

PUSHING BACK AND PULLING AWAY: COTEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LEARNERS IN THE NEW LATINO SOUTH

by

GREGORY SCOTT MCCLURE

(Under the Direction of Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor)

ABSTRACT

Coteaching can be described as two educational professionals working together to provide instruction for the same group of students in the same physical environment. In the three article manuscripts that comprise this dissertation, I examine coteaching as an instructional model for teaching language and content to English language learners (ELLs) in elementary schools in the southeastern United States. The first manuscript is an ethnographic case study that contributes to the sparse literature on coteaching ELLs by describing the practice in a fourth grade classroom. Using ethnographic methods and a collaborative teacher inquiry group, I analyze both the local micro-level factors within the coteachers' classroom as well as the broader macro-level factors at play in the district and state context. Findings document the coteachers' consistent use of parallel teaching, and to a lesser extent, team teaching, to promote language and content learning for the students in their care. In the second manuscript, coauthored with Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor, we employ a critical perspective to challenge the presentation of coteaching as a panacea for promoting language and content learning for ELLs. Using ethnographic and arts-based approaches to research, the study encourages teachers to articulate the qualities of their coteaching experiences in order to better understand the complexity of coteaching as an

instructional practice. Analysis of these data revealed the extent to which relations of power and status in the school setting as well as issues of language, race, and ethnicity are implicated, yet rarely articulated, in the design and implementation of coteaching. The final manuscript suggests the need to conceptualize coteaching ELLs from an ecological perspective. Such a perspective recognizes language and content instruction as being intimately interrelated and consequently views coteaching as occurring in dynamic and complex contexts. The manuscript analyzes data from classroom observations and planning meetings between coteachers, as well as district and state documents to articulate the potential benefits of an ecological perspective.

INDEX WORDS: coteaching, English language learners, New Latino South, Theatre of the Oppressed, ecological perspectives on language education

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Donna Wilson, my first teaching mentor, and to the ESOL students enrolled at South Rowan High School from 1998 – 2001. Donna, you were the first to demonstrate that teaching is an act of love and advocacy, as well as a constant struggle for social justice and human rights. To you, my first students, my first teachers—oh, how I wish to go back to that first day in August 1998 when I stepped into the hallway that served as our classroom. How much you taught me that first year. Because of your patience, your honesty, and your trust, I learned so much about language and culture, about teaching and learning, and about the importance of relationships in education. As I approach my own graduation, I leave you with a poem written to honor the kindness shown to me on the occasion when the first one of you graduated from high school.

Reynaldo's Tie

I still wear it you know,
The tie you gave me on the day of your graduation.
Each time I pull the smooth silk across my neck
I return to China Grove, careening down the hallways
Pushing that rickety media cart, my portable classroom jalopy:
Posters demanding linguistic order, maps of Mexico,
North Carolina, "The World" fluttering behind.

The tie you took from your own neck,
Wrangled out from robes and regalia,
The blue and silver one that laid right on top of your heart

"Profesor!" siempre me llamabas.
You called me this way, always,

but this time with conviction, confidence.

I used to keep it reserved for special moments:
A wedding, interview, funeral; those
Life moments that really matter.

Matamorros y maquiladoras

Only the first of many borders crossed daily:
Spanish poetry and the 5 paragraph train wreck,
Sheets of homonyms, cognates, and irregular verbs
That smell like stale canned language alongside
Your bilingual airbrush literacy.

Cruzando, luchando, the struggle continues.
Was it those life moments? Maybe these? Which?
Like stones that sink or skip across the water
They are all life moments.

Reynaldo, I wear it now quite often in fact.

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To my fantastic committee I can only say that I hope to emulate your teaching and scholarship as I head off into the world of academia. You are all incredible models of how to successfully balance full rich lives of family, teaching, and research, and I am grateful for your support of my work. JoBeth, your model of caring and engaged scholarship is inspiring. The connections between your research, teaching and personal life seem to be informed by an underlying thread that is a deep felt concern for peace in human relations. This is clear to me as I recall the ways you promote dialogue and strive to conduct collaborative research with teachers. Finally, I thank you for bringing me back to Freire in ways that have inspired my teaching and my life. He sits on my shoulders too.

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There was one crazy moment late in the game while I was writing this dissertation when I had a dog and a seven-year old in my lap (one of which was trying out my new wireless mouse *as I attempted to write*), two pre-teen girls in the kitchen fighting over whose turn it was to do dishes, and the world’s loudest vacuum cleaner roaring away in the next room, and I thought to myself—what am doing; I will never get this thing done! Indeed it was a labor of love, and it was a group effort! Thanks to everyone who helped make it happen. We are Boone-bound!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | vi |
| LIST OF TABLES | xii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xiii |
| CHAPTER | |
| 1 INTRODUCTION: MOTIVATIONS FOR STUDYING COTEACHING | 1 |
| On the language of pull-out, inclusion, and coteaching | 5 |
| Three manuscripts about coteaching English language learners | 10 |
| References | 13 |
| 2 LITERATURE REVIEW | 17 |
| Coteaching and ELLS | 18 |
| Discourse analysis and coteaching..... | 23 |
| Possibilities of coteaching..... | 28 |
| References..... | 32 |
| 3 PULLING AWAY FROM PULL-OUT: COTEACHING ELLS FOR LANGUAGE AND CONTENT IN AN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM | 38 |
| Demographics and instructional trends..... | 39 |
| Context and methods..... | 41 |
| Coteaching ELLs at Westside Elementary School | 47 |
| Discussion | 58 |

| | | |
|---|---|-----|
| | Mediating factors and implications..... | 60 |
| | References..... | 64 |
| 4 | PUSHING BACK AGAINST PUSH-IN: ESOL TEACHER RESISTANCE AND THE COMPLEXITIES OF COTEACHING | 68 |
| | From pull-out to push-in in ESOL: A case example..... | 71 |
| | Scholarship on ESOL coteaching | 74 |
| | Questioning the good intentions of inclusion | 79 |
| | Methods..... | 80 |
| | The coteaching edict | 82 |
| | The “ideal pair” and the need for dialogue | 86 |
| | The ESOL teacher as temporary substitute or classroom assistant..... | 90 |
| | Discussion | 92 |
| | Implications for practice | 94 |
| | References..... | 98 |
| 5 | THE ECOLOGY OF COTEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS..... | 102 |
| | Coteaching defined and interrogated | 105 |
| | Coteaching within specific sociopolitical, historical, and cultural contexts..... | 108 |
| | Ecological perspectives on language teaching and learning..... | 110 |
| | Coteaching from instrumental perspectives | 113 |
| | Toward an ecological perspective of coteaching..... | 120 |
| | A word of caution, and hope | 124 |
| | References | 128 |
| 6 | CONCLUSIONS, FUTURE DIRECTIONS, AND SO WHAT | 133 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Back where it all began..... | 133 |
| Coteaching as a complicated endeavor | 134 |
| Future directions | 136 |
| So what..... | 137 |
| References..... | 139 |

APPENDICES

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----|
| A | FIELD NOTE TEMPLATE..... | 140 |
| B | INTERVIEW PROTOCOL..... | 141 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Table 1.1: Coteaching Approaches | 8 |
| Table 3.1: Site and Participant Profile | 42 |
| Table 4.1: Levels of Collaboration between ESOL and Grade-level Teachers | 77 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Figure 3.1: Representation of Eva's and Leila's parallel teaching | 48 |
| Figure 3.2: Representation of Leila's and Eva's team teaching | 53 |
| Figure 3.3: Digital versions of students' Multicultural Family PhotoPoems | 57 |
| Figure 5.1: Instrumental model of coteaching | 106 |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: MOTIVATIONS FOR STUDYING COTEACHING

Curriculum and Instruction staff meeting, Henderson County Public Schools, June 2003

KR (Associate Superintendent C&I): I'm not sure we need to keep doing all this pull-out, Greg. Doesn't the research say inclusion provides a much richer learning environment for ESOL kids? It certainly seems to be working with our special ed kids.

GM (Director ESOL): Well, I'm not really aware of the any research on inclusion with ELLs. There's the Thomas and Collier¹ study that identifies pull-out as ineffective, but I'm not sure about inclusion specifically. We could look into it, I guess.

KR: We've sure got to do SOMETHING. This LEP subgroup data's not going to improve itself and I just don't see how pulling those kids out of the classroom is doing any good.

