future. Topics for future research are also suggested.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter surveys the literature on the education of LEP students and factors important for their school success. It begins with some background and historical information on the legal requirements for LEP education and types of LEP programs. Next, demographic information is presented including U.S. immigration figures, characteristics of LEP students in the U.S., immigration to the Midwest, and LEP students in Iowa. Then the focus shifts to the challenges and struggles unique to immigrant and refugee students, key characteristics of effective programs for LEP students, and research on school/community relationships.

History of LEP Education in the U.S.

Legal Background

The education of LEP students has a similar beginning as bilingual education. Although bilingual education and native language instruction have existed in the U.S. since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, support for bilingual education as we know it today dates back only to the 1960's (Cortes, 1986). The Civil Rights Act of 1965, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1968 (also known as the Bilingual Education Act), and the Supreme Court case Lau v. Nichols provide the legal foundation for both bilingual and LEP programs (Faltis, 1993; McKay, 1993). The legal requirement is that students who are not yet proficient in English (Limited English Proficient) must be provided with comprehensible instruction to aid in their English language development. The goal is to prepare students for regular school
activities by giving them access to core content while increasing their English language proficiency (Lucas & Schecter, 1992; Peregoy & Boyle, 1997).

**Funding**

Funding for ESL programs from the federal government comes mainly through Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (McKay, 1993). Schools sometimes use money for ESL from other federally funded programs for disadvantaged children (such as Chapter 1 money for poorer districts). However, studies indicate that some schools do not use other funds for LEP students because they mistakenly believe students who already participate in special programs like ESL cannot receive funds from other special programs like Chapter 1 (McLeod, 1994). Since public education is regulated primarily through the states, individual states also have programs for funding ESL. However, funding for all students varies widely both between states and within states with schools in poorer areas often receiving less money than those in richer neighborhoods (McLeod, 1994b). Yet all ESL programs need funding in order to adequately meet the needs of LEP students.

In Iowa, schools receive special funding for LEP students at a rate of .14 above the regular funds per student in the district. However, the special funding is limited to three years regardless of the number of years a student is classified as LEP (Bolten, 2000b). In 2000, an Iowa legislative committee proposed increasing the amount of special funding for LEP students and extending the number of years of availability from three to four (Bolten, 2000a). According to research, though, many students need five years or more to achieve academic proficiency in English (Cummins, 1979), so three or even four years’ funding is often insufficient time to meet the academic language needs of LEP students. The result is
that sometimes students continue receiving ESL services even though they no longer qualify for special funding from the state, forcing schools in Iowa to use money from the general fund to cover the expenses of ESL programs (Bolten, 2000b).

**Program Types**

Although schools are required to provide special instruction for LEP students, the kind of instructional program is not defined. Therefore, a range of program types exist in schools around the country. In schools with larger groups of students from the same language background, transitional bilingual programs are more common. A transitional bilingual program provides instruction in the students' native language for one to three years while working to develop English language proficiency. Proficiency in English is the ultimate goal, but literacy in the native language is used as a foundation for English proficiency and continued learning of core content (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). However, a National Education Association study found that only about 6% of all K-12 LEP students were in transitional bilingual education programs during the 1989-1990 school year (Faltis, 1993). Although bilingual education was the preferred method of meeting the legal requirements for LEP education in the 1970's, increasingly diverse language backgrounds of students made bilingual education nearly impossible for many schools (Cornell, 1995). The result was the creation of special alternative instructional programs (SAIPs) which help students develop English proficiency through a variety of methodologies including ESL (Cornell, 1995).

ESL programs, which do not provide instruction in the students' native languages, are predominant today, particularly in areas where students' native languages are diverse.
Several varieties of ESL programs exist. Pull-out programs take students from their regular or mainstream classes for short periods daily to help students develop their English language proficiency (Faltis, 1993; Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). Sometimes core content is also reinforced, but the major goal is to develop the students' English. Sheltered English is another type of ESL program which does cover grade-level subject content in English. Teachers use supportive instructional techniques to ensure that LEP students understand the content and develop their English proficiency (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). Flores' (1996) study of Iowa programs found that pull-out programs are the most popular type of ESL in Iowa although they may not be the most effective program type (Thomas & Collier, 1995).

**Demographic Information**

**Immigration to the U.S.**

In the past two decades, the United States has experienced a major wave of immigration. Like the wave of immigration from 1880-1930, this wave is affected by economic and political conditions around the world. Differing conditions in the late 1900's are reflected in the fact that more than 80% of the immigrants to the U.S. come from Asian and Latin American countries while 75% came from European countries in the previous immigration wave (McLeod, 1994; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). Census figures from 1990 show that the number of Asian and Pacific Islanders has doubled (from 3,500,439 in 1980 to 7,273,662 in 1990), and Hispanics have increased by 53% (from 14,608,672 in 1980 to 22,354,059 in 1990) making them the second largest minority group in the U.S. (McLeod, 1994; Perez & Salazar, 1997; Vobejda, 1991). Immigration is not just a turn-of-the 20th century phenomenon but is likely to have a major impact on the U.S.
several generations to come. “Immigration is and will be one of the most critical demographic factors in this country for the next 50 years,” (Rong & Preissle, 1998; p. 4).

Several other characteristics of the latest wave of immigration stand in contrast to the previous wave. First, the demographics are different. As mentioned above, the racial composition of immigrants has changed. Also, immigration in the 1980’s and 1990’s has a higher percent of “additional immigration” which includes refugees, undocumented immigrants, asylees, amnestied immigrants, and others as defined by the INS. Second, immigrants from the latest wave have a higher educational attainment overall. However, great variations exist among groups:

Today’s immigrants include the most-educated groups (e.g., Asian Indians and Taiwanese) and the least-educated groups (e.g., Mexicans and Salvadorans) as well as groups with the lowest poverty rates (Filipinos) and the highest poverty rates (Laotians and Cambodians) -- a reflection of polarized migrant backgrounds from vastly different historical and structural contexts. (Rong & Preissle, 1998; p. 5)

English language skills are another area of great variation among today’s immigrants.

Throughout this paper, immigrant is defined as a noncitizen “who has voluntarily moved from one society to another” (Rong & Preissle, 1998; p. 3). Refugees are considered a subgroup of immigrants (classified as “additional immigration”) because they are not limited to the quota like most immigrants.

**LEP Students Across the U.S.**

Due in part to the large number of immigrants, LEP students have increased rapidly in the past decade. However, not all LEP students are foreign born. The majority (about 60%) were born in the U.S. (McLeod, 1994; Waggoner, 1999). Most (51.2%) of those born in the U.S. who do not speak English are Hispanic (Waggoner, 1999). From 1984 to 1991,
almost 1 million new LEP students enrolled in U.S. schools. Studies suggest that the total number of LEP students in 1991 was anywhere from 2.0 to 7.5 million depending on how the estimation was done (August & Hakuta, 1998; McLeod, 1994). LEP students now comprise between 5.5 - 16% of the total public school population (Mace-Matluck, Alesander-Kasparik, & Queen, 1998; McLeod, 1994). The lower elementary grades have even greater percentages of LEP students with 53% of all LEP students enrolled in grades K-4 (August & Hakuta, 1998). The young age of LEP students means that their numbers in public schools will continue to increase (Perez & Salazar, 1997). In the 1990 census, states with larger populations including California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois had the majority (67%) of LEP students and higher concentrations in the public schools particularly in the urban areas (August & Hakuta, 1998; McCarty First & Willshire Carrera, 1988; Waggoner, 1999).

Midwestern Immigration

However, a new trend is emerging whereby immigrants are dispersing more from urban areas to smaller cities across the country, and smaller cities and towns in the Midwest are seeing increasing numbers of LEP students due in part to the demand for workers and lower costs of living (August & Hakuta, 1998; Grey, 1999). This is certainly true in Iowa which experienced a 34% increase in the number of immigrants in 1996, making it one of the top ten states for growth in immigration (“An increasingly diverse,” 1999). Two other Midwestern states were also in the top ten. Kansas was second in the nation with a 77% increase, and Missouri was sixth with a 43% increase (“An increasingly diverse,” 1999).
LEP Students in Iowa

As the number of immigrants increases, so does the number of LEP students. In Kansas, the number of LEP students has doubled in the four years from 1994 to approximately 14,200 in 1998 (Mithen, 1999). That same year in Missouri, of the 16,000 students whose native language was not English, about 6,000 were classified as having limited proficiency in English, thus qualifying for additional funding, while 10,000 were considered English proficient. Nebraska has experienced a 488% increase from 1990 with approximately 7,400 LEP students in 1998 (Mithen, 1999). Iowa has experienced an increase in LEP students every year since the 1987-1988 school year with an average annual increase of 14.2 percent. The total number of LEP students in Iowa in 1999 was 9,160 (Iowa Department of Education, 1999).

Another area of change for Iowa schools has been in the composition of LEP students. Figures from the Iowa Department of Education (1999) show that during the 1985-1986 school year, while the top three native languages of LEP students were Spanish, Vietnamese, and Laotian, these three languages together accounted for only 57% of the native languages. During the 1998-1999 school year, the top three native languages, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Bosnian, accounted for 76% of LEP students. Laotian dropped to 5.3% in the 1998-1999 school year. Of the top three groups, two experienced significant change during the thirteen years. While Spanish speakers remained the largest group, their numbers increased considerably from 807 in 1985 to 5,460 in 1998 while the number of LEP students in Iowa schools went from 3,150 to 9,160 as a whole. Bosnian students experienced an even greater change from no native Bosnian speakers in 1985 to 660 in 1998.
(Iowa Department of Education, 1999). This growth is due to a number of Bosnian refugees coming to Iowa in recent years (Bolten, 2000b). The two school districts involved in this project contain the two groups of LEP students which have grown the most in Iowa during the last decade. Urbandale has predominantly Bosnian LEP students while Perry has Spanish-speaking students. The districts contain the two groups of LEP students which have grown the most in Iowa during the last decade.

The pattern of LEP students in Iowa can be understood by looking at Iowa’s interesting history with refugees. From 1974, when President Gerald Ford allowed refugees to enter the U.S. from Southeast Asia, Iowa has opened its doors with a successful resettlement program. Governor Robert Ray (1969 - 1983) was instrumental in bringing refugees, especially Southeast Asians, to Iowa in 1975 (“The Compassionate,” 2000). Support has continued from other Iowa governors, including Governor Branstad (1983 - 1999) and Governor Vilsack (1999 - present), with Iowa celebrating twenty-five years of services for refugee families through the Bureau of Refugee Services in 2000. In fiscal year 1998, Iowa was fifteenth in the nation for refugee resettlement with 1,677 arrivals. The majority of refugees in 1998 were from Eastern Europe (79%). Indo-Chinese and Africans were the next largest groups (10% and 9%, respectively). Refugees from the former Soviet Union, Latin America, and the Near East comprised the final portion of Iowa resettlements (Iowa Factbook, 1999). As the program continues, Bureau Chief Wayne Johnson expects “smaller numbers of refugees” overall, but “from many different and diverse countries” (Johnson, 2000; p. 2). The refugee statistics from 1998 reflect the small number of refugees from Southeast Asia and the former Soviet Union because of increasingly stable
conditions in those regions of the world. However, when regions of the world experience crises, Iowa can expect an influx of refugees such as those who came from Kosovar in 1999 (Johnson, 2000).

**Struggles and Challenges for Immigrant Students**

Immigrant and refugee students often face a number of problems that make education more challenging for them. Evidence from secondary schools suggests that the unique problems of immigrants may not be fully addressed. “High drop-out rates, low standardized test scores, poor attendance records, and the small number of students going on to post-secondary education all attest to the failure of most high schools to meet the needs of this student population,” (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990; p. 317). Gopaul-McNicol and Thomas-Presswood (1998) discuss seven “factors common to the immigrant experience that educators... must understand” in order to work effectively with immigrant families:

1) acculturation processes, 2) socioeconomic level, 3) social support and network, 4) educational and employment background, 5) language proficiency, 6) immigration status, and 7) social and political standing in the mainstream culture. [numbering added] (p.6)

This section will describe the relevance of these seven factors for teachers and what the implications are for educating LEP students. This framework will also later be applied to students in two ESL programs as a method of comparison and for further explanation of the contexts for education in the two school districts.

**Acculturation Processes**

Acculturation is the process of modifying behaviors or the culturally defined “way an individual perceives his or her relationship to the world” based on contact with a
different culture (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998; p. 7). Acculturation is an individual process involving several stages ranging from marginalization where the individual feels alienated from the new culture to assimilation where the individual gives up his or her culture for the values and behaviors of the new culture (Berry et al., cited in Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998).

For immigrant students, acculturation also involves an adjustment to a different educational system. Assuming that students have prior educational experience, it is likely to be quite different from the American school environment. Curriculum offerings differ between the U.S. and other countries in content and sequencing and tend to be very Euro-centric rather than multicultural (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992; Short, 1999). The “culture of the classroom” can also be an adjustment for the students (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990; McLeod, 1994). This may be particularly true for middle and high school students where the students change teachers and classes when the bell rings, keep their belongings in a locker, and buy lunch at the school cafeteria (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992). Understanding the “culture of the classroom” can be a very difficult task for immigrant students. Different perceptions about respect for authority and participating in classroom discussions may cause a kind of school culture shock for immigrant students (McCarty First & Willshire Carrera, 1988; McLeod, 1994b). Learning styles of immigrants often clash with common American teaching styles (Cornell, 1995; McLeod, 1994b; Short, 1999). Students’ cultural backgrounds also affect their prior knowledge (Cornell, 1995). They may have little exposure to American history and culture which causes additional difficulty in understanding lessons (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). The “culture of the classroom” is just one
area where immigrant students have to make adjustments and acculturate to some degree in order to be successful in school. Gopaul-McNicol and Thomas-Presswood (1998) suggest that making teachers more aware of what is involved in the acculturation process can ease some of the students' stress related to it as teachers better understand the perspective of the students, and teachers can better plan their strategies for addressing the students' learning needs.

**Socioeconomic Level**

Income and educational attainment are two important factors in determining socioeconomic level (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). Studies suggest that a family's socioeconomic level has an effect on their children's education. McLeod (1994) lists several "educational implications" of poverty:

Children who are poor may be malnourished, may not have adequate health care, may live in substandard housing, may live in unsafe environments, are likely to have parents who have not progressed far in school, and are unlikely to have access to educational opportunities in the community such as preschools, libraries, music lessons and concerts, and after-school programs. (p. 27)

In addition, for immigrant students, poverty can cause students to miss school. This is particularly true for older students who may be expected to work to help support their families, sometimes including relatives back in their native countries to whom they send money. Girls may be responsible for caring for younger siblings so that adults in the family can work (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992; Rong & Preissle, 1998). This can also affect students' study habits as immigrant students may have little time for homework due to caring for younger siblings or maintaining the household while parents work (Cornell, 1995).
Based on Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, Peregoy and Boyle (1997) stress the importance of meeting students' safety and security needs and creating a sense of belonging. Although they apply this concept to the school environment, many immigrants may have safety and security needs outside of school due to their economic situation. One high school LEP coordinator in California found this as one of the most difficult things for schools to deal with:

Despite the difficulties sometimes in delivering instruction, that's not our big gap. The gap is in being able to provide for the needs of the kids and their families so they can be in school. Everything from glasses, clothes, jackets, primary health care. Within the past ten days alone I've had to call 911 five times. They come with big health problems, and no means of getting health care. (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992; p. 5)

LEP students are more likely than non-LEP students to be poor. This is especially true for foreign born non-English speakers where almost one-third live in poverty (Waggoner, 1999). However, there is a great deal of variation among groups, so some LEP students come from families with relatively high incomes. East Asians from Hong Kong, the Philippines, Japan, and Taiwan are examples of groups with high median incomes (at least $45,000 in 1989). On the other hand, Southeast Asians such as Cambodians and Laotians had the lowest median incomes and highest poverty levels among all the groups studied (Waggoner, 1999). Hispanics also had a high proportion (57%) of families with incomes under $20,000 (August & Hakuta, 1998). Economic status is closely tied with parents' educational attainment.
Social Support and Network

One important factor for many immigrant families is their network of support. “Immigrant families often depend on one another for emotional, psychological, and financial support; this support can alleviate stress and contribute to the immigrant’s adaptation” (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998; p. 18). Support often comes from family members, other immigrants from the same ethnic group, churches or other social agencies, and sometimes a host group. For adult immigrants, support is critical for finding a job and making the initial adjustments to the new culture. When available, immigrant students utilize similar social support networks in the school to help ease their transition into the new setting.

The most obvious social network for an immigrant is their family. Immigrants often come with other family members, or they come to join family members who have already immigrated. Tensions between family members are not uncommon due to varying degrees of acculturation within the family as a whole as well as for individual members of the family (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). This may result in cultural conflicts that arise in immigrant families as the traditional cultural values the family held clash with the values of the new culture in which they live.

At the same time, families and/or social networks can provide a great deal of support for immigrant students. It has been noted that parents of language minority children are often not as involved with the school as parents of English speaking children (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). However, studies have shown that parents of language-minority students are often very interested and involved with their children’s education when the definition of
involvement is broadened to include culturally appropriate involvement (Auerbach, 1989; Ritter, Mont-Reynaud, & Dornbusch, 1993). The vast majority of immigrant parents understand the importance of education and value it very highly for their children (Huss-Keeler, 1997; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990). In fact, in some cases, the driving factor for immigrating to the U.S. was so their children could have a better life with the help of a better education.

Though immigrants often value education, many immigrant families have views different from school personnel of how schools work. For example, while American teachers expect parents to be active participants in the education of their children, many immigrants do not question the authority of the teacher, and they see no need to interact with their children’s teacher unless there is some sort of problem (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996; Huss-Keeler, 1997; McGroarty, 1998; Sosa, 1997). (Other problems with parental involvement are addressed in a later section of this chapter.) Once parents and teachers acknowledge their differing perspectives on education, progress can be made to resolve them.

**Educational and Employment Background**

Students’ educational backgrounds also vary widely. The number of immigrant students with little or no formal education and low levels of literacy in their native language is increasing in the U.S. (Mace-Matluck, et al., 1998; Minicucci & Olsen, 1992). Often these students come from poor or rural areas or their educational opportunities were halted by wars. The older the student, the greater the problem since young students are still learning basic literacy skills. In secondary schools, “subject matter content learning
depends greatly on proficient literacy abilities and prior subject matter knowledge,” (Faltis, 1993; p. 93). Immigrant students who enter U.S. schools with academic backgrounds struggle through a transition process, but because of their strong academic abilities, they are usually able to become successful students quickly in the U.S. (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995).

**Language Proficiency**

Except for the small percentage of immigrant students who arrive proficient in English, language problems are their most obvious need (Waggoner, 1999). The vast majority struggle to learn core curriculum content while acquiring English language skills. However, immigrants come to the U.S. with widely varied English proficiency levels (Faltis, 1993; Minicucci & Olsen, 1992). Some of them may have had years of English classes in their native country with varying success. Others may have little or no exposure to English before arriving in the U.S. (McCarty First & Willshire Carrera, 1988). Almost all immigrant students understand the value and importance of learning English, though, so they are highly motivated to do so (McCarty First & Willshire Carrera, 1988; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995).

**Immigration Status**

Immigrants come to the United States for several different reasons. In some cases, they are forced to leave their country because of wars, persecution, or political instability. Refugees fall into this category and are sometimes referred to as involuntary immigrants (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998; Seufert, 1999). Due to the traumatic experiences that caused them to leave their home country, many refugees undergo
tremendous levels of stress. Refugee children also experience this emotional stress. In addition, when they arrive in the U.S., they may be several years behind in grade level due to wars. It is also common for refugees to wait in a second country for several years before coming to the U.S. In the case of Bosnian refugees during the late 1990's, the students may be transitioning into a second foreign culture (including language and system of schooling) after having spent some time in Germany (Seufert, 1999).

Voluntary immigrants are defined as those who plan to come to the U.S. looking for jobs or better living conditions. Voluntary immigrants may be documented or undocumented. Undocumented immigrants face a number of challenges because of their immigration status. Fear of being deported often causes families to be leery of any interaction with authorities, including schools, hospitals, or police. Also, undocumented immigrants are easily exploited workers because they often do not dare to complain about pay or working conditions for fear of being discovered (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). Students who are undocumented often have to move because of their family's fear of being caught (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992). Consequently, they may be missing school records which can provide valuable information to teachers about a child's academic background. Also, such children are likely to come from a lower socioeconomic level because their parents have trouble finding good jobs. Certain hardships are then associated with immigrant status and can become a factor in impeding school or community partnerships (McGroarty, 1998).
Social/Political Standing in Mainstream Culture

Racism and discrimination are two key factors in determining how immigrants will adjust to living in the U.S. People of color tend to be discriminated against in the U.S. solely on the basis of their race (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and African-Americans have all experienced varying levels of discrimination. However, immigrants from Eastern-European backgrounds have assimilated into American culture more smoothly in part because of their similar racial background (Gopaul-McNicol & Thomas-Presswood, 1998). Political conditions also play a role in how well immigrants are accepted in the new country.

Unfortunately, since schools reflect the values of society, studies have shown that teachers often unintentionally convey prejudicial attitudes through lack of eye contact and attention to minority students, subjective measures of performance, assignment to lower tracks, program names which suggest inferiority, and outright racism in some contexts (McLeod, 1994b).

Resource Perspective vs. Cultural Deficit Perspective

Rather than viewing students' cultural backgrounds from a deficit perspective, Ruiz (cited in Pease-Alvarez & Hakuta, 1992) describes the resource perspective which focuses on positive aspects of bilingualism. McCarty First & Willshire Carrera (1988) see the large numbers of LEP students in schools today as an opportunity to create multicultural educational programs which help all students "learn to respect and appreciate cultural diversity [and] overcome ethnocentric and prejudicial attitudes" (p. 114). Indeed, with the great differences among LEP children already, placing high value on linguistic and cultural
differences and encouraging majority and minority students to appreciate cultural pluralism is an important part of a successful program for LEP students (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990).

Effective Practices for LEP Education

Many suggestions have been made about effective practices for LEP education. However, only a limited number of studies have been conducted to identify the practices of exemplary programs for LEP students. This study will build on prior research by describing effective practices in two Central Iowa ESL programs. Lucas, Henze, and Donato (1990) focused on secondary schools with high Latino populations. They studied five schools in California and one in Arizona. From their study, they identified eight features of schools which help LEP students achieve success.

1. The language and culture of students is valued.
2. Students are held to high expectations and given support in reaching them.
3. Leaders of the schools put a high priority on LEP education through curriculum and instruction and the hiring of trained teachers.
4. Staff development is encouraged for all other staff in effective instruction and interaction with LEP students.
5. Quality courses and programs of a wide variety are provided for students.
6. The counseling program has a special focus on LEP students by hiring bilingual counselors with high student expectations.
7. Schools foster parental involvement in the educational process.
8. School staff "go the extra mile" to ensure student success in part by becoming advocates for LEP students in the community (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990).

Gándara (1994) includes a similar list in her summary of research on effective practices for LEP students. However, she adds involvement from the community, leadership of a strong principal, a school vision that is tailored to the community and its particular concerns, and a
degree of flexibility in how students reach the high standards including the use of multiple languages.

Short (1999) stresses the importance of school vision from her review of school reform literature and studies on effective schools. Some key factors for a strong school vision are all faculty taking responsibility for ESL students, not just the ESL teachers; high expectations and the support necessary to reach them are provided to ESL students; the school helps students develop their native language and culture; and ESL students and their families are made to feel welcome in the school community. Short (1999) lists several examples of services that help ESL families feel more welcome in the school: bilingual counselors, interpreters for parents, translation of school communication into the home languages, culturally sensitive school policies, and availability of bilingual books in the school library. Services such as these show ESL families that the school has a high regard for the culture and language of all its students.

Lucas (1998) reviews successful programs for unschooled Latino immigrants. She mentions characteristics of several model programs such as building on the strengths of students and families (cultural resource perspective); positive attitudes toward immigration, use of native language, and illiteracy; quality of intake (initial placement) and assessment procedures; recognition of multiple forms of success (multiple assessment forms and flexibility in achieving high standards); administrative support; multicultural education; workforce training; and family involvement.

Many of these areas overlap with factors identified by Short (1999), Gandara (1994), and Lucas, Henze, and Donato (1990). However, the roles of workforce training.
multicultural education, and quality placement and assessment procedures need more
explanation. Lucas (1998) mentions the importance of stressing higher education for Latino
students. Effective vocational training with job shadowing, field trips to businesses, and
education about careers is also a viable option for students and one way in which
communities can become more involved with education.

Multicultural education is important for the success of ESL students because it
promotes cultural sensitivity in interactions among groups, curriculum, and non-
instructional services for students (Lucas, 1998). Examples of cultural sensitivity may
involve “the establishment of a student advisory board, representative of the school
population, for school discipline and policy matters, and a conflict mediation student group,
who helps to promote understanding and ethnic harmony” (Lucas, 1998; p. 313).

Initial placement and continuing assessment procedures are another important area.
Lucas (1998) mentions several important components of good intake procedures. Testing
oral/aural skills through oral interviews and tests, assessing reading and writing skills in
English and the student’s native language, gathering information from parents about
students prior educational experience, and assessing the student’s mastery of mathematics
are key procedures. The National Coalition for Advocacy of Students (NCAS) also
mentions helping parents understand more about the system of education in America,
helping families during the school enrollment process, and working to identify and prevent
potential problem areas related to school performance such as access to physical and mental
health services (Lucas, 1998; McCarty First & Willshire Carrera, 1988).
An overview of successful programs for ESL students focuses on three main areas: administrative support which feeds the school vision and eventually produces a welcoming environment for ESL students and families. Administrative support includes factors like giving curriculum and staffing needs for ESL a high priority, providing staff development specifically about working with ESL students, and fostering a positive school vision. School vision includes factors such as faculty assuming responsibility for ESL students and eventually becoming advocates for ESL, high expectations for student success, offering a wide variety of courses and programs for ESL students, fostering family and community involvement, good placement and assessment procedures, and workforce training. Administrative support and a positive school vision will create a welcoming environment for ESL families where the native language and culture of students is valued through practices such as the translation of school documents, availability of interpreters for parents, bilingual books in the libraries, bilingual counselors, multicultural education, and culturally sensitive school policies. These factors will be presented as a framework for assessing support for ESL from the school community in Chapter 4.

Critical Factors for Building School/Community Relationships

One of the components of effective programs for LEP students is the involvement of parents and the community (Adger & Peyton, 1999; Gandara, 1994; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990; Short, 1999). This section will look at reasons and types of programs for involving parents along with how to overcome the special challenges of working with language-minority parents. Then research on the role of community as an extension of parent programs will be discussed.
Parent-School Relationships

Parental involvement has been a goal of many schools since the early 20th century. Early efforts at parent involvement were quite different from today, though, as the schools dictated what roles parents would play when they volunteered to assist the school (Sosa, 1997). Today, parental involvement takes many forms, but one contrasting role from expectations in earlier eras is the role of parents as educators to enhance students' learning at home (Sosa, 1997; Volk, 1994; Zuniga & Alva, 1996).

Epstein has been one of the most influential researchers in the area of parental involvement. She has categorized six types of parental involvement based on different practices and outcomes. The six types are information from the school for families about basic health and social issues, communication from schools about services offered and the academic progress of students, parents and family members volunteering at the school, parents being actively involved in their child's learning at home, parents participating in school committees as advocates for their students' education, and parents and schools working together to build connections with community groups and support services (Epstein & Connors, 1992). The different levels of involvement are not necessarily dependent on one another. However, there is a kind of progression from one level to the next leading up to the final level of community support services.