And just like that, the district barreled forward with *coteaching*, or *inclusion* as it was referred to in Henderson County. Coteaching is defined as two educational professionals jointly delivering instruction to a group of students in the same physical setting (Friend & Cook, 2003; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008). While the conversation above was reconstructed from memory, the actual documents and notes I consulted in my files from that district meeting confirm the tone I recollect—"We're moving towards inclusion" and "test scores rule." In fact,

¹ This is a reference to Thomas and Collier's (2002) longitudinal study of program effectiveness at facilitating academic achievement for ELLs.

the items listed on the June 2003 meeting agenda and their order of discussion also seemed to imply this not-so-subtle message. Item one on the agenda was “Update on Special Ed Coteaching,” followed by “Review of Subgroup Data- Sp. Ed & LEP,” and the final item on the agenda was simply labeled “Next Steps.” The reconstructed dialogue above constituted the “Next Steps” and came right on the heels of a tense and discouraging review of “LEP” subgroup performance data from the previous year’s state reading and math assessments. I was genuinely interested in the possibilities of coteaching but somewhat leery of how such a dramatic transition would impact ESOL teachers, and even more concerned about the top-down approach that was beginning to unfold. Pull-out had dominated ESOL instructional models for so long that a shift towards mainstreaming and inclusion would mean a significant rethinking of ESOL teachers’ roles, professional identities, and daily teaching lives (Davison, 2001). Hand-written notes and comments in the margins of the meeting agenda suggest my initial concerns with how ESOL teacher roles would be defined and respected in coteaching environments, concerns that are explored and validated in much of the literature discussed in this dissertation (Arkoudis, 2003, 2006; Creese, 2003, 2005, 2006).

It didn’t matter that we couldn’t find research or guidance on coteaching ELLs; we plowed ahead based on good intentions and borrowed practices from special education as we in the ESOL world have done so many times before (e.g. standardized testing accommodations, see Abedi, Courtney, & Leon, 2003). We passed the word down from the district level to principals regarding the impending transition from pull-out to inclusion as an instructional model for working with ELLs. As research leverage for the shift to coteaching, we wielded Thomas and Collier’s (2002) study of program effectiveness for ELLs that identified pull-out as the least effective approach among a range of instructional models that included English immersion,

transitional bilingual education, developmental bilingual education, and two-way bilingual education (see Thomas and Collier, 2002, for a more detail on program models and Crawford, 2004, for a critique of the study itself). To be clear, we had no rationale or empirical support for coteaching ELLs, only that what we had been doing—pull-out—was ineffective. If I was hesitant about this quick decision and lack of research, I was also persuaded by the decidedly positive rhetoric that dominated the discourse surrounding coteaching. Indeed, how could I argue with the idea of inclusion, collaboration, and what appeared to be an opportunity to foreground ELLs’ needs directly within the mainstream classroom? Finally, we (ESOL) were out of the shadows (and the closet under the stairs!). This seemed like a move in the right direction. In my capacity as ESOL Director I pushed onward, a convinced cheerleader for coteaching.

The broader social and institutional context in which this transition to coteaching took place deserves mention. While North Carolina already had a history of “high-stakes” standardized testing called “The ABCs of Public Education,” the newly imposed regimen under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001) was of a different breed. Although the ABCs system also narrowly emphasized a focus on reading and math, it was massaged into a more palatable system by incorporating a range of rewards and incentives (to the tune of \$1,500 per teacher) for schools with a determined percentage of students passing reading and math tests. NCLB, on the other hand, emphasized punitive measures, enacted under phrases like “corrective action” and “school of improvement.” Having only one subgroup not meet NCLB’s adequate yearly progress (AYP) was all that was required for a school or district to begin the downward spiral into punitive measures. As a result, the “LEP” subgroup in Henderson County, which had yet to meet AYP, was a constant topic of analysis in our curriculum and instruction staff meetings. These discussions, much like the dialogue at the beginning of the chapter, usually involved a healthy

dose of cheerleading for coteaching sandwiched between spreadsheet data and/or PowerPoint slides projecting the latest analyses of the well-scrutinized “LEP” subgroup.

Looking back, I see myself very clearly engulfed by and contributing to what Grinberg and Saavedra (2000) poignantly described as the “illusion, collusion, and delusion of bilingual/ESOL education” (p. 427). Having worked as an ESOL teacher and later a program director, I was accustomed to constantly operating at the margins of curriculum and instruction decisions and fighting for attention and resources to support the ESOL program. Consequently, as coteaching continued to be pitched in terms of equity and inclusion, I easily bought into the *illusion* that the district’s push for coteaching and inclusive education was motivated at least as much by concerns for equity and a focus on ESOL education as it was by test scores. Having bought in to the illusion, my ensuing *collusion* in a system that had historically maintained ESOL at the margins came quite easily. Instead of slowing things down and trying to bring other voices (teachers) into the process, I jumped on board and began to promote coteaching to the hilt. This “misrecognition” (p. 436) on my part obscured the reality that the rationale behind coteaching was motivated chiefly by a desire to improve “LEP kids’ test scores” and had very little to do with concerns for equity, inclusiveness, or the professionalization of ESOL. As the coteaching initiative unfolded we largely ignored resistance from ESOL teachers and principals when scheduling and personality conflicts emerged, chalking it up as expected growing pains that accompany any organizational shift. We patted ourselves on the back with a clear sense of accomplishment. We had responded to low test scores by implementing a new program model, and we had done so in a more inclusive manner. The *delusion* could not have been more convincing.

Thus began my professional and academic involvement with coteaching ELLs. While these initial experiences with coteaching ELLs were significantly impacted by bureaucratic mandates, headstrong personalities, and an increasing emphasis on high-stakes tests, the point of this introduction is not to position coteaching in a negative light. I reveal the details above not to suggest or imply that coteaching *is* not, or *can* not be an effective and inclusive instructional model for working with ELLs. Indeed, I have undertaken this study because I believe quite the contrary, that there is tremendous potential to be realized from coteaching efforts. Rather, the point I am trying to make is that coteaching ELLs, like any educational practice, is embedded in and influenced by social, political, and historical contexts that must be considered. Further, the inherently complicated nature of coteaching—two teachers trying to negotiate instructional responsibilities in shared teaching space—combined with a social and political context characterized by heightened accountability and increasing enrollments of ELLs constitutes a unique and challenging setting. By documenting a range of experiences of coteachers in diverse settings, this dissertation contributes to a foundation of scholarship on coteaching ELLs in public schools in the United States and suggests ways to promote effective coteaching partnerships. In the remainder of this chapter I discuss several key terms related to coteaching ELLs and then close with an overview of the three manuscripts that follow.

On the Language of Pull-Out, Inclusion, and Coteaching

At the heart of educational policy that mainstreams ELLs into the regular classroom is the notion of inclusiveness (Mohan, Leung, & Davison, 2001). Scholars have noted that ELLs have historically been excluded from full access to classroom instruction as they have either been “pulled-out” for specialized English language development or their needs were ignored all together (Tucker & Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 1993). Further, in

much of the literature, ELLs have been constructed as lacking (indeed the official acronym used in state and federal policy documents is LEP-*Limited* English Proficient) and remedial learners, often grouped separately from their English speaking peers *within* the classroom in addition to being pulled out (Kennedy & Canney, 2001). Consequently, it is important to examine and unpack the terms applied in describing ESOL education as we seek to better understand how ESOL education is represented in current trends towards coteaching.

Pull-out

Pull-out for ELLs is an instructional practice where students are removed from the mainstream classroom for a segment of their day (usually 45-60 minutes) for specialized instruction in English (Cornell, 1995). For many, pull-out conjures striking images of removal, deleting any possibility of human agency while objectifying learners and commoditizing the process of learning as something that happens in a remote location. In an extreme characterization, the “limited” student is pulled, or extracted *from* the regular (monolingual English) context, to receive the necessary treatment and knowledge required to appropriately fit in to the regular classroom. The obvious follow-up is to consider the landing area, to what are they pulled *to*? Many studies have critiqued pull-out for failing to facilitate ELLs’ access to grade-level content (Thomas & Collier, 2002), emphasizing English at the expense of the native language (Genesee, 1999), and generally advancing full assimilation as a goal (Roberts, 1995). On the other hand several advantages of pull-out identified in the literature include providing more focused and small-group instruction, an opportunity for a “time out” of the subsuming language demands of the mainstream classroom (Duke & Mabbot, 2001), and the ability to build meaningful relationships with ESOL teachers (McClure, 2008). The point here is not to weigh or critique one program model against another, but rather to demonstrate how applying a critical

perspective and attention to language can reveal the complexities and limitations of any instructional approach.

Inclusion

Inclusion and mainstreaming carry the positive connotation of being invited and welcomed into an “inner circle.” At the same time, they also confirm the reality of exclusion, the existence of the Other, and attempts to bring the Other into the fold of the accepted mainstream. Before accepting this invitation for inclusion, there are a few critical questions to consider. What does it mean and what are the consequences of being included in this community in the first place? Isn't this in fact the same community that once advocated for strict exclusion based on linguistic and ethnic difference via pull-out? Regarding coteaching and mainstreaming ELLs, it is important to consider how ESOL teachers and ELLs are positioned in such communities. Without a critical examination of the community itself and the broader cultural influences that shape curriculum and instructional decisions for the community, we are not moving forward or pushing the boundaries of traditional collaboration. Pugach and Warger (1996) suggest the need for a more consciously inclusive environment that goes beyond simply working together and inviting Others in. Inclusion from this broader perspective recognizes the knowledge and experiences of those being included and uses these as a foundation for learning and dialogue.