The benefits of parental involvement in school are numerous including better academic and language achievement of students, better home-school and parent-child relationships, better behavior in school, and cognitive growth (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Volk, 1994). Improved attendance and lower drop-out rates
are two benefits of parental involvement for high school students (Connors & Epstein, 1994). Epstein & Connors (1992) also suggest that parental involvement can balance out the shortages of family resources. Parents themselves become more confident in their parenting skills as a result of their participation in school programs (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996; Violand-Sanchez, Sutton & Ware, 1991).

In spite of all the benefits for students, schools often struggle to implement successful programs for parents of language minority students (Adger & Peyton, 1999; Auerbach, 1989; Bermudez & Marquez, 1996; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Violand-Sanchez, et al., 1991; Volk, 1994). Sosa (1997) speaks of three major categories of barriers to parental involvement including logistical barriers (time, money, safety, child care, and program segmentation), attitudinal barriers (uncertainty about roles, frustration or dissatisfaction with their ability to help their children, and communication problems), and expectations barriers (varying expectations about the amount of parental participation). Bermudez and Marquez (1996) speak of seven different reasons which may contribute to the difficulty of involving language minority parents including language skills, differing ideas about the role of the schools, misunderstandings about the school system, low self-confidence, scheduling problems due to work, past negative experiences with the school system, and discriminatory or insensitive attitudes from school personnel (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996).

Adger & Peyton (1999) suggest that current models for parent involvement are structurally inadequate for causing true parental involvement because they are based on a deficit model. Other researchers have also noted that programs involving minority families
in the education of their children do not have an adequate appreciation for the cultural strengths of minorities (Auerbach, 1989; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Laosa, 1983). Parents are often seen in light of their need for more training or information rather than as potential resources or contributors to the educational process:

If... parents are cast as recipients of resources rather than as resources themselves for schools and students, their connection to schools can be expected to remain tenuous. Instead, structures and arrangements based on social relationships and activities that position parents as competent adults attract immigrant parents to become involved more powerfully than they have been in the past. (Adger & Peyton, 1999; p. 217)

Zuniga & Alva (1996) report on a pilot program for parental involvement which sought to include parents as teachers and learners from “a community of learners perspective.” They began with an articulation of parents’ wishes and desires. Then resources to meet those needs were assessed both within the community and among the group of parents. The result of such a program is, “The role of teachers and the educational system shifts away from formulating the nature and goals of parent education activities to a supportive role in assisting parents in the acquisition and development of resources parents deem valuable” (Zuniga & Alva, 1996). Collaborative structures are more effective than hierarchical ones which have traditionally been the norm (Adger, 1996). Viable parental involvement programs then must be based on a more equitable distribution of power and “the concerted actions of all parties” (McGroarty, 1998; p. 9).

While suggestions abound for how to design better programs, researchers admit that “systematic collaboration between the home, the school, and the community is still at a primitive stage of implementation” (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996; p. 1). This is particularly true for secondary students whose parents become less and less involved as they progress
from elementary school to high school (Connors & Epstein, 1994; Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, & Simon, 1997; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). However, given the benefits to students and parents from parental involvement, educators are stressing this kind of outreach from the school.

**School-Community Partnerships**

Partnerships between schools and community organizations are representative of a high level of support from the community. As Epstein’s classification of parental involvement shows (Epstein & Connors, 1992), some would say connections with the community is a greater level of partnership between the school and the family (Larson & Rumberger, 1995; McGroarty, 1998). This is especially true when the school is serving as a clearinghouse for other social services already offered to families by community organizations:

> There is no other agency that sees every child every day. In addition to the school’s easy access to students, the school is usually geographically accessible and familiar to parents. Schools are seen as positive and neutral community agencies. Although the school cannot provide all the services and funds that children and their families need, the school is in an advantageous position to be a broker and an advocate. (Chavkin, 1993; p. 222)

Chavkin (1993) calls for “multiethnic family-school-community collaborations” as an alternative model for educating minority students. “Community organizations can be powerful allies for assisting schools to meet the multi-faceted needs of immigrant students and families” (McCarty First & Willshire Carrera, 1988; p. 80). McGroarty (1998) describes school-family-community partnerships as “plac[ing] parents and community members on an equal footing with school authorities” (p. 3). The aim of these more broadly
defined partnerships is to empower everyone involved in children’s education so that changes in society will occur.

Although a great deal of research has not yet been conducted on family-school-community partnerships, there are some guidelines for developing strong programs. First is the need for strong leadership from the school administration (McGroarty, 1998). Another important step is making parents feel comfortable and welcome in their role as collaborator with the school and community. This can be done through providing information in the native language, having a designated area in the school for language minority parents to visit with each other or conduct meetings, having child care available during meetings, and providing leadership training for parents (McGroarty, 1998).

The level of support from the community is often indicative of the prevailing attitudes toward immigration and the use of languages other than English in the school. Flores (1996) found that “the attitude of the community is reflected in the school” through the viewpoints of mainstream teachers and the kinds of services offered for ESL students (p. 238). Lucas (1998) describes the effect of negative or even complacent attitudes from the community:

Negative attitudes in a community toward immigration could affect not only the climate but the programmatic issues of local school efforts. These attitudes have a ripple effect upon students, parents, faculty, and staff. When ambivalent or negative attitudes prevail, decisions detrimental to learning may result. A school may place special classes for students in portable classrooms isolated from the main campus. Schools may also neglect to include immigrant students in elective courses and extracurricular activities...” (p. 309)

Often the negative or ambivalent attitudes from the community may be the result of lack of understanding and personal knowledge of the ESL students and program. Involvement with
the students or program through school-community partnerships is one way to change the negative attitudes to positive ones.

This chapter has provided background information on the education of LEP students including types of programs and funding. A connection was made between the wave of immigration at the end of the twentieth century and the growth of LEP students across the U.S. In particular, the trend for pockets of LEP students in small cities and towns in Midwestern states like Iowa was noted. Not only does this provide an unique challenge to the school districts who experience growth in their LEP population, it also presents some struggles for the students and their families. Research on exemplary programs for LEP students suggests some key factors for helping LEP students achieve success and feel welcome in their new environment. One part of this is involvement in the school from family and community members.

In the chapters that follow, the question of how schools with increasing numbers of LEP students can build strong partnerships with families and community organizations is explored in the context of two Central Iowa schools. The characteristics of the programs are described along with an evaluation of the school environment and information about the attitudes of the community. Chapter 3 describes the approach, design, and methods for the study.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS

This study attempts to better understand how some Iowa school districts are facing the challenge of increased numbers of LEP students. Community attitudes toward LEP programs are a key part of the study since attitudes of mainstream teachers, administrators, and community members have a bearing on how well the schools meet the challenge. A qualitative case study approach was taken focusing on two central Iowa public school ESL programs. This study utilized qualitative methodology in part because of the "well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local contexts" (Miles & Huberman, 1984; p. 15). These detailed descriptions can connect to theory while giving a specific context to the stories of the two school districts.

This chapter describes the types of data collected and the procedures used to obtain, verify, and analyze the data. Observations of the programs and interviews with school personnel, community members, and immigrant families were conducted. Also, relevant documents about the cities, their school districts, and their ESL programs were collected. Analysis of the results involved contact summaries and document summaries which were coded. Following the coding, matrices were constructed to display data in a manner conducive to further analysis. Throughout the collection and analysis of data, several precautions were taken to ensure verification of information.

Sample Population

Due to the in-depth nature of case studies, only two school districts were chosen for the study. Although Perry and Urbandale were chosen for several reasons, the primary
reason was because of their recent growth in number of ESL students. Other reasons include their close proximity to each other and their differences in terms of composition of ESL students. Perry and Urbandale are both located in central Iowa. In fact, they are in adjoining counties approximately 25 miles from each other. Both have experienced large growth in the number of ESL students during the past ten years. Perry’s ESL students have risen from zero (0) in 1990 to 430 in 2000. Urbandale’s ESL students have increased from nine (9) in 1992 to 163 in 2000. Although the growth of Perry’s program is more dramatic, both programs have had to make major changes to accommodate the increasing number of LEP students. Changes of this sort often require involvement from school administration and the community. These districts are prime places to study because of the dramatic growth that has occurred in their LEP populations.

An interesting difference between the two districts, though, is the composition of their ESL students. Perry’s ESL students are strictly Hispanic now, although there were some Sudanese students in the public schools several years ago. Urbandale’s ESL students come from a variety of backgrounds, but the majority (63%) are Bosnian. There are also a growing number of Hispanics (24%), with the remaining 13% comprised of various groups such as Vietnamese, Russian, Sudanese, Ukrainian, and others. One of the main differences between these populations besides the homogeneity of Perry’s ESL students versus the heterogeneity of Urbandale’s is the circumstance under which many of the students came to Iowa. Urbandale’s ESL population is primarily refugee while Perry’s is primarily immigrant. This variable provided an interesting point of comparison between the two school districts.
Data Collection

The methods of data collection used in this study were observations, interviews, and collection of relevant documents from both sites. In order to obtain firsthand knowledge about the ESL program and the climate for ESL in the district, observations in ESL classrooms were conducted at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. Observations were also conducted in mainstream education classrooms. Interviews of various school personnel, volunteers, community leaders, and parents of ESL students were conducted to provide multiple perspectives. Simultaneously, documents giving information about the ESL programs, the school districts, or the local communities were collected as an additional source of information. Data was collected over a period of about two months from late February 2000 to early April 2000.

Observations

In all, about 10 hours of observation were conducted at both sites (see Table 3.1 for a breakdown of observation hours). Observations of the ESL and mainstream classrooms were an important part of the study for several reasons. First of all, they provided some background about the ESL programs and the schools they were located in (Research Question #1). Secondly, they allowed for some triangulation with the interviews about the types of ESL programs (Research Question #1b), the resources available for them (Research Question #1c), and the attitude of the educational community toward the ESL program (Research Question #2). Thirdly, observations allowed me to identify some important issues to investigate further.
Table 3.1. Observation hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Perry</th>
<th>Urbandale</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult ESL</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations included notes about the classroom environment, activities and procedures used in the class, and learning objectives. Wherever possible, I also collected copies of the worksheets or assignments given. In the mainstream classrooms, accommodations for ESL students and the interactions between ESL students and non-ESL students were noted. Occasionally, interviews were conducted with the teacher prior to or immediately following the observation. In those cases, questions about the classroom procedures, lesson plan, or teaching philosophy of the teacher were included to enhance the observation and allow for triangulation of data (Creswell, 1998).

Interviews

In order to learn more about the attitudes of the educational and larger community toward ESL (Research Questions #2 & 3), interviews were conducted. A total of forty-one
people were interviewed including school personnel, volunteers, community leaders, and parents of ESL students (see Table 3.2 for a detailed summary). Interviews began first with ESL teachers in each district. From there the interviews included other school personnel. Mainstream teachers were interviewed as well as school counselors, principals, an ESL director, a superintendent, and school board members. A limited number of community leaders and parents of ESL students were included, too. ESL students were not interviewed because of the difficulty in obtaining parental consent. Snowball or chain sampling was the major sampling method. Sampling of this kind begins with one group and continues expanding based on the people recommended by the participants creating a mushroom effect as more people are contacted (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). ESL teachers were the first source of recommendations in this study. I had already established the general categories of school personnel, community leaders/volunteers, and ESL parents. Recommendations were used simply as a way to make contacts with people who otherwise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Perry</th>
<th>Urbandale</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESL Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Associates</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream Teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrators/ Counselors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Leaders</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Parents</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
might have been inaccessible to me and to ensure that everyone with relevant information for the study was included in the process.

Interviews were somewhat structured. A series of questions (see Appendix A) was written in advance based in part on issues identified in the review of literature (see Table 3.3 for purposes of questions for ESL teachers). Some questions were modeled after questions used in research on mainstream classroom teachers’ perceptions of ESL students (Penfield, 1987) and on parent awareness of school and community resources (Zuniga & Alva, 1996). The questions provided a guideline of what information to cover in the interview and added some consistency in the topics covered within a group of participants. Questions were modified based on the situation, though. Sometimes questions were deleted, added, or changed slightly during the interview for a variety of reasons including lack of time, relevance, or redundancy of information.

Interviews were tape recorded while the researcher took notes with the exception of one interview conducted at a business that did not allow tape recorders and interviews of parents (for reasons of privacy and comfort). Locations of interviews varied from the homes of a few parents and volunteers to school offices, teachers’ lounges, classrooms, and restaurants. The average length of the interviews was approximately 25 minutes.

A consent form was signed by each participant (see Appendix B). Only ESL parents were guaranteed confidentiality. Other participants gave permission for their names to be included in the study. Participants were also notified that they would be contacted after the interview for brief member checks of the interview data (Creswell, 1998). Member checks
Table 3.3. Purpose of ESL Teacher Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is your experience and training in ESL? How long have you been in (name of district)?</td>
<td>Personal background in ESL &amp; district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How did the ESL program originate here?</td>
<td>History of program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What problems or challenges were involved?</td>
<td>History of program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What are the main problems or challenges the program faces today?</td>
<td>Current challenges from teacher’s perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What kinds of interaction do you have with ESL students? How often do you see them and in what capacity?</td>
<td>Teacher’s role in ESL program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. In your opinion, what do new ESL students struggle with the most when entering your school?</td>
<td>Challenges for ESL students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What extracurricular activities do ESL students participate in? (Middle &amp; High schools)</td>
<td>Indicator of how integrated students are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How often do you communicate with parents of ESL students? In what ways (phone, letters home, conferences, etc.) Do the parents visit the school?</td>
<td>Parental communication, involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. What is the attitude of regular classroom teachers in working with ESL students at your school?</td>
<td>Educational environment, mainstream teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How supportive are other school staff such as counselors, secretaries, school nurse, etc.?</td>
<td>Educational environment, staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. What kinds of support does the district provide for ESL in terms of materials, training, personnel, etc.?</td>
<td>Support from the district, inservice training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. What resources/materials are provided in the students’ native languages (books, bilingual aides, counselors, school communications, etc.)?</td>
<td>Emphasis on native languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. From my perspective, it seems the community is very supportive of the ESL program. Is this an accurate view? Why is this a un/supportive community?</td>
<td>Support from community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. I've heard about many programs in Urbandale where the community helps the students with donations of clothing, school supplies, etc. Can you tell me more about this? How did it begin? Have there been other activities which involve the community in helping ESL students (particularly at your school)?</td>
<td>Specific examples of supportive programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I've heard about a program on higher education in Perry for ESL parents and students with counselors and community people involved. Can you tell me more about this? How did it begin? Have there been other activities which involve the community in helping ESL students (particularly at your school)?</td>
<td>Specific examples of supportive programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Based on your experience, what is the best way to build community support for the ESL program? What advice would you have for other communities (like Ames) who are struggling with this area?</td>
<td>Suggestions for other programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Give an example of programs/activities that you would like to see in the near future which foster relations between the ESL population and the community. What's preventing you from doing it (time, money, support)?</td>
<td>Suggestions for future activities to build community support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

serve as one way to verify the data gathered from the interviews. In this study, summaries of the interviews were sent to the ESL teachers asking them to check the accuracy of my interpretations. Sometimes follow-up questions about procedures relating to the ESL programs were also included.

Documents

In order to provide another source of information for triangulation, relevant documents were also collected as part of the data for this study. Types of documents ranged
from newspaper articles about the towns, school districts, or ESL programs and students to brochures about services available in the communities. Websites of the school districts and any information made available by them about their ESL programs was included. Documents also included classroom handouts gathered during the observations. Documents were found either through an internet or newspaper database search, recommendations of participants in the study, or by happenstance.

Analysis of Data

Contact and Document Summaries

The process of analyzing the data collected began by typing up notes from the interviews and observations. It continued with summaries of the observations, interviews, and documents collected from each site. Contact summaries were used for the observations and interviews. The purpose of the contact summary was to reflect on the major "themes, issues, problems, and questions" from the contact while beginning to reduce the data into a manageable size for further analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Document summaries were used for the documents collected. Document summaries included a description of the context from which the document was taken, an explanation of its significance, and a brief summary of the content of the document (Miles & Huberman, 1984). These summaries also noted the important themes and issues in a concise manner, reduced the data to a more manageable size for further analysis, and led to reflection on important issues or questions which I needed to address.
Coding

Cross-site analysis, a comparison of the information between the two locations, began when codes were developed for the interviews, observations, and documents from Urbandale and Perry. Initially, major themes or issues were coded (e.g. SUP=support). Then, the codes were combined and reduced to five major categories with sub-headings in each category (e.g. SUPB=board support, SUPS=staff support, SUPC=community support). The codes were used primarily to sort through data and identify recurring themes. They also provided a basic framework for organizing the data into a more coherent picture of the situation at the two locations.

Matrices

Matrices or tables were developed to display the data in a visually appealing and insightful manner (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The matrices developed all involved cross-site analysis, a comparison of the data from two or more sites. A role-ordered matrix (Tables 4.2 and 4.3) and a checklist matrix (Table 4.4) were created. The checklist matrix includes quotations as well as a rating to give additional information about why that rating was chosen (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

This chapter has reviewed the methods chosen for this study. The following chapter contains the findings of the two case studies. Specifically, a description of the ESL programs and the attitudes of the educational and larger communities will be addressed along with a description of efforts by the ESL teachers to improve support for their programs. Finally, Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of this study for ESL programs which are trying to build greater school-family-community support for ESL.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

The results of the study are reported in this chapter following the order of the research questions. First, a detailed description of the two communities is provided. The characteristics of the two ESL programs are explained including what population of students they serve, the type of ESL program, and the personnel and resources designated for the programs. Then, the attitudes of the educational and larger community are described as well as how ESL personnel have affected these attitudes. The opinions of parents about community support are also included. Finally, suggestions for other ESL programs trying to build support are discussed.

Description of Cities in the Study

Perry

Perry began in 1869 as a major railroad station when the Des Moines Valley Railroad company started the Des Moines and Fort Dodge Railroad. The railroad continued to be an important part of Perry history when the Interurban Railroad came out to Perry from Des Moines in 1906 (Hastie, 1997). Immigration was an important factor in the early settlement of Perry. Immigrants came to Perry to work the railroad and other industries that developed over the years.

Today, Perry is a growing community. The population has risen from 6,700 in 1990 to 8,000 in 1999 (Finney, 1999). Perry has a strong industrial base for a city its size with three metal foundries, a Meadow Gold dairy plant, and the IBP, Inc. pork processing plant. Agriculture is still important in Perry as evidenced by numerous ag-related businesses,
including a large John Deere dealer on the east edge of town and several seed companies. Another area which Perry is working to develop is tourism. The Thymes Remembered Tea Room and Calico Shops attracts visitors from across the state. The restored Hotel Pattee is another attraction for tourists (Finney, 1999).

As the largest employer in Perry (1062 employees), the IBP plant has had a major impact on the city (Iowa Department of Economic Development, 1999). One of the most obvious impacts is the number of Hispanics who have moved to Perry to work for IBP. Approximately 55% of IBP’s employees are Hispanics. The majority of them are immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, or El Salvador (Beaumont, 1999). This wave of immigration has changed the demographics of Perry from 0.7% Hispanics in 1990 to 14% in 1999 (Census Bureau, 1990; Beaumont, 1999).

Businesses in Perry reflect the presence of Hispanics with a twice-monthly newspaper in Spanish, two Mexican food restaurants, and two specialty grocery stores. It is also not uncommon to see signs in Spanish around the town including “Hablamos Espanol” (We speak Spanish) on store advertisements.

The school district in Perry has also experienced changing demographics in the 1990's. Overall, the district has grown in enrollment from 1541 students during the 1990-1991 school year to 1695 students in 1999-2000 with a peak enrollment of 1717 during the 1995-1996 school year (Iowa Department of Education, 1999). According to MDR’s School Directory (1999), 11% of students are from families below the poverty line. The median income in Perry for 1989 was $21,999 according to U.S. Census figures from 1990.
The Perry Community School District has three schools: one elementary, middle, and high school. The elementary school is one of the largest in the state with 938 students during the 1999-2000 school year (MDR's School Directory, 1999). The building houses students from kindergarten to sixth grade. The middle school was comprised of 288 seventh and eighth grade students in 1999-2000. The high school contained grades nine through twelve and had 546 students in 1999-2000. Both the middle school and the high school are experiencing some overcrowding due to the growing number of students in the Perry school district. Voters approved a bond issue in 1999 for a new high school to help alleviate the overcrowding. The school is expected to be completed during the 2001-2002 school year.

**Urbandale**

The city of Urbandale was incorporated in 1917 with a population of 298. Prior to that time, people lived in the area because of its close proximity to Des Moines. A street car came to Urbandale from Des Moines, and later Urbandale was a stop on the Interurban Railroad between Des Moines and Perry (Des Moines City Directory, 1996; Long, 1998). Urbandale experienced a growth spurt in the 1960's when Interstates 35 and 80 were built around Des Moines. When a freeway was added through Des Moines connecting to the interstate (I-235), more people moved to the western suburbs of Des Moines because of easy access via the freeway. Urbandale grew from a population of 1777 in 1950 to approximately 27,800 in 1995 (Des Moines City Directory, 1996).

Urbandale has a variety of businesses including industry, insurance companies, telephone company offices, and retail stores. Due in part to its prime location on Interstates 35 and 80, Urbandale also has modern warehouses, a bulk mail center, and various
distribution centers. The city provides many services such as excellent parks, a trail system
for walking or biking, a swimming pool, and a library (Des Moines City Directory, 1996).
A community center including a new library is expected to be completed during 2000.

Urbandale’s school district has experienced only moderate growth during the 1990’s. In the
was 3500, an overall increase of just under 300 students during the ten-year period. In fact,
enrollment projections show a gradual decline in the number of students between 2000 and
2005 with a projected enrollment of 3216 in the 2004-2005 school year (Iowa Department
of Education, 1999). Of the 3500 students in 1999-2000, 95% were white, 2% were Asian,
2% were Black, and 1% were Hispanic. Only 3% of students came from families below the
poverty line (MDR’s School Directory, 1999). The median income in Urbandale during
1989 was $42,686 (Census, 1990).

The Urbandale Community School District has seven buildings: five elementary
schools, one middle school, and one high school. The elementary schools are Jensen, Karen
Acres, Olmsted, Rolling Green, and Valerius. A kindergarten center is located in Olmsted
Elementary. All elementary schools have first through fifth grades. The total elementary
population in Urbandale during the 1999-2000 school year was 1495. Urbandale Middle
School had 820 sixth through eighth graders in 1999-2000. The high school enrollment for
1999-2000 was 1189 (MDR’s School Directory, 1999).

Characteristics of the ESL Programs

Student Population

Of the 1700 students in the Perry school district, twenty-five percent are Hispanic
Table 4.1. Comparison of ESL in Perry and Urbandale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perry</th>
<th>Urbandale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate of ESL growth</td>
<td>very rapid</td>
<td>rapid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL groups</td>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>Bosnians, Hispanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of ESL students</td>
<td>influx of needed labor</td>
<td>invited refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of ESL students</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of ESL program</td>
<td>sheltered instruction -</td>
<td>adjunct program - middle &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>middle &amp; high school, pull</td>
<td>high school, pull out -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>out - elementary</td>
<td>elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of ESL teachers in</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of bilingual associates</td>
<td>3 (Hispanic)</td>
<td>3 (2 Bosnian, 1 Hispanic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in 1999-2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District ESL budget for</td>
<td>$199,964 (1.35%)</td>
<td>$149,051 (0.78%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000 (% of total)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of $ to ESL student</td>
<td>$506/student</td>
<td>$914/student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

according to Superintendent Ellen Wrzesky. Of the total school population, 23% are

English language learners, all of which are Hispanic. This represents a rapid rate of growth

from 1990 when Perry had no ESL students (see Table 4.1 for a comparison of ESL

programs in Perry & Urbandale). Wrzesky has described Perry as “a rural district with very,

very urban demographics.” Forty-three percent of students in the district are on free and

reduced lunches with the number growing steadily each year. Certainly Perry’s school

district has experienced a change in its population of students during the 1990’s. Perry had

no Hispanic students in the district in 1990. In the 1999-2000 school year, Perry has 430

Hispanic students.
Urbandale has also experienced a large growth in the number of their ESL students during the 1990's. In 1992, Urbandale had only nine ESL students. During the 1999-2000 school year, Urbandale had 163 ESL students from seventeen different language backgrounds. Bosnian students make up the majority of ESL students in Urbandale (63%). Spanish speakers are the second largest group with 24% of the ESL students. The remaining fifteen language groups are small with only a few over 1% of the total ESL population in Urbandale (Chinese - 3%, Polish - 2%, Ukrainian - 2%, Russian - 1%).

**Type of ESL Program**

Perry's ESL program follows primarily the sheltered instructional model where core content is taught in modified English in conjunction with English proficiency development. This is particularly true at the secondary level where several courses are taught specifically for ESL students. In science, the high school offers sheltered earth science and biology taught by regular science teachers occasionally in conjunction with a bilingual associate. World history and English are taught by an ESL teacher specifically for ESL students. Students are mainstreamed for elective courses, e.g. personal clothing, or when their English skills are high enough to enter mainstream classes. The middle school has a similar arrangement. Sheltered social studies, math, and language arts classes are offered by the ESL teacher.

There is also a special program for middle and high school newcomers at Perry during the afternoons. Newcomers are secondary students with low English language abilities who are offered special services to help them transition into the new school setting (Constantino & Lavadenz, 1993). Newly arrived students from the high school and the
middle school combine into three groups based on ability level. Two groups meet at the middle school to work intensively on English language skills with the middle school ESL teacher and the bilingual associate. One group goes to the elementary school and works with the kindergarten ESL students until kindergarten dismissal. Originally, this group of twenty-five students ranging from seventh graders to seniors in high school was meeting all together at the middle school primarily under the instruction of the middle school ESL teacher (with assistance from a bilingual associate and the kindergarten ESL teacher who came for the last period of the day). However, due to the large number of students and the small size of the classroom, the newcomer group was split at the beginning of the third trimester to better meet the needs of the students.

The elementary ESL program at Perry follows more of the pull out model, particularly for kindergarten to third grade. Students leave their classroom to spend about 45 minutes with an ESL teacher daily to work on English language development. Beginning ESL students in fourth through sixth grades have more intensive ESL classes spending about two hours a day with the ESL teacher who also assists their geography teacher.

Urbandale’s ESL program is a pull-out program at the elementary schools since students are taken out of their mainstream class for about 45 minutes several times a week to work on English language development. In the middle school and high school, the program is an adjunct program. Students have a scheduled class with an ESL teacher daily for about 45 minutes to receive special help on their homework and their English language proficiency. The remainder of the day, they are in mainstream classes with no special language instruction. Urbandale provides three levels of service for its ESL students: direct,
tutorial, and monitor. Direct students are those identified with the biggest English language needs. Ideally, they would work with an ESL teacher for about 45 minutes daily. Tutorial students receive limited service by meeting with the ESL teacher only a few times per week for about 45 minutes. Monitor students are not seen on a regular basis, although they are still counted as ESL students and additional funding is received from the state for them. Based on the level of service for the student (direct, tutorial, or monitor), students meet with ESL teachers on a varying amount.