Coteaching

In this study coteaching is defined as two educational professionals jointly delivering instruction to a group of students in the same physical setting (Friend & Cook, 2003; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008). Although coteaching is relatively new to the field of ESOL, coteaching itself is not new. Considered a ‘revolutionary’ act, limited coteaching in US schools began in the 1960's (Nunan, 1992; Pugach & Johnson, 1995) and gained popularity through the 1970s (Reinhiller, 1996). In the literature five major approaches to coteaching are frequently

identified. These approaches include the following: lead and support, station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and team teaching, or coteaching. Table 1 summarizes these five approaches to coteaching.

Table 1.1

Coteaching Approaches

| Coteaching Approach | Teacher Roles | Student Groupings |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Lead and support | One leads instruction, the other focuses on individual student needs | Whole class/ Large group |
| Station teaching | Each teacher leads a lesson for a small group of students | Flexible groupings for specific purpose - students rotate through stations |
| Parallel Teaching | Teachers teach same curriculum, ideally two equal-sized groups | Flexible groupings for specific purpose |
| Alternative teaching | One teacher teaches larger group, other teaches smaller group for remediation or enrichment | Flexible groupings for specific purpose |
| Team Teaching/Coteaching | Teachers both share instruction and 'chime in' as they teach con-jointly in a coordinated fashion. | Whole class/ Large group |

Teachers, Students, and a Problem of Terms

Terminology describing the teachers, students, and program models in the field of teaching English to non-native speakers has been argued and debated across several continents (Cummins & Davison, 2006). Indeed, many different terms and labels continue to come in and out of fashion in attempts to accurately, perhaps, even neutrally, portray the reality in different global contexts. Until recently the most widely used term to refer to the instructional practice of teaching English to non-native English speakers in the US has been English as a Second Language (ESL). This term has been applied to students, teachers, and program models. From

my perspective this term is inaccurate and potentially demeaning, as its decidedly monolingual assumption rejects the possibility that “ESL” students are in fact learning English as a third, fourth, or even a fifth language. Operating from the position that language is an active force, both constructing and being constructed by society, I have made explicit choices regarding the terms used in this study. In this dissertation I use the term *ESOL*, English for Speakers of Other Languages, because it is the term used in the districts where this study was conducted.

Additionally, the term *English language learner* (ELL) is used to refer to the non-native English speaking students who are learning English. Although this term seems to negate the fact that even native English speakers are still learning English, it is a step up from the term Limited English Proficient (LEP) still used in federal and state policy and legislation.

Finally, much of the literature on coteaching uses the terms *mainstream*, *regular classroom*, and *grade-level* to identify the teachers with whom ESOL coteachers are working. Another term commonly used is *content teacher* which then implies that the ESOL teacher has no actual content and further strengthens the perception that ESOL teachers’ main role is largely one of support (Creese, 2005). In this dissertation on coteaching at the elementary level I use the term *grade-level teacher* in an attempt to move away from terms that position ESOL teachers as peripheral or irregular in comparison to their colleagues. While this term is not perfect, and does not work for teachers at the secondary level who may teach courses instead of a grade level, I believe it marks progress from terms such as *mainstream*, *regular*, and *classroom* teacher that contribute to framing ESOL teachers as *peripheral*, *ir-regular*, or *having no legitimate classroom* or *content*. The attention to language and labels continues.

Three Manuscripts about Coteaching English Language Learners

This dissertation examines data from two coteaching projects in public schools in northeast Georgia. The projects themselves stand alone, representing a range of experiences of coteachers working together to provide language and content instruction to ELLs. Taken together, the manuscripts help to articulate the argument made in this dissertation that coteaching ELLs is a complex social endeavor, an instructional practice that is influenced by many factors. The first two manuscripts analyze empirical data from coteachers' experiences in elementary classrooms. These manuscripts contribute to the sparse literature on coteaching ELLs, describing what the practice looks like, what coteachers actually *do* (Chapter 3), as well as how issues of race, ethnicity, and native language impact coteaching partnerships (Chapter 4). The final piece draws on recent literature on coteaching ELLs as well as the empirical research described in the first two pieces to suggest a developing framework for supporting coteaching partnerships for ELLs.

Pulling Away from Pull-Out: Coteaching ELLs in the New Latino South

The first piece is a descriptive qualitative case study that examines the coteaching experiences of an ESOL teacher and her grade-level colleague in a fourth grade classroom in northeast Georgia. Continued immigration has irreversibly transformed the sociocultural landscape of schools in the southeastern United States. Recent Census data confirm that states in the southeastern United States such as Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Tennessee continue to experience the fastest growing immigrant populations in the nation. As school districts struggle to find responsive frameworks for educating ELL populations, pull-out instructional models that segregate students from the mainstream classroom are being replaced by coteaching models perceived to be more inclusive and make better use of human and material

resources. In this study I examine ethnographic data from field notes, semi-structured interviews, and documents collected at the school, district, and state level. Additionally, I draw on data from a collaborative teacher inquiry group that met four times during the school year to discuss the challenges of coteaching ELLs. Student work and teacher documents from an exemplary unit demonstrate the coteachers' success at promoting language and content development while also validating students' linguistic and cultural resources. I analyze both the micro-level factors that made successful instructional moments possible in the classroom as well as the macro level structural and institutional factors that frequently constrained the coteachers' efforts. The manuscript concludes with suggestions for ways to promote and sustain effective models of coteaching for ELLs.

Pushing Back Against Push-in: ESOL Teacher Resistance and the Complexities of Coteaching

The second piece continues to examine the complexities of coteaching ELLs in public schools. Combining ethnographic and arts-based approaches to research, this study adopts a critical perspective that challenges the presentation of coteaching as a panacea for educating ELLs. Additionally, the study examines the potential for performance-based focus groups (Boal, 1979) to cultivate dialogue and coalition building among coteachers of ELLs. Data from the study suggest that coteaching is a complex social act influenced by hierarchical relations of power and status in the school setting. Performance-based focus groups reveal that language, race, and ethnicity also are implicated as important social factors in the coteaching enterprise. In light of the demographic context of US public schools, this study offers timely insight into the challenges, complexities, and possibilities of coteaching ELLs, with clear implications for pedagogy and professional development.

The Ecology of Coteaching English Language Learners

Drawing from the literature and my own empirical work, I attempt in this final piece to articulate a developing critical framework for coteaching ELLs that draws on ecological perspectives of language and culture and challenges the notion of classroom as a static culture largely defined by one adult teacher in charge. The framework is grounded by an analysis of how new relationships and environments that are created in coteaching contexts—contexts frequently hindered by bounded and hierarchical conceptions of teacher, grade-level, and knowledge—have the potential to extend our thinking about curriculum, pedagogy, and collaboration. This developing framework has implications for addressing the marginalization of ESOL teachers and students as well as research and pedagogy that seek to foster collaborative approaches for educating linguistically and culturally diverse learners.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Coteaching has not been widely used in educating ELLs. Like many elements of ESOL education (segregative instructional models, testing accommodations, etc.), coteaching is an instructional practice that has been borrowed from special education. While there are clear distinctions between these two student populations, particularly regarding language, ethnicity, and the role of immigration, there are relevant similarities in how both have been marginalized and represented in education as well as in the program models used to educate them. As a result, some of the principles and experiences that have informed coteaching in special education contexts may be applicable to coteaching in multilingual contexts as well.

The inclusive education movement in special education gained momentum in the mid 1980's and was predicated on a philosophy of education that stressed that a "free and appropriate public education" for all students could not be realized under models that separated and isolated students based on ability (Mabbot & Strohl, 1992). Inclusion and coteaching came to be seen as an alternative way to foster the participation of students with disabilities in the mainstream classroom. According to Zigmond and Magiera (2001), at its core, inclusion is about equity and access, a means for providing all students with the same educational opportunities. They cite the major goals of coteaching and collaboration in special education as increasing access to a wider range of instructional options, enhancing special education students' participation within general education classes, and ultimately improving their overall academic performance.

In a review of the literature Hornby (1999) notes that there continues to be increasing support for inclusion internationally, particularly in Europe and the United States. Despite this sustained push for a more inclusive educational model, some scholars (Borthwick-Duffy, Palmer, & Lane, 1996) contend that the data regarding student performance in coteaching settings are inconclusive and thus the enthusiasm for inclusion is based more on philosophy and emotion than on empirical evidence. Citing mixed results from several studies on the efficacy of inclusion, Hornby (1999) suggested abandoning the blanket call for inclusion and argues for instructional decisions to be based on the individual needs of children and their schools.

Coteaching and ELLs

David Nunan's edited volume on collaborative language teaching and learning (1992) constitutes some of the earliest work that specifically examined collaboration and coteaching for second language learners. The work as a whole examines collaboration from a number of perspectives, including curriculum development as well as teaching and learning. I will address two studies here that contribute to our understanding of coteaching relationships in language learning contexts. This important volume constitutes a significant foundation of research on the role of coteaching in second language education. Given the increasing emphasis on inclusion in social and educational policy, it is remarkable that in the sixteen years since it was published there has been very little research conducted on coteaching in language learning contexts.

Shannon and Meath-Lang (1992) conducted a collaborative case study with 25 coteachers from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in the United States. Teachers in this study collaborated to deliver both language (American Sign Language) and content in various subject areas. The study set out to identify factors that characterized successful coteaching partnerships and used open-ended interviews that "allowed [the researchers] to focus on the text of the

teachers' narrated experiences." (p. 123) Themes that emerged from the teachers' texts suggest that coteaching partnerships are most successful when coteachers have sufficient opportunity for reflection and their participation is voluntary. Regarding instructional philosophy, participants indicated that sharing similar instructional views was helpful, but they also reported that teachers' instructional and personality differences could become an "asset to one's own learning about teaching and ... a pedagogical tool." (p. 127)

One of the strengths of coteaching noted in the study was its potential role in facilitating and promoting dialogue and a critical perspective among students. Fourteen of the participants in the study indicated that coteaching presented an opportunity to demonstrate a diversity of perspectives and opinions to the class. As coteachers found themselves with different points of view on a given topic, a healthy dialogue around the disagreement allowed students to become comfortable with the notion that teachers are not always right and that there are often various perspectives on issues. More importantly, as teachers engaged in honest dialogue in class with one another, students were not only provided with a range of viewpoints, they also saw how knowledge and information can be contested and questioned in productive ways. Regarding the strengths of dialoguing through their disagreements in front of the class, one participant stated, "One of the benefits is to demonstrate the need to be active in dealing with the information that is being shared... that the *presenters* are still actively considering the issues" (p. 133, emphasis added). Further, the engaged nature of the collaboration helped foster a sense of classroom community. One teacher commented, "Actually, team teaching helped us come together as a group, pushing us away from the authoritarian model... thus we were able to elicit more from the students expressively, because they were not focused on a central figure" (p. 125).

There are a few elements that distinguish the context in this study from the typical

English language learning context in most public school classrooms. Although the study investigated the nature of coteaching in a language learning context, a major difference here is that *all* of the students in the school were language learners. This presents a very different context as opposed to classrooms mixed with native language speakers and second language learners. No doubt inclusion and mainstreaming are issues that deaf students and teachers must face, but in this study they were not immediate classroom or school wide issues. Additionally, most of the teachers in the study were highly motivated to coteach and recognized the benefits of an interdisciplinary collaboration, a situation not always found in K-12 contexts that seem to be driven more by top-down mandates. Nonetheless, the study provides insight into the characteristics of successful coteaching relationships and also establishes a foundation for understanding the ways that coteaching may foster creative and critical language learning.

In the same volume, Bailey, Dale, and Squire (1992) reflect on their experiences coteaching ESOL courses in a university context. In their account, the authors highlight the dynamic and fluid nature of their coteaching realities and challenge Cunningham's (1960) rather fixed typology that characterizes team teaching roles as either *team leader*, *associate*, *master/beginner*, or *coordinated team*. For example, the authors relate how one coteaching relationship steadily evolved throughout the semester. What began as a clear example of the *master teacher/beginner teacher* type quickly developed into the *team leader* pattern as the beginning teacher became more confident in his role and transitioned to a position of assistant to the lead teacher. This evolution continued as the pair became more comfortable with one another's strengths and teaching styles, and the relationship eventually reflected a more equitable collaboration, or the *associate* type (Bailey, Dale, & Squire, 1992, p. 165). This study presents coteaching as a complex and fluid relationship that evolves and changes over time. Significant

time investments for planning and relationship building as well as a commitment to reflection were cited as central to the positive outcomes.

More recently scholars have written about coteaching for English language learners from a more functional, “best practices” perspective that presents coteaching as a neutral, unproblematic approach to working with ELLs. In a review of one elementary school’s shift from pull-out to coteaching, Coltrane (2002) rather simplistically suggested, “When teachers collaborate and combine their talents, everyone benefits” (Coltrane, 2002, p. 6). While collaboration often yields positive results, statements such as this obfuscate the complexities of collaboration and ignore the fact that coteaching is often a contentious and exhausting enterprise. In fact, Coltrane’s opening paragraphs depict the frenetic morning routine of an ESOL coteacher tracking down colleagues in order to plan “over a dozen different lessons and activities-all of which will be implemented that same morning” (Coltrane, 2002, p. 6). While this image accurately captures some of the challenges of coteaching and the creative ways teachers approach them (i.e. planning on the fly), it also reveals important insight gleaned from a deeper level of analysis. That ESOL teachers must frantically run from class to class to “plan” their lessons for the day exemplifies what Billig et al. (1988) referred to as intellectual vs. lived realities. As seems to be the case in Coltrane’s study, there is intellectual support at the institutional level for coteaching that preserves an ideology of mainstreaming and inclusion. However, the lived realities of the teachers point to a lack of meaningful and tangible supports necessary to facilitate the implementation of coteaching. Often the presence of intellectual support at the institutional level justifies expectations that the model will produce grand results (in this case, accelerated English language development and higher scores on standardized achievement tests). As a result, teachers responding to these pressures often struggle to do more

with less and ultimately compromise their efforts. Without the necessary space and support to fully develop and reflect on their craft, coteachers eventually burn out.

In discussing the challenges associated with coteaching, Coltrane presents issues such as scheduling and lack of planning time for coteachers. Regarding collaborating to meet the needs of ELLs with learning disabilities, Fradd (1993) identified similar logistical barriers, citing inflexible state and federal funding policies as a major obstacle to effective collaboration between ESOL, special education, and classroom teachers. While scheduling, time, and funding restrictions are realities that schools must grapple with, they represent only the logistical and functional challenges of coteaching. By emphasizing these issues as key concerns, these studies fail to acknowledge the social and historical issues involved and, as a result, neglect to address coteaching comprehensively.

In a conceptual piece on coteaching, Hoffman and Dahlman (2007) present coteaching and collaboration as a powerful support system for teachers working with diverse learners. They acknowledge that coteaching is not quite so simple and suggest that efforts should remain flexible and responsive to the dynamics of teacher personalities, school culture, and student needs. According to the authors, common challenges to coteaching include unrealistic workloads (as evidenced in Coltrane, 2002), inadequate resources and professional development, and insufficient time spent setting common expectations and getting to know each other. It is important to note that while Hoffman and Dahlman (2007) identify similar logistical issues as Coltrane and others, they also begin to address broader ideological concerns such as the role of school culture and relationship building among coteachers. These factors are critical and must be explored if we are to more fully understand the complexities and begin to realize the possibilities of coteaching in multilingual settings.

Discourse Analysis of Coteaching

Several studies have looked at coteaching relationships from a discourse analysis perspective. Many of these studies have begun to investigate the discourse of coteaching in multilingual contexts using a more critical lens. Employing different forms of discourse analysis, these studies describe how ESOL and grade-level teachers are positioned in their schools. They offer different analytical lenses in discussing coteaching in multilingual contexts, allowing for a richer understanding of how the teachers are constructed within their classrooms and schools by themselves and their colleagues.

Martin-Jones and Saxena (1996) conducted a long-term study that examined the implementation of a bilingual assistant program at the school and classroom level in five school districts. For three years they looked at the discourses of bilingual teaching assistants and classroom teachers in primary schools in England. Although the study is not an investigation of coteaching per se, it provides valuable insight into how content and language specialists position themselves, and are positioned, with regards to language, language use, and bilingualism. The study involved a survey of all the bilingual classroom assistants from the five districts as well as in-depth interviews with a sub-sample of the assistants. The researchers observed and collected audio and video recordings of bilingual teaching/learning events in classrooms. Transcript data clearly showed discursive differences between the bilingual assistants and the teachers within schools. Most notably, bilingual teaching assistants were restricted from taking on certain voices by the subject teachers and the students. While subject teachers had the authority to interrupt conversation, allocate speaking turns, and interpret the significance of classroom events, bilingual assistants did not. As well, subject teachers orchestrated the instruction and organization of classroom talk which frequently resulted in the containment of languages other

than English and the maintenance of a monolingual discourse (p. 121). This reality is a critical point for potential coteachers to consider. Bilingual assistants in this program model were used as language tools to transmit the content information as opposed to a more negotiated collaboration that taps into the cultural and linguistic resources of all those involved in order to facilitate collaborative instruction. Such an approach requires significant planning and reflection, as well as a shift in the hierarchy among the collaborators.