At the high school, direct students have at least one ESL class per day. The class may be for credit (in English) or non-credit. Occasionally a student might have two ESL classes in the same day. ESL class time at the high school typically involves help with homework in what might be referred to as the adjunct model of ESL since it involves coordination with the assignments students receive in their mainstream classes (Snow, 1991). Since ESL is a scheduled course for students, they are not “pulled out” of any other class at the high school like students are at the elementary. In addition to working on their homework during ESL, students have a weekly journal assignment to help develop their English language skills. The program model at the middle school is very similar to the high school. Students primarily work on homework during their ESL class with the assistance of volunteers or the ESL teacher.

Volunteers are an important part of the system at the middle and high schools in Urbandale. They can regularly be seen assisting students with homework during the ESL classes. The high school ESL program had two regular volunteers during Spring 2000. One volunteer, retired teacher Joan Sievers, began working with ESL when her friend, a high
school biology teacher, mentioned the need for volunteers in ESL. The other volunteer, Ellen Prust, works with students as part of Caring Corps, a new service group in Urbandale. Middle school ESL volunteers are organized by the PTA. They are mostly parents of mainstream students who regularly volunteer for the school. The elementary ESL program is just beginning to use volunteers for one-on-one work with students. Another volunteer from Caring Corps started working on reading with some ESL students in March 2000.

At the elementary level, direct students are not seen daily due to the large numbers of elementary ESL students and limited number of ESL staff. Instead, most students are seen three or four times per week for about 45 minutes except students at the elementary schools with smaller ESL populations (Olmsted, Rolling Green, and Valerius) who are seen twice a week on average. At the elementary school, ESL teachers coordinate assignments with the mainstream classroom teachers, but they are also working on basic English skills.

**Personnel and Resources for ESL**

Perry has six full-time ESL teachers and three bilingual associates (see Table 4.2 for teacher assignments). One ESL teacher is at the high school all day, and another comes over from the elementary in the afternoon to teach government, history, and English. One ESL teacher is at the middle school all day. In the afternoons, she works with the newcomer ESL students (some of whom come over from the high school). Two ESL teachers work with elementary students all day. Another ESL teacher works with the kindergartners and first graders most of the day, but she also has some newcomers working with her kindergartners in the afternoon. Bilingual associates in Perry provide some instructional assistance. They also play an important role as interpreters for parents and occasionally
Table 4.2. Perry ESL Teachers in 1999-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julie Walstrom</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Fry-Liebich</td>
<td>Middle school (a.m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newcomers (p.m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemarie Navarro</td>
<td>Elementary (a.m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High school (p.m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judi Neuman-Lee</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Latham</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Herrera</td>
<td>Elementary (a.m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newcomers (p.m.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

students. The bilingual associates are evenly distributed at the schools, although the associate at the elementary school is not actually in the classroom. Her primary role is translation and working with a special needs ESL student one-on-one. Perry has hired another certified middle/high school ESL teacher for the 2000-2001 school year to work with the newcomer students.

Three of the Perry ESL teachers are currently finishing their Master's degrees in TESL from the University of Northern Iowa. They have been taking night and summer courses for several years now. Upon completion, they will get their ESL endorsements. One of the other teachers is also close to completing requirements for her ESL endorsement. One of the other teachers has a Ph.D. in TESL and has taught at the university level for many years. The kindergarten ESL teacher has experience and certification in reading. The
bilingual associates, as is typical for this position, have little or no formal training in ESL. Their previous experience in the field is primarily their own language learning experience.

Funding is a major issue for the Perry ESL program. Perry has an overall budget of $14,836,057 for the 1999-2000 school year with $199,964 ($506 per ESL student) allocated for the ESL program. The teachers do not feel many constraints on the budget because the school board has provided them with all of their requests. However, the administrators in Perry realize that the ESL budget is severely limited due in part to the limits on funding from the Iowa state legislature. Superintendent Ellen Wrzesky says, “Funding is a major limitation for us.” The school district is forced to pay for the ESL program in part from their general fund which they would prefer not to do.

Consequently, the district is active in applying for grant money from the federal government and private sources to help with the funding. Two grants that they have received which relate directly to ESL are a Migrant Even Start grant and a grant from the Wiese Corporation for a second grade language camp. The Migrant Even Start grant allows for ESL and other services for four-year-old children of migrant workers. The language camp grant from the Wiese Corporation pays for a week-long experience in the second grade where Spanish-speaking students from the sixth grade (often ESL students) teach Spanish to second grade students (mainstream and ESL students) in an after-school camp setting.

Urbandale has three full-time ESL teachers (see Table 4.3). The high school and middle school ESL teachers both have their Master’s degrees in TESL along with the ESL endorsement from the state. The elementary ESL teacher is certified in Spanish, but she
Table 4.3. Urbandale ESL Teacher Assignments 1999-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stephaney Jones-Vo</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelley Fairbairn</td>
<td>Middle school/elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristin Ferguson</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

does not currently have an ESL endorsement. Urbandale also has three bilingual associates. The two Bosnian associates are full-time. A part-time Spanish associate was hired in Spring 2000. Urbandale has also hired another certified ESL teacher for the 2000-2001 school year to help with the growing number of elementary ESL students.

Funding is not such a pressing matter in Urbandale. The overall budget for Urbandale was $18,987,783 during the 1999-2000 school year with $149,051 budgeted for ESL ($914/ESL student). The teachers report having adequate budgets (better than at some other school districts). The elementary ESL teacher reported that the PTA is always willing to make donations if there is a need outside of the budget, and the other ESL teachers mentioned donations from service organizations such as Lion’s Club and Lioness Club.

Attitude of the Educational Community

The attitude of the educational community includes how well ESL students are received by other students, regular teachers, school staff, and administrators in the schools. The evaluation of support from the educational community is tied to the effective practices for LEP education noted in the literature review. Specifically, three overlapping areas were identified in the literature: administrative support, school vision, and a welcoming
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Support</th>
<th>Perry</th>
<th>Urbandale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High priority for ESL education (Curriculum &amp; Instruction, certified staff)</td>
<td>Fully developed: 1/6 certified staff, sheltered instruction, good budget, grant applications, adding more staff next year</td>
<td>Fully developed: 2/3 certified staff, variety of courses offered, excellent budget, adding more staff next year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff development for all teachers</td>
<td>Under development: 2 in-service trainings for mainstream teachers, ESL teachers attend conferences</td>
<td>Under development: “Programming for ESL Success” brochure, one-on-one work w/mainstream teachers, ESL teachers attend conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Vision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty assume responsibility for ESL students</td>
<td>Under development: minority of mainstream teachers w/ “ownership” problem</td>
<td>Fully developed: mainstream teachers happy to work with ESL students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff act as advocates for students</td>
<td>Under development: admin. &amp; ESL teachers have strong commitment, but mixed support from mainstream teachers</td>
<td>Fully developed: ESL staff speak at service groups, school staff works to meet needs of all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High achievement standards &amp; expectations</td>
<td>Fully developed: want success &amp; h.s. graduation for students</td>
<td>Fully developed: expect student success &amp; h.s. graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide variety of quality courses &amp; programs</td>
<td>Fully developed: several sheltered courses available at h.s. &amp; m.s., participation in extracurriculars</td>
<td>Under development: access to all courses w/ tutoring help, but few ESL specific courses, participation in extracurriculars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perry</td>
<td>Urbanaule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parental/family involvement</strong></td>
<td>Under development: ESL Parent</td>
<td>Under development: some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advisory Committee, bilingual</td>
<td>communication difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assoc. primary source of contact, working to make improvements</td>
<td>for mainstream teachers because of lg. barriers, bilingual assoc. primary source of contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community involvement</strong></td>
<td>Under development: not many programs between school &amp; community</td>
<td>Fully developed: volunteers, donations, cultural events, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial assessment procedures</strong></td>
<td>Under development: LAS, placement “sticky &amp; difficult”</td>
<td>Under development: Iowa DOE Home Lg. Survey, home visits with bilingual associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple forms of assessment</strong></td>
<td>Under development: still working to help teachers make adaptations</td>
<td>Fully developed: stressed to teachers by ESL staff &amp; through brochure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workforce training</strong></td>
<td>Fully developed: counselor emphasis, attend local minority recruitment days, special seminar for ESL families with college reps.</td>
<td>Fully developed: strong teacher emphasis, special financial aid assistance from ESL teacher or counselors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full developed: translation available for 2 major lg groups (Bosnian &amp; Spanish)</td>
<td>Fully developed: awareness of cultural differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcoming Environment</strong></td>
<td>Fully developed: bilingual associates who translate, but not all teachers submit letters</td>
<td>Fully developed: awareness of cultural differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Translation of school documents</strong></td>
<td>Fully developed: counselors accepting of cultural diff., awareness in school policies</td>
<td>Fully developed: awareness of cultural differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culturally sensitive school policies</strong></td>
<td>Fully developed: fair # of Spanish books in h.s. library</td>
<td>Under development: Bosnian materials very difficult to obtain, some Spanish books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilingual library books</strong></td>
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Table 4.4. (continued)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Perry</th>
<th>Urbandale</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interpreters for parents</td>
<td><strong>Fully developed</strong>: 3</td>
<td><strong>Fully developed</strong>: 3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bilingual associates for 395</td>
<td>bilingual associates for 163</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ESL students at 3 schools</td>
<td>ESL students at 7 schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural education</td>
<td><strong>Under development</strong>: not</td>
<td><strong>Under development</strong>: not</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>widespread throughout the</td>
<td>widespread throughout the</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>curriculum</td>
<td>curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing students’</td>
<td><strong>Under development</strong>:</td>
<td><strong>Not evident</strong>: only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>native languages and</td>
<td>some work in native lgs. w/</td>
<td>minimal work in 2 native lgs. of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultures</td>
<td>bilingual associates,</td>
<td>students w/ bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spanish language camp</td>
<td>associates, cultural</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual counselors</td>
<td><strong>Not evident</strong>: no bilingual</td>
<td><strong>Not evident</strong>: no bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with high student</td>
<td>school counselors</td>
<td>school counselors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expectations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

environment. Perry and Urbandale were rated on a number of factors defined in the literature that are related to these three areas (see Table 4.4).

The ratings chosen were "not evident," "under development," and "fully developed."

"Not evident" is defined as no evidence for the category found during this study. This does not necessarily mean that the school has done nothing to address that category, though.

"Under development" is the rating for categories that the school is actively working to improve. In most situations, the school has already identified the area as one that needs further development in order to best serve their students. "Fully developed" identifies a category where the needs of students are being met adequately. This rating does not imply that the category is perfect, although in some cases it may be very close to ideal.

Explanations of each of the categories follow with specific examples to support the rating.
Administrative Support

Perry

School staff feel very strongly that the administration is supportive of the ESL program, especially when speaking about the school board. The high school principal, Dan Marburger, reported tremendous support from the board. One of the mainstream teachers interviewed also agreed saying, “The school system has been over 100% supportive. Not just the minimum required, just everything that we would need...” The ESL teachers have similar sentiments as expressed by Judi Neuman-Lee, an elementary ESL teacher:

...The school board and the administration have made a real commitment to provide better services which means less kids and more time for the teachers. Our numbers have increased, but not to warrant the kind of expansion [of hires] if you would just do a sheer number thing. So there’s a tremendous commitment, especially on the board level and the administrative level to really provide quality academic help for the ESL kids. That is kind of unusual, I think, in a school district... and they're tremendous.

The commitment from the administration is evident in Perry. However, there are some areas that still need work. Although the majority (five out of six) of the ESL staff will have the state endorsement by the end of summer 2000, currently only one of the six teachers is certified in ESL. Overall, the ESL curriculum has received significant support through the development of a number of sheltered courses. The development this year of a newcomer program, the special afternoon program to develop literacy and ease the transition of newly arrived students, suggests responsiveness on the part of administration. Funding from the board has also been strong in spite of a limited ESL budget from the state. Instead, the Perry school district has been active in applying for grants as additional funding sources.
Staff development is an area, though, that is still under development. In many instances, mainstream teachers have received no in-service training about ESL. In the past few years, two in-service trainings were conducted for non-ESL teachers by outside speakers, but the high school principal acknowledges the struggle with staff development specifically for ESL. Part of his struggle is the lack of good training materials about ESL for the mainstream teachers. He expressed an intention to continue to improve in this area.

ESL teachers are encouraged to attend local conferences and professional development. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, three of the six ESL teachers in Perry are currently finishing their Master’s degrees. However, none of the teachers have been able to attend the annual professional association conference (TESOL) in recent years because of the expense and complexity in leaving the state for a conference.

Urbandale

Teachers in Urbandale feel that the administration is very supportive of ESL. They mentioned annual increases in funding for ESL, support for professional development, and hiring of new staff, including a Spanish bilingual aide this Spring. Kristin Ferguson, elementary ESL teacher, said, “The school board is very supportive of ESL. They’ve done a lot to spread the word and give us positive support and feedback.”

Staff development for mainstream teachers is an area that continues to receive attention from administrators and ESL teachers. While ESL teachers in Urbandale have taken a very active role in staff development, none of the mainstream teachers or staff members interviewed for this study reported having any formal inservice about ESL students while working in Urbandale. Instead, the ESL teachers are their source of
information. ESL staff have written a brochure for teachers and others called “Programming for ESL Success.” The brochure lists “recommended strategies for use by classroom teachers” including presentation of lesson and assignments, test taking, and special considerations.

ESL staff at the high school have also conducted some training at the beginning of the school year on occasion. During the introductory teachers’ meetings, ESL staff have presented information about cultural sensitivity and working with ESL students. For example, one year the Bosnian bilingual associate who works at the high school spoke to the teachers in Serbo-Croatian without any translation. She acted angry at them but offered no understandable explanation as to the cause of her anger. The idea was to simulate how ESL students feel when they enter the classroom and do not understand basic instructions or procedures in the class. The demonstration provided a way for ESL staff to get the attention of mainstream teachers and share some strategies for working with ESL students.