Using ethnography of communication, Creese (2005, 2006) examined the specific discourse patterns of collaborating teachers in coteaching relationships in British secondary schools. She used similar methods as Martin-Jones and Saxena (1996) and extended this work by examining the discourses between two certified teachers. She found that the subject teachers' discourse of transmission of grade-level content was valued over the ESOL teachers' discourse of facilitation and support. Furthermore, Creese's work (2003) has shown how the coteaching relationship becomes more complicated when the ESOL teacher herself is a member of the language minority community. These bilingual coteachers, Creese argues, constantly mediate and negotiate their positions on language, race, and ethnicity, revealing a complex reality that involves both colluding and resisting institutional discourses.

Drawing on ethnographic data from a larger study, Creese (2006) provides a detailed look at interview and classroom transcripts from a geography and ESOL coteaching pair. She acknowledged three theoretical sources informing her thinking and analysis: a sociocultural perspective that views interaction as dialogic and socially mediated (Vygotsky, 1978); functional linguistics that views language as indexing social needs (Jakobson, 1971); and second language acquisition theories of input and interaction (Long, 1983) that stress the importance of opportunities for negotiation of input in language learning. Creese (2006) argued that while

ESOL teachers' work is characterized as support and facilitation and thus viewed as less important than the direct transmission of content knowledge, without it ELLs may not have access to the content information that is transmitted (p. 436). As a result, she suggested using the term complement instead of supplement to describe the relationship of ESOL and subject area teachers, as it "captures the idea that the teachers are working together to create learning opportunities rather than having to supplement one another for something missing" (p. 437). Creese suggested that ESOL and subject area teachers are under different social and institutional pressures and as a result cannot achieve all instructional aims equally. The term complement then, recognizes this reality and allows Creese to extend her analysis beyond the local and individual to broader social and institutional factors such as state level assessment pressures and mandates.

From a professional development context, Davison (2006) examined ESOL and grade-level coteachers' discourse in an international English-medium elementary school in Taiwan. She argued that research on coteaching and collaboration between ESOL and grade-level teachers has narrowly focused on methods and strategies used in the classroom and has largely neglected the processes of coplanning and coteaching and of finding ways to support such processes. Utilizing Hallidayan (1985) components of field, tenor, and mode to analyze the discourse and social positioning of teachers, Davison developed a 5-stage model of collaboration in ESOL-classroom teacher partnerships to facilitate the theorizing and evaluation of coteaching. The model progresses from *pseudocompliance*, basically a rejection of collaboration and preference for the status quo, to *compliance*, to *accommodation* which is characterized by a willingness to experiment, to *convergence* characterized by high levels of interaction,

experimentation, and dialogue; and finally to creative *co-construction* which is defined by critical reflection and normalizes collaboration as the preferred approach.

Throughout, Davison problematizes the relationship between ESOL and grade-level teachers, aligning herself with Creese (2003, 2005, 2006) and others by indicating that the partnership is often characterized by the subordination of ESOL to the content area curriculum, as well as by “an imbalance of authority, responsibility, and opportunities for input” (p. 456). She connects this reality to broader social and institutional contexts by analyzing district and state policy documents that position ESOL in similar ways. Davison concludes by calling for “action-oriented research with built-in opportunities for critical reflection” (p. 472) to provide coteachers with the necessary time and tools for examining their partnerships.

Arkoudis (2006) used positioning theory (Harre & van Langenhove, 1999) to investigate the planning practices of an ESOL and a science teacher in an Australian secondary school. She approached this work from a critical realist perspective seeking to identify agency within social structures through discourse. By focusing on the teachers’ planning conversations and the tensions that arose within those conversations, Arkoudis uncovered differing epistemological assumptions and a hierarchy which placed the specialized content knowledge of ESOL below that of science (supports findings from Arkoudis, 2003). She further showed how the ESOL teacher (Victoria) deployed considerable interactional skill in manipulating the linguistic resources available to her during the planning conversation, and in doing so, positioned herself in a supportive role rather than a collaborative one. The result being that she “gain[ed] some epistemological authority within the conversation that is not afforded to her within the institutional practices of the hierarchy of the education system” (p. 427-28), but only by deferring to the science teacher’s subject area knowledge.

As in the studies above, Arkoudis' (2003) findings implicate power and hierarchy as integral in understanding coteaching relationships between ESOL and grade-level teachers. While I agree with this assertion, I struggle with some of the conclusions Arkoudis draws, or rather *fails* to mention. While she recognizes Victoria's resourcefulness and diplomacy in sustaining the planning session, she places the onus of accommodation solely on the ESOL staff, program, and curriculum. Her concluding remarks bear this out: "Implicit within this [the challenge of cross-disciplinary planning] is the training of ESOL teachers to be more aware of how to develop the collaborative practices and strategic ways of gaining epistemological authority within the mainstream curriculum, smoothing the rough ground" (p. 429). There is no mention of the need for a *collaborative* approach to developing these "strategic ways" for ESOL and classroom teachers to work together. She has neglected one half of the pair here in ascribing responsibility for successful collaboration. Failing to comment on this leaves her central concern of ESOL as "adjunct to the mainstream curriculum" (p. 3) unaddressed.

From these studies, we see that a common source of difficulty, or tension, appears to result from the exclusive politics of discipline-specific communities and hierarchies of power and knowledge that privilege content area curriculum and teachers over that of ESOL. As we have seen, ESOL coteachers must enter specific discourse communities where pedagogy and subject knowledge are viewed and positioned differently. Whereas grade-level teachers are connected to legitimate socially-sanctioned knowledge of the content-area curriculum, ESOL teachers are constructed as delivering generic support and facilitation for the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic minorities they serve. In this sense, ESOL work is seen within schools as strategy driven (Arkoudis, 2006), generic, and with no subject-specific knowledge of its own (Creese, 2005, 2006). This institutionalized positioning has a significant impact on the potential of

coteaching relationships. If ESOL is positioned within or peripheral to the mainstream curriculum, what does this say about the agency of ESOL teachers within such contexts? Indeed, it is difficult to conceptualize ESOL teachers as agents of change, or even professional peers, within such an arrangement.

Possibilities of Coteaching

In contrast to the hierarchical positionings evidenced in most of the studies of coteaching ELLs (Martin-Jones & Saxena, 1996; Arkoudis, 2003, 2006; Creese, 2005, 2006), in this section I present empirical work that emphasizes successful and collaborative coteaching partnerships. These studies bring attention to some of the pedagogical possibilities of coteaching.

Gardner (2006) presents a unique situation where the ESOL and grade-level teacher experienced highly effective levels of coteaching, or what she referred to as “partnership talk in the instructional register” (p. 478). In this study, Gardner examined the teacher-teacher talk in a primary grade social studies lesson in England and drew on the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) work of Christie (1997) that aims to differentiate registers in classroom discourse. In doing so, Gardner documented how the ESOL teacher moved from a peripheral scribing role “into sharing with the class teacher first the regulative register, then a convergence of both registers, and finally the instructional register” (p. 479). From this analysis, Gardner developed a framework for a proposed continuum from support talk to collaborative talk, and finally to partnership talk. She cautioned that the success experienced by these teachers is likely attributed, at least in part, to the professional identities involved in the partnership: an experienced and respected ESOL teacher and a subject area teacher who was a “newly qualified teacher (NQT) who had only been in the school for three weeks” at the time of the study (p. 479). In her conclusion, Gardner is quick to declare that while partnership talk constituted a highly effective

collaborative model in this context, it should not necessarily be taken as the goal of all ESOL and grade-level collaborations.

A study of three coteachers by Glazier (2004) illuminates the transformative potential of coteaching in multilingual contexts. This ethnographic study describes the work of one Jewish and two Arab teachers as they collaborated in a first grade classroom during the first year of a bilingual/bicultural school in Israel. Glazier focused on the teachers' interactions to determine how coteaching influenced their understandings of themselves and each other, and additionally how these understandings influenced their teaching practice. She observed the teachers' planning conversations, conferences with parents, as well as classroom instruction. One of Glazier's central tenets throughout the article is the notion that in order to teach and model respect for linguistic and cultural diversity to their students, teachers themselves must "explore their own cultural understandings and misunderstandings of self and other" (p. 612). Further, Glazier suggested that collaborative teaching that brings together teachers of different linguistic, cultural, and/or historical backgrounds comprises a fruitful context to support such critical reflections.

While the study examines the three teachers' interactions, much of the data presented centers on the experiences of Yaffe, the Jewish teacher among the trio. Glazier presents planning events and teaching episodes that capture shifts in Yaffe's thinking and understanding about her cultural self and how it relates to her Arab coteachers. The teachers' collaborative planning for a unit on Land Day provides a poignant example. Land Day is an annual event commemorating the killing of six Arab citizens of Israel in 1976 by state security forces during protests over Israeli expropriations of Arab land. The event is particularly significant for the school because those killed were from a nearby town where many of the students live. During the planning process, Yaffe came to realize that her understanding of Land Day, that Arabs were compensated for their

lands, was quite different from her Arab coteachers. Engaging in this interaction with her colleagues, Yaffe began to critically reflect on her knowledge and assumptions regarding the event and began to recognize her position as only partial and even privileged as a beneficiary of the land distribution policy. These discussions led to a collaborative lesson that presented balanced multiple perspectives on Land Day and its impacts on Jewish and Arab communities. In this way the coteachers challenged the dominant one-dimensional perspective usually invoked when teaching about historical events and encouraged the students to recognize the uncertainty and contradictions inherent in social contexts.

Glazier (2004) concluded that through the coteachers' sustained efforts at collaboration they developed a critical consciousness that contributed to their understandings of self as Arabs or Jew, as well as the Other. This involved appreciating their colleagues' perspectives alongside their own and understanding how cultural differences impacted one's status and opportunities inside and outside the classroom (p. 614). Glazier described this as the development of *cultural fluency* that allowed the teachers to move back and forth between the two cultures in the classroom. As a result, they were learning about culture in transformative ways alongside their students, taking into account diverse historical and religious perspectives.

This review brings focus onto the reality that the historical marginalization of ESOL as a discipline continues to impact ESOL pedagogy through the practice of coteaching. The empirical and theoretical work that follows draws on this foundation of research and begins to contribute to establishing a research base on coteaching ELLs in US public school settings. Further, although Creese (2005, 2006) and Arkoudis (2003, 2006) have begun to address the complex issues of power, knowledge, and epistemology in coteaching partnerships, these studies fall short of offering any substantive framework for addressing the complex issues uncovered. The current

study contributes to this emerging line of critical inquiry into coteaching with ELLs and begins to answer questions Arkoudis (2003) and others pose regarding “*how we can best bring together teachers from different discourse communities and get them into sustained and productive dialogue*” (p. 172, emphasis added). This is increasingly important, as coteaching gains momentum as a model for educating ELLs in US contexts and conceptualizations of teaching expand beyond the classic one teacher/one classroom standard. Instead we must consider the vision of a two-teacher classroom and look to provide coteachers with opportunities for reflection and professional development.

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CHAPTER 3

PULLING AWAY FROM PULL-OUT: COTEACHING ELLS IN THE NEW LATINO SOUTH²

It is the last day of the quarter and the two teachers in the classroom appear to be in the middle of a delicate synchronized instructional dance. Eva, the fourth grade teacher, is seated in a chair at the back of the room with the students gathered on the carpet in front of her. The lights are dimmed, and the natural light from outside creates a much more calming mood than the harsh glow and drone of the fluorescents that normally dominate. As Eva reads aloud to the students from Patricia Polacco's *Babushka's Doll*, Leila, the ESOL teacher who coteaches with Eva during this daily literacy block, hops up from her spot on the carpet and comes to life as Babushka's doll. Perched at the edge of a desk, Leila transforms herself into the doll on Babushka's shelf, mimicking her every move as Eva reads the story. Eva tells how the doll begins to swing her legs, and Leila points to her own and swings them back and forth. For the remainder of the story, Leila performs as a live version of the magical doll from Polacco's story, using pantomime and facial cues to accentuate key vocabulary terms. In a matter of moments, she has brought the story to life and provided real-time visual scaffolding to the oral reading of

² McClure, G. To be submitted to *Co-teaching and Other Collaborative Practices in the EFL/ESOL Classroom: Rationale, Research, Reflections, and Recommendations*.

the text. Just as important, instead of simply “roving” to make sure students were paying attention, Leila chose to take an active and creative role in the instruction during this read-aloud.

The scene above comes from a year-long case study that examined the experiences of one pair of coteachers in a fourth grade classroom in the southeastern United States, a region that has experienced tremendous growth in its English language learner (ELL) population in the last decade (Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002). This chapter explores the relatively new terrain of coteaching as an instructional model for promoting language and content development for ELLs. In this study coteaching is conceptualized as an instructional practice where two or more educators share instructional responsibility for students assigned to the same classroom (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008). In the following sections I discuss the rationale for the study, highlighting recent demographic shifts in the southeastern US as well as the lack of empirical literature on coteaching for ELLs. Next, I discuss data from the case study, highlighting both the micro-level factors that made successful instructional moments possible, as well as the macro-level structural and institutional factors that frequently constrained the coteachers’ efforts. The chapter concludes with suggestions for ways to promote and sustain effective models of coteaching for ELLs.

Demographic and Instructional Trends

Continued immigration has irreversibly transformed the sociocultural landscape of schools in the southeastern United States. Recent census data confirm that while the growth rate of immigrant residents has decreased somewhat from the dramatic rates experienced during the 1990s, states in the southeastern United States continue to experience the fastest growing immigrant populations in the nation. In fact, from 2000 to 2008 six of the seven states with the

highest percent increase in the number of immigrants were all located in the southeastern US (US Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2008).

As a result schools in the southern region of the New Latino Diaspora (Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002; Hamann & Harklau, 2009) have experienced tremendous increases in the numbers of ELLs. In Georgia for example, the number of ELLs enrolled in public schools increased over 250% between 1996 and 2006 (NCELA, 2007). Unfortunately, available academic achievement data for ELLs is not encouraging; indeed, academic success has not paralleled demographic growth. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that Latino students, who represent the dominant majority of ELLs, have a dropout rate of 27% compared with 7.3% of their White counterparts (Kaufman, Alt, & Chapman, 2004). Facing these realities, grade-level teachers with little or no professional development in second language instruction (Antunez, 2002) struggle to create teaching practices that support the language and content development needs of the ELLs in their classrooms. As a result, coteaching between English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers and grade-level teachers appears to present a logical solution to this challenge, and has garnered attention recently.

While the notion of collaborating to meet the needs of ELLs is not a new one (Nunan, 1992), empirical studies that examine coteaching as an instructional practice for ELLs in US public schools is relatively unexplored in the professional literature. Despite this lack of empirical research, coteaching has gained momentum in recent years, as evidenced by the increasing number of workshops, symposia, and presentations at national education and ESOL conferences (e.g., AERA, TESOL), as well as publications in popular practitioner journals and magazines (e.g., *Education Week*, *Teaching Tolerance*, *Essential Teacher*). Studies that have examined coteaching for ELLs have occurred in international contexts like Australia (Arkoudis,

2003, 2006), Hong Kong (Davison, 2006), England (Creese, 2003, 2005, 2006; Gardner, 2006), and Israel (Glazier, 2004). While these studies have established a significant baseline of empirical work on coteaching ELLs, findings from international settings cannot necessarily be mapped onto the US context without further inquiry. Given the unique reality of the US context that results from the increasing enrollment of ELLs in public schools, the heightened state of accountability due to recent government policies like No Child Left Behind (2001), and the recent trend towards coteaching, the lack of empirical work on coteaching in US contexts constitutes a significant gap in our knowledge regarding how to best educate ELLs. Consequently, this ethnographic case study aims to address this gap by documenting the coteaching experiences of an ESOL teacher and her grade-level colleague in a fourth grade classroom in northeastern Georgia.

The current study is guided by the following questions: how do grade level and ESOL teachers collaborate to support language and content learning for ELLs; what does it *look* like, what do they *do*? How do factors outside the classroom impact their coteaching efforts?

Context and Methods

Westside Elementary School (WES) is a medium-sized neighborhood school in an urban school district in northeast Georgia. The district has 22 schools, 14 of which are elementary schools. Despite the district's proximity to the state's flagship research institution and teacher education program, student performance on state assessments in recent years has been below the state average (Georgia Education Report Card, 2006, 2007, 2008). As one example, for the year in which this study took place the graduation rate in the district was 63.1%, the fourth lowest in the state (GADOE, 2009). For its part, during the three years leading up to this study, WES saw consistent increases in student achievement on Georgia's state assessments in reading and math

across all student groups (Georgia Education Report Card, 2006, 2007, 2008). Additionally, as a result of increased interest in the idea of neighborhood schools in the area and a multimillion dollar renovation, WES saw its kindergarten enrollment double from three classrooms during 2007-2008 to six classrooms in 2008-2009 (personal communication, District Enrollment Coordinator).

Table 3.1.