Staff development in Urbandale appears to occur more in an informal, one-on-one setting when the ESL teachers work very closely with the mainstream teachers to provide tips for ESL instruction. It appears that the impetus for this interaction is a question or need on the part of the mainstream teacher who then approaches the ESL teacher. All the mainstream teachers interviewed in Urbandale agreed that the ESL teachers have been an invaluable source of information for them and all reported good working relationships with the ESL teachers.

ESL teachers in Urbandale also are encouraged to attend conferences and professional development whenever possible. Stephanie Jones-Vo completed her Master’s
degree from Iowa State University several years ago with administrative support from the school district. The ESL teachers also have attended and presented at area conferences in Des Moines and Iowa City during the 1999-2000 school year.

**School Vision**

**Perry**

School vision is an area at Perry that continues to develop. Teachers and administrators are aware of some areas which need additional work such as faculty assuming responsibility for ESL students and becoming advocates for students, parental and community involvement, initial assessment procedures, and use of multiple forms of assessment.

Short (1999) noted that one of the key features of a strong school vision is all faculty assuming responsibility for ESL students. Although this is true for the majority of teachers in Perry, some opposition from mainstream teachers was reported by the ESL teachers. ESL teachers reported that support from mainstream teachers has improved as they have more exposure to and experience with ESL students, but the ESL teachers say that the “vast minority” still have a problem with “ownership” of ESL students. The attitude of this small number of mainstream teachers is that they do not have the time or energy to adequately instruct ESL students, so they do not even want to try. Instead, they would rather let the ESL teachers work with the students all the time.

Along these same lines, I found no evidence of mainstream teachers going beyond their ordinary duties to act as advocates for ESL students. The mainstream teachers I interviewed were not negative about ESL students, but there was no evidence that they took
the initiative to work to improve conditions for the students. The high school counselor interviewed for this study was very positive and proactive in her involvement, though. She was involved with grant applications for special programs for ESL students and worked diligently to find bilingual counseling services for students in need. Uniformly, administrators and ESL teachers in Perry were highly committed to improving education for ESL students and acting as advocates in the larger community.

Another factor that is under development in Perry is parental and family involvement. Julie Walstrom, high school ESL teacher, reports that communication between the parents and the school could be better. However, she stated that the bilingual aide has made communication with parents much easier than it used to be. The creation of an ESL Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) during the 1999-2000 school year is another improvement in this area. The PAC was formed by ESL parents who saw the need to get more involved with their children's education. However, the ESL PAC has progressed slowly due to small numbers in attendance and fewer meetings over the school year than originally planned. One successful activity initiated by the committee was a college night especially for ESL students and parents. Representatives from Iowa State University (ISU), Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC), and Job Corps attended along with Perry ESL graduates who were currently enrolled in college. The Perry graduates shared their experiences in college and encouraged high school ESL students to think seriously about going to college while the recruiters provided admissions and financial aid information. The event was well attended, and the students and parents who came were very interested in the information.
Likewise, community involvement is still under development. The community has several programs which offer special services to families in need, including a large percentage of Hispanics. For example, Perry has a free clinic run entirely by volunteers and donations. The clinic began in response to the need for prenatal care for immigrants when doctors wanted to stop delivering babies in Perry in February 1994. Since that time, the clinic has expanded to include all sorts of basic care needs such as routine physicals, allergy shots, prenatal services, common illnesses such as colds and ear infections, and referrals for more complicated services like diabetes management. The free clinic is open to anyone; however, the majority (85-90%) of the approximately eight hundred patients a year are Hispanic.

Many of the services in the Perry community are related to basic survival needs: health, housing assistance, weatherization, utility assistance, and donations from the food pantry. However, there is little formal connection between the schools and the community. As suggested in the literature about school-community partnerships (Chavkin, 1993; McCarty First & Willshire Carrera, 1988), schools can collaborate with community organizations as a central clearinghouse for services for needy families. There is much potential for more formal partnerships between the school and the community in Perry.

Initial assessment (intake) procedures are another area that ESL teachers in Perry identified as needing improvement. When students first enroll in the Perry school district, they are given a home language survey that the teachers have developed similar to the Iowa Department of Education Home Language Survey. Parents and students fill out the form. In most cases, the ESL families can meet with a bilingual associate to help them with the
paperwork. Then most students take a version of the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) (DeAvila & Duncan), depending on their age and skill level. Younger students take the PreLAS. Placement is very flexible, and adjustments are made as necessary based on a child’s performance in the classroom. Although this is the formal assessment procedure, ESL teachers report that the test is sometimes not given when students first arrive because of tight schedules. Missing student records complicate matters as well. One ESL teacher referred to placement as “sticky and difficult” because of the struggles involved.

Multiple forms of assessment is another area that Perry is working to develop. Although this is something that ESL teachers and administrators recognize as being important for ESL students, not all mainstream teachers understand and accept the idea. High school principal Dan Marburger mentioned some efforts to encourage mainstream teachers “to make modifications for ESL students,” but no evidence of modifications were seen during the observations and interviews with mainstream teachers in Perry.

Three factors of school vision that were fully developed in Perry were high achievement standards, wide variety of quality programs and courses, and workforce training. Administrators and ESL teachers alike have high expectations for academic achievement from the ESL students, even though these expectations are not always met. Superintendent Ellen Wrzesky, the ESL teachers, and a bilingual aide mentioned lower than desired achievement levels of ESL students as an area of major concern. This seems to be more of a problem with the large number of newcomer students because several names of highly successful former ESL students were mentioned during the data collection. For example, one female ESL student was a top graduate from the high school in 1999. Also,
several members of the National Honor Society are Hispanic students who have been in the ESL program.

Perry's variety of quality courses and programs is one of its strengths. As mentioned previously, the high school offers sheltered courses in science (earth science and biology), social studies, and English so that students with lower English language abilities do not fall behind in the core curriculum requirements for graduation. The middle school also offers sheltered courses in math, social studies, and English.

Some ESL students are involved in extracurricular activities as well. Wrestling is a popular sport for boys at the middle school, and the soccer team at the high school is almost exclusively composed of ESL students. In fact, the soccer program began at the request of the ESL students. Other ESL students do not participate in extracurricular activities because of part-time jobs or responsibilities at home. Some ESL teachers suggested care for younger siblings was one reason girls do not participate as much in extracurricular activities.

Workforce training is another area that is strong in Perry. The ESL college night initiated by the ESL PAC is an example of an activity that helps students make the transition to the workforce. High school counselor Tammy Valline mentioned the difficulties in helping students think beyond finding a job at IBP when they graduate. Visits to the ESL classroom to talk about college, trips to minority recruiting days at nearby college campuses, and visits from college representatives are all ways that the Perry school district is working to encourage students to continue their education beyond high school. In terms of job training, Principal Dan Marburger hopes to begin a mentoring program soon that would match Hispanic business leaders with high school ESL students in a job shadowing
type of experience. The high school counselor also mentioned basic career training work that she does with ESL students to help them identify areas of interest based on past hobbies or elective courses taken.

**Urbandale**

From the early stages of Urbandale's ESL program, school vision has been a strength. The first ESL director in Urbandale, Bruce Christiansen, began the process in conjunction with Stephanie Jones-Vo, the first full-time ESL teacher in Urbandale. They developed a plan to bring refugee students to Urbandale to enrich the community through increased diversity. The pioneering vision of this team laid a strong foundation for the program today so that it has been able to handle increasing numbers of ESL students. Jones-Vo explains, "It's really because of that vision that was in place... [The growing number of ESL students in Urbandale] wasn't an accidental thing that happened."

Urbandale is strong in many of the factors under school vision. Comments from ESL teachers and the interviews with mainstream teachers suggest that all faculty assume responsibility for the teaching of ESL students. Shelley Fairbairn, middle school ESL teacher, noted "Teachers here don't view students as the ESL teacher's problem.... It seems like the teachers are just so willing to work with the kids. In Urbandale, we're lucky because the ESL students are seen as a real asset to the district and a real enhancement of the students population, whereas in some places I know, that's not the case."

The commitment from all teachers in the district is seen in their willingness to be advocates for the ESL students. The ESL teachers are advocates when they speak to community groups such as Lion's Club about the ESL program in Urbandale and its needs.
The program has received a number of donations from community organizations and businesses in part because the ESL teachers work as advocates for their students. Mainstream teachers are also involved in this process. One example from the fall of 1999 was donations of clothing as well as household goods for a “free garage sale” for needy ESL families. A brief e-mail message to mainstream teachers requesting donations of winter clothing for ESL students brought a lunchroom full of seventy-five boxes of household items and clothing for all ages. ESL families were able to take the items they needed free of charge. Mainstream teachers worked as advocates for their students to help spread the word about the need, and the response was amazing. The clothing donations show support from the community for the needs of ESL families. The number of volunteer hours in the Urbandale ESL program and the frequency of donations from community organizations reflects the support.

High achievement standards are another fully developed factor in Urbandale. Like Perry, Urbandale expects its students to succeed. One ESL teacher mentioned that mainstreaming students upon their arrival at the school showed high expectations for students since they are expected to survive mainstream courses with only a minimal amount of assistance from the ESL teacher.

One reason students are able to succeed in mainstream courses at Urbandale is because of the modifications in assignments and assessments made by mainstream teachers. This is an area that the ESL teachers have stressed in their work with other teachers. The major focus of the “Programming for ESL Success” brochure written by ESL teachers is how to make modifications for ESL students and how to offer alternative types of
assessment. In particular, Stephanie Jones-Yo reported some struggles in helping mainstream teachers fully understand what alternative assessment is about. According to Jones-Yo, "It has been my challenge to convince some teachers that the actual manipulation of the material in taking a test is where the learning happens, not before that." She has worked with mainstream teachers to help them understand that allowing ESL students to use their notes, textbooks, or the assistance of the bilingual associate or ESL teacher during an exam can lead to successful learning because of the test modifications.

Workforce training is another strength of the Urbandale program. Jones-Yo encourages students to apply for college and even helps them fill out the application for financial aid. High school counselors in Urbandale also work with ESL students to help them overcome some of the challenges to a college education that are unique to ESL students such as admission requirements and financial aid. Marla Morrison, Urbandale high school counselor, mentioned several personal conversations about ESL students that she has had with college financial aid officers. Career training is another part of the preparation Urbandale ESL students receive. The class has had several guest speakers from the business community. One job placement worker who has spoken to the class on various occasions provided tips for interviewing, including how to dress appropriately in April 2000. The Urbandale Hy-Vee grocery store donated refreshments and some personal care products to complement the presentation.

Factors under school vision that Urbandale is working to develop more fully are the variety of courses and programs offered to ESL students, family involvement with the school, and initial assessment procedures. Because Urbandale's program at the secondary
level provides tutoring support for students who are in mainstream classes, ESL students have access to the many courses offered at Urbandale High School. From a practical standpoint, though, their overall comprehension may be too low for success or they may self-select easier courses which would mirror practices of tracking students in non-college prep classes.

Though pull-out ESL programs are not seen as the most effective program type because the assistance students receive from an ESL teacher is very limited (Thomas & Collier, 1995), ESL teachers in Urbandale think the pull-out program works well for their situation. Students enter mainstream classes (the ultimate goal of public school ESL) immediately upon arrival at the school. They are not limited to the sheltered courses offered by the ESL program, so they have a greater range of choices. Then during their daily hour of ESL, teachers are available to assist them specifically with questions they have about assignments from their courses. The instruction is tailored specifically to the authentic needs of the classroom.

Urbandale ESL students are becoming more involved in extracurricular activities, although the involvement is not yet as high as teachers and administrators would like to see. Middle school ESL teacher Shelley Fairbairn explained that it “takes initiative” to get the kids involved with extracurricular activities, but once they become involved, the independence and “school savvy” they gain is a great benefit. Often ESL families are not fully aware of the opportunities and benefits of participating in extracurricular activities, so the ESL teachers have to encourage them to find out more information about the programs.
Involvement from families is a growing area in Urbandale. The bilingual associates are a resource for communicating with many of the children's parents who are still learning English. Almost all communication from the school to the parents goes through the bilingual associates. In some cases, this means that the bilingual associate has a much closer relationship with the family than the ESL teacher has. This was certainly true for the elementary Bosnian associate who received many phone calls from ESL parents even when she was at home. Parents would call to ask her advice about things like how to have their car fixed or get immunizations for their children.

Although the bilingual associates have made it much easier to communicate with families, there are still some difficulties. Working through a translator to communicate with parents just makes the process one step more complicated than it already is. Elementary mainstream teacher, Lisa Schaub, lists parental communication as the most frustrating part of working with ESL students, "The biggest frustration I have is communicating with parents because they don't speak the English language, and then having to wait for a conference and having a translator."

Urbandale's initial placement procedures are better for Bosnian families than for students from other language backgrounds since the bilingual associates participate with the families in the initial assessment. Once ESL personnel learn that a new family is coming to Urbandale, an ESL teacher and a bilingual associate make a home visit to the family before they have even come to the school to enroll. The bilingual associate is able to speak with the family in Serbo-Croatian to explain a bit about the educational culture in America. An informal assessment of the students' language skills in both the native language and English
can then be made. Staff also help families fill out enrollment forms for school. The basic formal assessment tool used by Urbandale is the Iowa Department of Education's Home Language Survey. The survey contains questions about the native language of parents and the language(s) spoken at home. No formal language assessment test is given to entering ESL students in Urbandale.