Site and Participant Profile

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Westside Elementary School</p> <p>325 students (Asian 2%, Black 37%, Hispanic 40%, Multiracial 4%, White 17%)</p> <p>English language learners 29%</p> <p>Eligible for free/reduced lunch 78%</p> | |
| <p>Eva & Leila’s Cotaught 4th Grade Class</p> <p>18 students (13 ELLs)</p> <p>2 hour daily coteaching block</p> | |
| <p>Eva</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 1st yr at Westside ❖ 3rd yr teaching K-5 ❖ BS Ed. Elem Ed ❖ White ❖ Monolingual (English) | <p>Leila</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 3rd yr at Westside ❖ 3rd yr teaching ESOL ❖ MS Ed. TESOL ❖ Bi-racial (Caucasian - Arab-American) ❖ Trilingual (English, Arabic, Spanish) |

The table above provides descriptive details about Eva and Leila regarding ethnicity, teaching experience, and education, however; it fails to give any detailed sense of the incredibly accomplished and caring teachers I came to know during this study. I include here excerpts from field notes and analytical memos to supplement this demographic data.

Eva is at the half-circle table under the windows at the far side of the classroom. She has four students with her, and they are all working together on a non-fiction book about planets. She has an extremely calm and pleasant air about her; it appears as if she is genuinely having a good time—like she’s out with friends and she’d rather be no where else right now. Her instruction mainly involves intermittent comprehension checks (‘Ok, so is Pluto a planet or not?’), but her interaction with the students is so genuine it’s almost as if she’s having a book club conversation with peers (‘Wouldn’t it be fascinating to work as a scientist and explore outer space!’). Her warmth and sincerity towards the students make me wish I was reading about planets too! (Field notes, 01/09/09)

My first meeting with Leila confirmed that she is passionate about and committed to her work as an ESOL teacher. She entered the room pushing her portable classroom on a media cart, and I was instantly reminded of my own days of doing just the same as a roving ESOL teacher. After arriving, she left twice to get materials she either forgot, or that wouldn’t fit onto the cart—ah the challenges of being a roving teacher! While she was out, I noticed a half-eaten sandwich strategically positioned on her cart between a stack of sticky notes and a container of pencils. When she returned we had just a few minutes to chat before the students arrived from lunch; she confirmed my suspicion that

she hadn't had lunch yet. She'd used up her lunch time planning an upcoming visit from a local police officer. (Memo, 10/29/08)

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected mainly from four sources: ethnographic field notes taken from classroom observations, transcripts from interviews and Coteaching Inquiry Group meetings, and documents and artifacts. Beginning in October 2008 and ending in May 2009, I conducted weekly classroom observations in Eva and Leila's classroom. On two occasions I stayed with the teachers after school to observe their weekly planning session. Classroom observations generally lasted two hours, beginning right after lunch and covered guided reading groups and whole-class writing instruction which lasted until the end of the day. Often times I arrived before lunch ended in order to conduct short informal interviews with one or both of the teachers to confirm details or clear up questions that arose from my observations. As a participant observer, I attempted to pay close attention to, and at times, participate in "what was happening in the [classroom] as it was happening (Lichterman, 1998, p. 401). As such, my position along the participant-observer continuum varied greatly depending on the events occurring in the classroom at the time. Some days I was the quiet researcher tapping away on the keyboard in the corner of the room, and other days I was intimately embedded into the life of the classroom, handing out student laptops or assisting individual students on their writing. To facilitate organization and analysis of data I used a standard field note template (Appendix A) that helped to focus my inquiry on several key elements (teacher roles, language support, content support, etc.).

To provide a framework for reflection and discussion, I suggested that we meet as a discussion group several times during the year to talk about issues the teachers were facing. This

idea was also in direct response to Davison's assertion (2006) of the need for coteachers to spend time together reflecting on and breaking down their coteaching experiences. As a result, the teachers and I met after school four times during the year (December, February, March, and May) as what we collectively named the Coteaching Inquiry Group (CIG). All CIG meetings took place in Eva and Leila's classroom at WES and generally lasted two to three hours. Meetings were audio recorded and relevant sections were transcribed to facilitate analysis. The purpose of these meetings was twofold: 1) to create a participatory element to the study by using the CIG as a site to share, discuss, and question the interpretations I was building from the data; and 2) to provide a designated time and space for the teachers to openly discuss and reflect on the challenges they were facing in coteaching.

In addition to observations and CIG meetings, I conducted two formal semi-structured interviews with each of the teachers, as well as a single interview with the district's ESOL director. Initial interviews were conducted in November and were designed to elicit teachers' experiences working with ELLs, their understanding of how coteaching was supposed to work, and the roles they played in their coteaching partnership. Follow-up interviews were unique to each teacher and allowed me to explore and clarify specific issues that arose during the study. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Interview guides are located in Appendix B.

The final aspect of data collection involved a variety of documents and artifacts relevant to the study. Initial documents included a variety of official school district reports and articles from local newspapers to develop a rich context for the study (e.g., press releases on academic standings and performance, annual school profiles, school improvement plans, and district demographic reports). Additionally, I collected teacher lesson plans, handouts from school and district-wide workshops, as well as state level documents on program models for serving ELLs.

Collectively, these documents helped to paint a picture of local and regional concerns and priorities regarding educational policies and practices as they related to educating ELLs. This cross-section of documents also helped to reveal and facilitate analysis of the connections between macro and micro-level contexts.

Analysis

As with most qualitative research, in this study initial data analyses occurred simultaneously alongside data collection (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Once all the data were collected and transcriptions completed, a more formal and systematic analysis began. I did a complete reading of all the data and organized them first chronologically and then by teacher. During a second pass through the data I began to make connections across the data and developed initial themes, some of which were arrived at deductively from the literature (power, marginalization of ESOL, planning time) and others more inductively by reviewing the data (teachers in competition, Asian students).

Additionally, I modified Taylor, Gilligan and Sullivan's (1995) "listening guide" to facilitate my analysis of the audio data (interviews and CIG meetings). I used this feminist approach because it encourages paying attention to the individual participant's story and voice, and it was congruent with my desire to de-emphasize my own voice in the study. During the first stage of this three-step process, I listened to the data in its entirety to get a sense of the big picture being presented. In the second stage, for the inquiry group data, I isolated the texts from each individual speaker in order and created a separate file for each. During the last stage I listened to the data while focusing on individual research questions. By using multiple stages of data analysis, actively looking for inconsistencies in the data, and member checking, I was able to triangulate the data and strengthen the trustworthiness of the study.

Coteaching ELLs at Westside Elementary School

One of the central goals of this study was to document coteaching for ELLs in an elementary classroom; to describe exactly what ESOL and grade-level coteachers *do* and how they collaborate to support language and content learning for the students in their care. At WES Eva and Leila drew on a number of instructional resources and coteaching arrangements, but their practice primarily involved two formats: parallel teaching and team teaching. In the sections below I describe how Leila and Eva enacted each of these approaches in their classroom.

Parallel Teaching

Parallel teaching can be defined as teachers jointly planning instruction and delivering the same content to separate groups of students at the same time (Friend & Cook, 2003). At the beginning of the year as the teachers were trying to organize their coteaching, Leila suggested using a framework called “kids stations” as a model for their guided reading instruction. During our first CIG meeting in December, Eva commented on this saying she appreciated Leila’s “willingness to make suggestions for curriculum and organization as [Eva] was still adjusting to teaching 4th grade.” Using this model, the students were split into four groups based on their reading abilities, so both teachers worked with ELLs in each of their groups. Students rotated among the four different stations throughout the week. In addition to Eva’s and Leila’s separate reading stations, there were two independent stations that changed from week to week but generally included a listening center and vocabulary work that students completed at their desks. Since this model emphasized rotating groups among the four activities, it reinforced parallel teaching as one of the most consistent manifestations of the pair’s coteaching pedagogy. Indeed, parallel teaching of guided reading groups was evident during the first 40-50 minutes of nearly

every class I observed. Figure 3.1 provides a graphic representation of how parallel coteaching looked in Eva and Leila’s classroom.