Welcoming Environment

Perry

The environment in Perry is fairly well developed. Perry has provided several services in the families’ native language. For example, bilingual associates are available for translation of school documents and interpreting for parents. Generally, there is an adequate number of staff to handle the needs. However, at peak times like parent-teacher conferences, there are not enough bilinguals to cover all the needs. Another problem is that mainstream teachers often fail to send documents to the associates for translation. This could be because they simply forget or feel that there is not adequate time to translate the message before the note is sent home. Perry has no evidence of bilingual counselors in the school, though the high school counselor refers students for outside counseling with a bilingual counselor on occasion. Additionally, one of the ESL teachers is a functional bilingual who occasionally incorporates some work in Spanish for her students, and occasionally students will use Spanish in lessons with a bilingual associate. The one-week Spanish language camp for second grade students is a beginning. There is an interest among the ESL teachers for more bilingual programming, but currently there is no commitment to bilingual education in part because certified staff are not fluent in Spanish.
An area that Perry continues to develop is a real understanding and appreciation for the culture of the ESL students. Several members of the high school staff reported that ESL and mainstream students are not fully integrated and so do not gain the maximum benefit of being in a bicultural environment. Tammy Valline, high school counselor, said, "...Because Perry is so small... diversity is new to them still and there's not a real appreciation for it. And that's not just the kids. It's... that's parents, too. They don't see the value in that."

Julie Walstrom, high school ESL teacher explains, "There is a real, I believe, a real tolerance and a real acceptance of the Hispanic kids at the high school, but I don't think there's a lot of understanding between the groups." In other words, mainstream students do not mind having ESL students in the school, but they lack an understanding of the cultural differences between the ESL students and themselves.

**Urbandale**

The Urbandale school district has a high level appreciation for the diversity of its ESL students. Although integration among the students is not perfect, Urbandale has made some steps forward in this area. The administration and teachers really see the value of diversity and have worked to increase the cultural exposure of the white, middle-class students that predominate Urbandale. Bob Stouffer, high school principal in Urbandale stated that a First in the Nation in Education (FINE) grant application has been submitted with a key emphasis being the programs at the high school that seek diversity in order to better prepare students for the workforce. School board president Doug Getter also sees the cultural exposure that occurs in a personal setting as students relate individually as positive. The "typical Urbandale student" can feel more comfortable in their relationships with ESL
students as they learn more about them and make the connection that they are likely to work with people from around the world since today's business is increasingly international.

Urbandale also has a commitment to providing some services in the native languages of students. The presence of two Bosnian bilingual associates and one part-time Spanish associate allows for some translation of documents and interpretation for parents. However, the associates cover several buildings, so it is impossible to meet all the needs for translation and interpretation. The wider variety of language groups in Urbandale than in Perry also makes it impossible to provide translation in every home language of the students. There was no evidence that the school provides bilingual counselors, and the school had only a handful of books in native languages of students. Serbo-Croatian books, in particular, are difficult to find for the Bosnian students according to Stephanie Jones-Vo and the high school librarian. The ESL classroom has a grammar book and two or three dictionaries in Serbo-Croatian or related dialects. Development of the students' native languages is another area where no evidence was found in Urbandale. The Bosnian or Hispanic students occasionally use their native languages with the bilingual associates, but development of their native language is not a goal of the school system. Other ESL students who speak Polish, Russian, and other native languages do not have an opportunity for any instruction in their native language.

**Attitudes of the Larger Community**

Community attitudes are a complex issue to examine because of the many factors that are involved. Consequently, this study reports a limited perspective which only begins to suggest some issues for further study. Since the focus of research was the schools in
Perry and Urbandale, the description of community attitudes and support is based primarily on the perspectives of school personnel. Interviews with community members also inform the description, but the number interviewed was limited to six people in Perry and two people in Urbandale. Attitudes in Perry appear to be somewhat mixed while Urbandale has a more supportive community environment.

**Perry**

Because Perry received an influx of ESL students due primarily to the arrival of the IBP, Inc. pork processing facility, many of the attitudes in the community are linked to people's feelings about IBP. The initial reaction of many people was negative. Some community members are working now to create a more positive atmosphere between racial groups. The establishment of a diversity committee in Perry is one example of this. The committee is composed of a variety of people from community organizations who are interested in the issue of diversity. Members have included managers and the community liaison from IBP, pastors from churches in Perry, and people from local businesses. They have addressed a variety of issues related to increasing diversity in Perry from topics such as housing to positive press for Hispanics to the need for a youth soccer program.

Support for the ESL program has been affected by this mixed reaction from the community. Although many would say that the community supports educational services, there are others who note that there is "an element of the community" that must be considered any time the school adds new ESL staff or expands their facilities. In other words, some community members tend to be resistant to increasing expenditures for ESL. However, Ellen Wrzesky, superintendent at Perry, says "I've never had anyone say we
shouldn’t be providing programming, I’ve never. I think there’s a whole core of people who think it’s wonderful. We’re in this community and believe that there’s advantages to having a diverse population to all students.” So even though the schools may encounter some resistance from the community due to increasing costs, the community recognizes the need to provide special instruction for ESL students. Some even embrace the diversity.

Urbandale

Community support in Urbandale has been wonderful according to the ESL teachers and administrators. Initially, Stephaney Jones-Vo and Bruce Christiansen determined that the community was open to diversity before they began building the ESL program. One mainstream teacher mentioned that some people in the community might not be very supportive because of changes in “jobs and neighborhoods” as more refugee families move to Urbandale. However, she also felt that anyone who is involved with the schools in Urbandale sees the benefits of having a diverse community and is consequently more supportive.

The Urbandale ESL program and families have worked to ensure that the community is appreciated for all it does. ESL mothers who received free daycare during a special event made baklava as a thank-you treat for the daycare providers. ESL students and staff often send thank-you notes to organizations that donate goods or money to the program. ESL staff also work to build new alliances whenever possible by speaking at service organizations. (See Suggestions for Other ESL Programs below for more information about how the ESL program shows appreciation.)
Role of the ESL Personnel in Affecting Attitudes

Within the school environment, ESL teachers have some influence on the attitudes of mainstream personnel. Support for ESL from administrators is also a critical factor. Certainly ESL personnel are able to make some differences as they act as advocates for the students. This is particularly evident in Urbandale where teachers are very active in seeking publicity for their students and ESL programs or activities (see Publicity below for more specific information). The media is only one way this is accomplished. Perhaps more effective for causing change or increasing community involvement is speaking for service organizations such as Rotary Club, Lioness Club, and churches. In this way, the ESL teachers are able to share the needs of their students and gather more support for them. Also, Urbandale has been very active in involving students in these kinds of presentations. It is not uncommon for the entire ESL program to take a field trip to another school or a conference to present about ESL in Urbandale or the cultures of the students. In the spring of 2000, Urbandale’s high school ESL students presented a program at the Waukee, Iowa schools, and they performed ethnic dances at the Iowa Language and Cultural Concerns Conference in Des Moines, Iowa.

Parent Opinions about Community Support

Surveys of parents were conducted in order to include their opinions in the study. However, because of difficulties in arranging interviews with parents, due in part to language differences between the researcher and the families, parents with higher English language skills were targeted. An interpreter was used on several occasions. As a result, the findings are limited.
Perry

Interviews with ESL parents in Perry were conducted after an adult ESL class. One of the regular adult ESL teachers was involved as an interpreter for four of the six interviews. Of the six ESL parents interviewed in Perry, three have mixed opinions about the support from the community. Four of them thought people in Perry were friendly and helpful to their families. However, of the six parents interviewed, one third of them had reservations about this question. One woman thought that the people in California where she had lived before moving to Perry were friendlier, more helpful, and not so racist. Another man said the attitudes of people in Perry depended on whether you had work or not. If you were out of work, they were not friendly and helpful anymore. In terms of support for the ESL program, half of the parents specifically mentioned support for education of children even if the support for adults was a bit lacking. However, all agreed that it could be much better. It seems that ESL parents are somewhat isolated from the mainstream community and therefore not fully able to judge the level of support from the community. Many of them reported only limited contact with English speakers outside of their jobs. Three even commented specifically that they did not have much interaction with the English-speaking portion of the community.

Urbandale

Two Bosnian parents were interviewed in Urbandale. They both had children in high school. These mothers felt that people in the town were very friendly and helpful to them. They especially mentioned assistance from their neighbors with things like buying a car, finding a job, or just neighborly help. They also felt that the school was very supportive
although both said that they were not knowledgeable enough about the community to feel comfortable making a judgement on community support.

**Suggestions for Other ESL Programs**

Based on the experiences of teachers and administrators in Perry and Urbandale, several themes became apparent for increasing support from the educational and larger community. Focusing on “the positives,” getting publicity for the students and the ESL program, serving as advocates for ESL students, and participants in the program having “an attitude of gratitude” were noted by ESL teachers and administrators in Perry and Urbandale as important factors for developing support for the ESL program.

**Focusing on the Positives**

Many administrators and teachers from both schools mentioned “focusing on the positives” as a way to help build support for the ESL program. Perry Superintendent Ellen Wrzesky mentioned the connection between the vision of the school district and the positive attitude necessary.

> I think that you have to embrace diversity. You have to have a mission and a strong belief within your administrators and your staff that all individuals need to be valued and that the expectation is that we accommodate ALL types of diversity and that we embrace that, we think it’s positive. And then for ESL, you have to have support for that regular classroom teacher, to help them. You have to have interpreters available, you have to have ESL staff available, and you have to see that as a positive. So it goes back to that central belief.

Along with this idea is stressing the positive contributions ESL students make to the school and the community. The Urbandale ESL teachers mentioned the importance of “showing
off the positives of your population” and highlighting the good things the students are doing.

Publicity

One of the ways to emphasize the positives to the community is through publicity about them. Urbandale in particular has succeeded in getting coverage of ESL student activities in the local newspapers (both *The Urbandale Press Citizen* and *The Des Moines Register*). Urbandale has also taken advantage of opportunities in Iowa like state conferences, education publications, and special contests for students. In April 2000, two Bosnian ESL students, encouraged by their ESL teachers, entered and won the McDonald’s/Disney Millennium Dreamer Contest for essays they wrote about their contributions to their communities. The essays were reprinted in *The Urbandale Press Citizen* along with pictures of the winners and their teachers. *The Des Moines Register* also carried a notice about the winners. Shelley Fairbairn, middle school ESL teacher at Urbandale, explains the reason for an emphasis on publicity. “We’re just trying to always enlighten people about what the kids have been through in their whole experience coming here and really what they have to offer. That has really helped, I think, too.”

Publicity can also mean presentations at civic organizations so that the community is more aware of the needs of the students and the ESL program. Participants in the study stressed that personal contact, particularly with the students themselves, can make a difference in community attitudes. According to Connie Toenjes, Urbandale ESL Director:

[The ESL teachers] go out into the community. They speak to Lion’s Club. They speak to Rotary Clubs. They go to women’s groups. They go to church groups. I mean, they are constantly out there putting out this message and educating people on who these children are and what we do with them and what our mission is. And I just think you can’t do it without that because that sells the program right there and
helps people, educates them as to what we’re about and what we’re doing. And it puts a real, human face on it... It puts everything in a totally different light, and I think you get a lot more community support that way.

Individual, personal contact between the ESL students and the community can be a real change factor. Julie Walstrom, high school ESL teacher in Perry, also has found this to be true:

One of the things that I’ve done... is let the kids get out into the community to let the community meet them just as kind of individuals, as kids, you know, with faces, rather than this group of Hispanics who have come to this school. So, I’ve had the kids do presentations at Rotary [and] Kiwanis.

Other ESL teachers spoke of the students as ambassadors. Elementary ESL teacher Judi Neuman-Lee said, “Our kids are really our best ambassadors because they are by and large excellent kids. And once people get to know them, ‘Oh, this kid’s a pretty neat kid and, you know, this isn’t so bad.’” One-on-one meetings between ESL students and community members helps to break down stereotypes.

Serving as Advocates for ESL Students

By getting out into the community and sharing the goals and needs of the ESL programs, teachers serve as advocates for their students. Other ways that this is important is within the schools themselves. Often this may include working with mainstream teachers to emphasize the validity of allowing multiple assessment procedures for ESL students or developing relationships with administrators. Bob Stouffer, Urbandale High School principal, stressed the importance of being an advocate for students to the administration so “the rug is not pulled out from under you” by cuts in funding or staffing when the budget is tight.
"An Attitude of Gratitude"

Another theme that was apparent particularly in Urbandale was showing appreciation for the support and help from the community by giving something in return. This could be sharing something of their culture and the diversity they bring to the community. According to Dan Marburger, Perry High School Principal, "Our kids, when they go out to the world to work, are going to work with all kinds of people. And so, we're getting experience with that now." On another level, the sharing could be service projects or volunteer work to repay the community for their help. "I think some communities might feel a little taken advantage of, on some level, and so if there are ways that students can give back to the community, I think that's a positive," Shelley Fairbairn, Urbandale middle school ESL teacher. Urbandale has sponsored events like the "Thank You Urbandale" evening where ESL students performed traditional dances wearing ethnic costumes and cooked traditional foods from their countries. The result according to Bob Stouffer, Urbandale High School Principal, is that "it gives an opportunity for the people who have been blessed by community support to reach out and say thank you to the community." The cycle of support continues when the students and the program begin to contribute to the community.

Urbandale ESL teachers work hard to ensure that donations, volunteers, and assistance of any kind are appreciated. The Urbandale ESL program honored retired school teacher Joan Sievers' service as a four-year ESL volunteer on Veterans Day 1999 with a surprise celebration (Augstums, 1999). Thank-you notes signed by all the ESL students and
teachers are also a common practice for any organization that donates supplies or money to the program. Guest speakers are also thanked for their presentation to the class.

Another project of the Urbandale ESL program during the 1999-2000 school year was sponsoring a Bosnian refugee family. When ESL teachers at the middle and high school asked students about doing a service project, the idea came up to sponsor a refugee family. The students knew they would be able to help the family in a way few others could because they had already experienced moving to Urbandale as refugees. As with other events in Urbandale, The Des Moines Register carried an article about the service project and the refugee family sponsored by the students (Johnson, 1999). According to Bob Stouffer, "It's really been a positive thing for them [the ESL students]. In other words, the same things that happened for them in the way that the school and community supported them, now they are doing in return for a new family here. So, it's really a nice, positive circle."

In addition to these suggestions from school personnel in Perry and Urbandale, there are other implications of this study for ESL teachers, school administrators, and the Iowa Department of Education. These implications and suggestions for how to address them will be discussed in the next chapter. The limitations of the study and suggestions for further research in this area are also included.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The increasing number of ESL students across the United States and particularly in several small towns in Central Iowa raised the question of how a school district goes about building support both within the school system and from the community in which the school is located. This can be particularly difficult in a place like Iowa where incredible diversity in student cultural and educational backgrounds is found in adjoining counties. Since large numbers of ESL students is a relatively new phenomenon in Iowa, the infrastructure to support school districts with growing ESL populations does not exist to the extent that it does in states that have traditionally had more ESL students (e.g. California). This study looked at two ESL programs in Central Iowa to determine the climate for ESL, the challenges a district may face, and what strategies can be used to build a quality program, including increasing community support for the students.

Summary of Findings

The results of the study show that although Perry and Urbandale are very different in terms of the population, average income of families, and types of ESL students in the school system, both districts have responded well to the sudden need to develop their ESL programs. Some of the innovative practices mentioned in the description of these programs include:

- Perry’s newcomer program in the afternoons for beginning middle or high school students including the pairing of kindergarten and high school ESL students
- Urbandale’s involvement of volunteers with the secondary ESL classes
- the week long second grade Spanish language camp conducted by sixth grade students in Perry
- the “Programming for ESL Success” brochure written by Urbandale ESL teachers
These activities are a brief listing of some of the innovative ideas I discovered during my brief months observing these programs. Undoubtedly there are others that are not mentioned here.

Part of the responsibility for cultivating such an innovative environment lies on administration to provide the foundation necessary for future development of support. School administrators who put into place a strong vision for the staff and students in their district will find that the school will be a welcoming environment for ESL students and families. ESL teachers and administrators can then work together to gather support from the community through emphasizing the positive contributions ESL students make to the school and the community, getting publicity for the program, serving as advocates for the students and their needs, and having a grateful attitude that works to continue the cycle of support.

There seems to be a causal relationship between the educational environment and the attitudes of the community. Flores (1996) suggested that mainstream teachers reflected the feelings of the community. Yet it also seems that the school can change those attitudes. The Urbandale school district has taken a very proactive approach to getting support from the community and maintaining it. The Perry school district, however, is working to
overcome some negative attitudes from the community by fostering a more positive attitude toward diversity within the school system.

It is likely that part of the different attitudes in Perry and Urbandale are connected to the factors that brought the LEP students to the communities. Most LEP students in Perry are there because their families came to work for IBP. In Urbandale, the ESL families are primarily refugees who were hosted in the Urbandale community by various groups. In general, the Urbandale community had more involvement in the decision to bring in immigrants than the Perry community had. Urbandale’s proximity to Des Moines suggest more exposure to ethnic diversity than the rural community of Perry, although Urbandale has remained predominantly white as a suburb of Des Moines. Perry’s rural character is a factor that makes the rapid increase in LEP students even more challenging.

**Limitations**

This study is limited primarily because the number of people involved was small (41 people interviewed), and the focus was on events that occurred during a two-month period of the school year during regular school hours. A longitudinal study that investigated extracurricular activities as well as classroom activities would provide a much greater depth of information from which to draw conclusions. There are many other people who could also contribute to the study. Particularly the number of parents (8 for both locations) and community members interviewed was very small. ESL students could also contribute a greater level of understanding about how to build a quality program.
Recommendations for Future Research

Community support is a complicated issue to study. This study only scratched the surface in terms of looking at support for ESL programs from the community. The main focus of this study was school personnel’s perceptions of community attitudes. Future research should focus on describing from firsthand knowledge two additional areas that were only touched on in the current study: parental involvement in the schools and community attitudes toward ESL. The description should also investigate how those attitudes affect supportive partnerships between the school-family-community. Although research has been conducted on ESL parental involvement (Adger & Peyton, 1999; Bermudez & Marquez, 1996; Epstein & Connors, 1992; Violand-Sanchez et al., 1991; Volk, 1994), much information is still needed. Certainly the relationship between the school and community resources is an interesting one that needs further study in order to understand more fully how to develop support for ESL programs.

Another variable to control for in future research is what brought the ESL families to the U.S. This study focused on two of the three types of ESL students in Iowa based on Flores’ (1996) classification of the reason families are in Iowa. The parents of ESL students in Perry immigrated for jobs. Many ESL families in Urbandale came as refugees. It would be interesting to study communities in Iowa such as Ames or Iowa City where the majority of ESL students came because their parents are graduate students. It is likely that community attitudes would be different from Perry and Urbandale given the different context.
Another interesting area for research identified in this study are the roles of bilingual associates. Both Perry and Urbandale use bilingual associates to work with the ESL students. Bilingual associates were noted as a critical resource for communicating with families and students in their native language. The associates also play a role in helping ESL students feel more comfortable in school since there is someone who can speak their native language. However, there were some differences noted in the roles of bilingual associates in the classroom that merit further study. Particularly given the different ESL program types, it would be interesting to see how their roles vary in pull-out and sheltered instructional programs.

One contribution of this study is the initial development of an evaluation tool for school support of ESL programs (Table 4.4). This tool combines factors identified in the research as common to effective ESL programs in a table that could be used for self-evaluation of the educational environment in a district. Further research could include refining and developing this tool further.

This study has described two ESL programs in terms of the population they serve, their program type, and personnel and resources for the ESL program. Then the attitudes of the educational community were described in terms of a framework of factors for administrative support, school vision, and welcoming environment. The attitudes of the larger community were presented from the perspective of the schools. Then suggestions for how ESL personnel can affect these attitudes were given based on the experiences of personnel in Perry and Urbandale. The hope is that these recommendations can help other school districts experiencing rapid growth in their ESL populations to develop optimal
programs, including positive and supportive attitudes from the educational and larger communities. The examples of innovative practices and suggestions for other school districts provide a guideline of what other programs experiencing sudden, rapid growth can do to best meet the needs of their ESL students.
APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

ESL Teachers

1. What is your experience and training in ESL? How long have you been in (name of district)?
2. How did the ESL program originate here?
3. What problems or challenges were involved?
4. What are the main problems or challenges the program faces today?
5. What kinds of interaction do you have with ESL students? How often do you see them and in what capacity?
6. In your opinion, what do new ESL students struggle with the most when entering your school?
7. What extracurricular activities do ESL students participate in? (Middle & High schools)
8. How often do you communicate with parents of ESL students? In what ways (phone, letters home, conferences, etc.) Do the parents visit the school?
9. What is the attitude of regular classroom teachers in working with ESL students at your school?
10. How supportive are other school staff such as counselors, secretaries, school nurse, etc.?
11. What kinds of support does the district provide for ESL in terms of materials, training, personnel, etc.?
12. What resources/materials are provided in the students’ native languages (books, bilingual aides, counselors, school communications, etc.)?
13. From my perspective, it seems the community is very supportive of the ESL program. Is this an accurate view? Why is this a un/supportive community?
14. I’ve heard about many programs in Urbandale where the community helps the students with donations of clothing, school supplies, etc. Can you tell me more about this? How did it begin? Have there been other activities which involve the community in helping ESL students (particularly at your school)?
15. I’ve heard about a program on higher education in Perry for ESL parents and students with counselors and community people involved. Can you tell me more about this? How did it begin? Have there been other activities which involve the community in helping ESL students (particularly at your school)?
16. Based on your experience, what is the best way to build community support for the ESL program? What advice would you have for other communities (like Ames) who are struggling with this area?
17. Give an example of programs/activities that you would like to see in the near future which foster relations between the ESL population and the community. What’s preventing you from doing it (time, money, support)?
Bilingual Associates

1. How long have you worked as a bilingual associate? What experience or training have you had in ESL?
2. How long have you been in [name of district]? Do you actually live in [name of town]?
3. What is your impression of the schools? How would you describe the quality of education (including the environment) that ESL students receive?
4. What is your role in the education process for ESL students? How much and in what ways do you interact with students? Do you ever “teach” the class? With other teachers or school staff?
5. How critical is it to have someone in the school who speaks the native language of families in terms of students’ education and communication with parents? Is translation one of your primary responsibilities?
6. What is your impression of the community in terms of how they view diversity and have received immigrants?
7. In your opinion, what is the biggest struggle that ESL families face when they come to [name of town]?
8. What other kinds of programs/activities should be provided for ESL students/families?
9. How supportive do you think the [name of town] community is of the ESL program and students? Give examples.

Mainstream Teachers

1. How long have you been a high school teacher? Have you had any special training in working with ESL students (in-service, special courses, etc.)? Approximately how many ESL students have you worked with during your time in [name of district]?
2. In your opinion, what do new ESL students struggle with the most when entering your school? How have you dealt with these problems?
3. What contributions do ESL students make to your class?
4. What frustrates you most in dealing with ESL students?
5. Are ESL students easier or more difficult to discipline? What problems do they create for the classroom?
6. How often do you communicate with parents of ESL students? In what ways (phone, letters home, conferences, etc.)? Do the parents visit the school?
7. What kinds of support does the district provide to help you with ESL students in terms of materials, training, personnel, etc.?
8. What is the role of the ESL teacher as you see it?
9. From my perspective, it seems that the community is very supportive of ESL students. Is this an accurate view at the high school level? Why is this so? What has facilitated it?
School Counselors

1. How long have you been a counselor at (name of district) High School? Have you had any special training in working with ESL students (in-service, special courses, etc.)?
2. What kinds of interaction do you have with ESL students? How many do you work with, how often, in what ways?
3. What resources or materials are provided in the students’ native languages (bilingual counselors, special sessions, school communications, etc.)?
4. In your opinion, what do new ESL students struggle with the most when entering your school?
5. How supportive are school staff and students toward ESL students? How supportive is the community toward ESL students?
6. How often do you communicate with parents of ESL students? In what ways (phone, letters, home visits, conferences, etc.)? Do the parents visit the school?
7. What sort of services do you often refer ESL students/families to in the community?
8. I know that (name of district) has really stressed higher education to its ESL students. What are some of the special challenges for ESL students preparing for higher education and how do you address these as a school counselor?

School Administrators

1. How long have you been in (name of district)? Briefly, what is your background in education?
2. The ESL teachers I’ve talked to in (name of district) say that the school administration is very supportive of ESL. Some places I am aware of feel the administration is not very supportive of their ESL programs. Why is it that you in (name of district) are supportive?
3. From your perspective, what are the biggest challenges for the ESL program in your district?
4. Perry’s Mission Statement stresses that “all students can learn” and “Efforts must focus on ensuring that all students master skills essential for success.” My observations in the newcomer ESL program suggest that sometimes this is a very daunting task. What does the district do to address these challenges?
5. The Mission Statement also mentions that these high expectations for students “can only be met through the combined efforts of a quality staff, and a supportive community.” How supportive of the ESL program (and families) is the Perry community? Give examples.
6. The Urbandale district’s governing values state that “The most effective learning comes from a positive, supportive, committed TEAM of family, school, and community.” In what ways do you see the family, school, and community supporting ESL students in the district?
7. What are the long range plans or goals for the ESL program? Where do you see (name of district)’s ESL program in 3-5 years from now?
8. I understand Perry has applied for several grants in relation to the ESL program. Could you tell me a little about these and why you have applied for them?
9. Give an example or programs/activities that you would like to see in the near future which foster relations between the ESL population and the community. What is preventing you from doing them (money, time, support)?

10. Based on your experience with the (name of district)'s ESL program, what advice would you give to other districts who are struggling to build support for their programs?

11. Statistics about program
   # of ESL students
   % of district population
   lg backgrounds
   % of free lunches

Community Organizations

1. Could you give me some background about your organization and maybe a little personal history about yourself in relation to (name of town)?
2. How does your organization serve ESL (refugee) families? (Numbers, statistics helpful)
3. Does it participate in any programs with the school district? If so, how did its participation with ESL students begin?
4. What is your perception of the ESL program at the school?
5. From your point of view, what is the biggest need of immigrant/refugee families in (name of town)?
6. How supportive is the (name of town) community in general of immigrant families?
7. What else should I know about the work your organization does with ESL families?

ESL Parents

1. How long have you lived in (name of district)? Do you like living here? Why or why not?
2. Are the people in (name of town) helpful and friendly to you and your family? In what ways?
3. How often do you talk to English speakers outside of a work setting?
4. How do you feel about your child's education in (name of district) (quality, content, etc.)?
5. What resources does the school provide for your child(ren)? Are any in your native language?
6. What services or resources should the school be providing that they are not right now?
7. How well do you know your child's teacher(s)? In what ways do you communicate with her?
8. How often do you visit your child's school? Have you been to any performances or activities at your child's school?
9. How supportive do you think the (name of town) community is of the ESL program and students?
APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORMS

General Consent Form

I agree to participate in the research conducted by Shaeley Santiago, a graduate student at Iowa State University. My participation is limited to a 15-20 minute interview followed by a confirmation of my responses to ensure accuracy on the part of the researcher. I understand that since this is a factual report, I may be quoted in the write-up of the study. I give permission for my name and the name of my school district to be included in the study.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, and I may withdraw from the project at any time with no consequence to myself. I have been informed how to contact the researcher if I have any questions or concerns about the project.

____________________  ______________________
Signature of Participant    Date

Parental Consent Form

I agree to participate in the research conducted by Shaeley Santiago, a graduate student at Iowa State University. Since the purpose of the research is to understand how schools can create better relationships with families and businesses, the opinions of ESL students and families are important to the study.

I understand that I will be interviewed for about 20-25 minutes. My name will not appear in the study to make sure that I cannot be identified by what I said.

I understand that I am not required to participate in the study, and I may choose to withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences to my family.

____________________  ______________________
Signature of Parent    Date
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