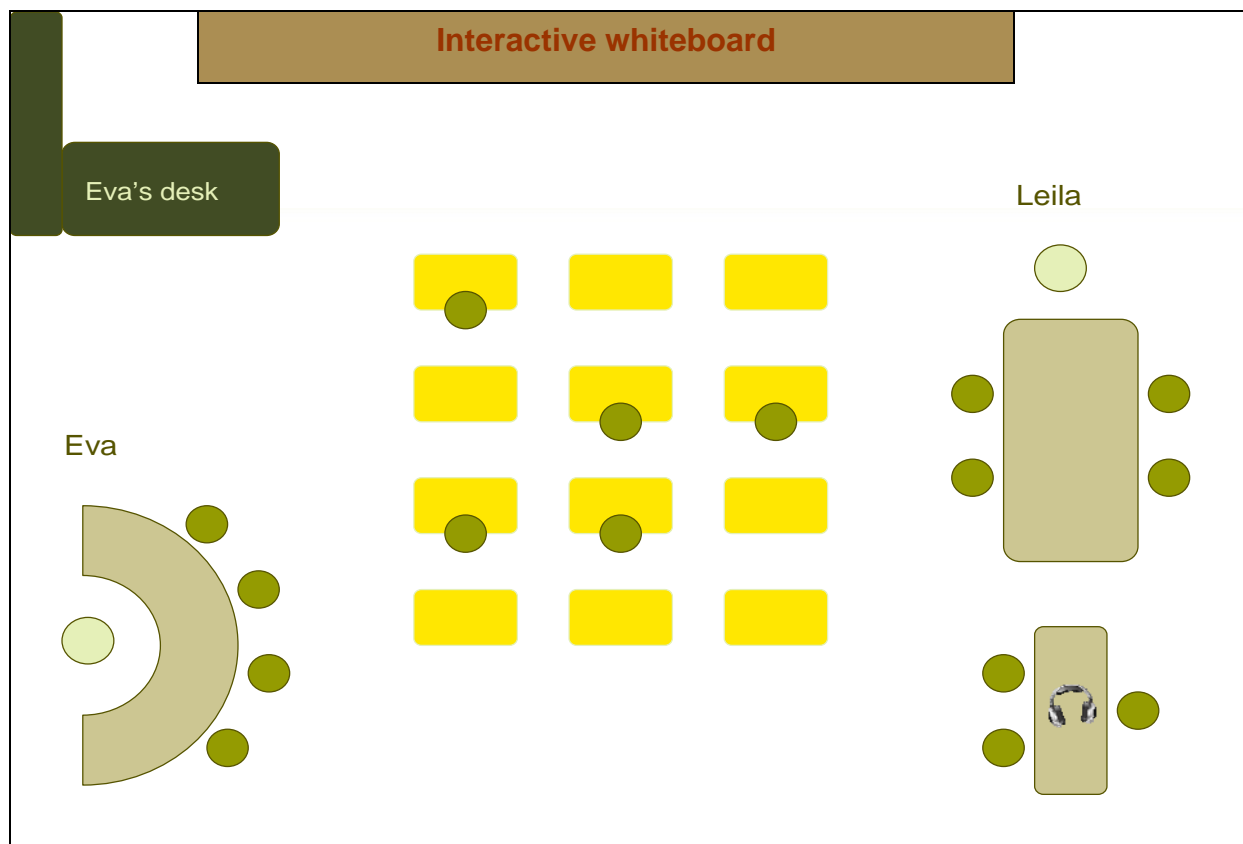


Figure 3.1. Representation of Eva’s and Leila’s parallel teaching

Over time I noticed patterns in the teachers’ instruction that allowed me to draw some distinctions between how they were individually facilitating language and content learning via parallel teaching. Eva’s instruction during guided reading was largely teacher-centered, while Leila’s instruction was more varied and consistently incorporated strategies identified as “best practices” in the ESOL literature. In the section below, I describe each teacher’s instruction during parallel teaching as I observed it throughout the year.

Eva. Eva consistently used prediction as an activating pre-reading strategy (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991) in her guided reading groups. Before the group began to read, Eva

would typically invite students to examine the cover and/or think about the title as a prompt for making predictions about what would happen in the text. Alternatively, she also frequently asked students to share what they knew about the topic. This pre-reading work typically lasted only two or three minutes, and then the students would proceed to take turns reading a section at a time out loud. As the students read, Eva would stop at the end of each section for a brief verbal comprehension check or to point out a key vocabulary term. This routine was followed until the students reached the end of the text, at which point the class transitioned to writing.

Leila. Leila used a variety of different activities in her guided reading group. Examples include making homemade vocabulary games, taking extended picture walks³, as well as asking students to make predictions and personal connections to the texts. Additionally, Leila's instruction consistently emphasized building students' background knowledge (Echeverria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Gibbons, 2002) and providing opportunities for students to orally practice using content language (Geva & Genesee, 2006; August & Shanahan, 2006). These instructional strategies often facilitated students' engagement with both the concepts and the language of the books they read. One lesson on civic responsibility is illustrative of how Leila incorporated these elements into her instruction.

Officer Buckle and Gloria (Rathmann, 1995) is a popular children's book filled with a variety of simultaneously humorous and informative "safety tips." Anticipating that the students would struggle with the concept of a "tip," before reading the book Leila asked the students to brainstorm a list of "good ideas" that could be shared with a new student regarding how to make friends at WES. Among other things, the students listed "study hard," "be friendly to others," and "don't be rude." During an extensive picture walk that followed, Leila asked the students to

³ A picture walk is a pre-reading strategy that involves an examination of the text looking at pictures to gain an understanding of the story and to illicit story related language in advance. For more detail, see Cunningham (2006).

write down a list of any safety tips they recognized along the way, using mini whiteboards she had distributed to each student. Students then shared their lists with a partner, practicing and using the language they had just learned. To scaffold the oral language needed to participate in this activity, Leila had written the following sentence stem on her own whiteboard: “One important safety tip I found was _____.” One of the ELLs applied this vocabulary term by addressing the technology problems I had been having with my laptop. As Leila’s group was finishing up, Yenifer walked over and said to me, “I have a **tip** for you Mr. McClure: borrow a laptop from Ms. Eva next time!” This comment indicated that not only did Yenifer understand the concept of a “tip,” but she was also able to successfully put the term into practice in an authentic communicative setting.

As these patterns of instruction continued throughout the year, I came to view parallel teaching as a modified “pull-out” within the fourth-grade classroom. I use the term *modified* here because Leila did not work exclusively with ELLs and the groups weren’t leaving the classroom; however, her efforts remained compartmentalized and isolated to her own guided reading groups. In geometry we learn that parallel lines follow each other on into infinity without ever touching. This definition perfectly describes Leila and Eva’s separate guided reading groups. As there was little to no collaboration, the ESOL strategies Leila regularly used did not seem to seep into Eva’s guided reading instruction. Further, two observations were consistent across all lessons I observed: Eva’s group finished first, and Leila’s group was louder. Whereas Leila’s group was often engaged in more open-ended inquiry tasks that encouraged students to play with, explore, and take risks with language (i.e., hunting for Spanish-English cognates in the story; writing down safety tips, etc.), Eva’s groups tended to jump into reading more quickly and seemed to be more focused on getting through each book. Also, Eva’s pre-reading, prediction, and during-

reading strategies were almost exclusively verbal in nature. While these activating strategies and comprehension checks can be effective for promoting engagement and reading comprehension, these strategies are less effective with ELLs unless they are accompanied by a focus on language structure, context, and vocabulary that are critical for students whose native language is not English (Anderson, 1999; August & Shanahan, 2006; Eskey, 2002; Folse, 2004). When I shared these observations with the teachers during one CIG meeting, both Eva and Leila agreed that their guided reading groups remained independent for the most part. Further, while both expressed a desire to do more collaborative work, Leila also asserted that the guided reading groups was a place where she felt she could be sure she was meeting the ELLs' language needs, a concern other ESOL teachers have expressed about the coteaching model (McClure, 2008).

Team Teaching

Compared to parallel teaching, team teaching is a much more collaborative and interactive practice between coteachers. According to Friend and Cook (2003) team teaching is defined as both teachers being responsible for the planning and instruction for all students (p. 184). They add that team teaching may involve a number of different arrangements, from alternating the teaching of mini-lessons, to taking turns in leading discussions, or even role-playing a debate to present different sides of an issue. Leila and Eva reported that, unlike parallel teaching, team teaching required significant coplanning to coordinate their lessons, and as a result was not as consistently a part of their pedagogy as was parallel teaching.

Scholars have suggested that ELLs, especially in the upper elementary grades and beyond, are faced with the increasingly challenging task of simultaneously developing English proficiency, mastering content knowledge, and developing academic literacy (Echeverria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Gibbons, 2002). When Leila and Eva did engage in team teaching they were

often able to address these challenges, effectively scaffolding each other's verbal instruction, content concepts, and also attend to procedural aspects of instructional tasks. Examples of this are seen in the opening vignette in this chapter and are further evidenced below.

Team teaching for Leila and Eva always occurred during writing instruction in the last hour of the day. Typically, one of the teachers would lead a mini-lesson while the other actively supported the lesson using the interactive whiteboard to pull-up images or color-code pieces of text on the screen (Figure 3.2). Frequently when the teachers were team teaching, they were able to play off of each other's instruction in what Eva referred to as "tag teaming back and forth" to add concrete examples or to help clarify what had been said. One lesson on descriptive writing illustrates this tag teaming. Eva started the lesson by asking the class "Who can tell me what a sensory detail is?" As hands went into the air, Leila jumped in (TAG!) from her position back at the whiteboard and offered to Eva and the class, "Maybe we should review the five senses first. Who can name one of the five senses?" As students generated a list of the five senses, Leila was calling on students and Eva was now at the whiteboard (TAG!) writing down student responses and quickly drawing appropriate body parts next to each one (an eye for sight, a nose for smell, etc.).

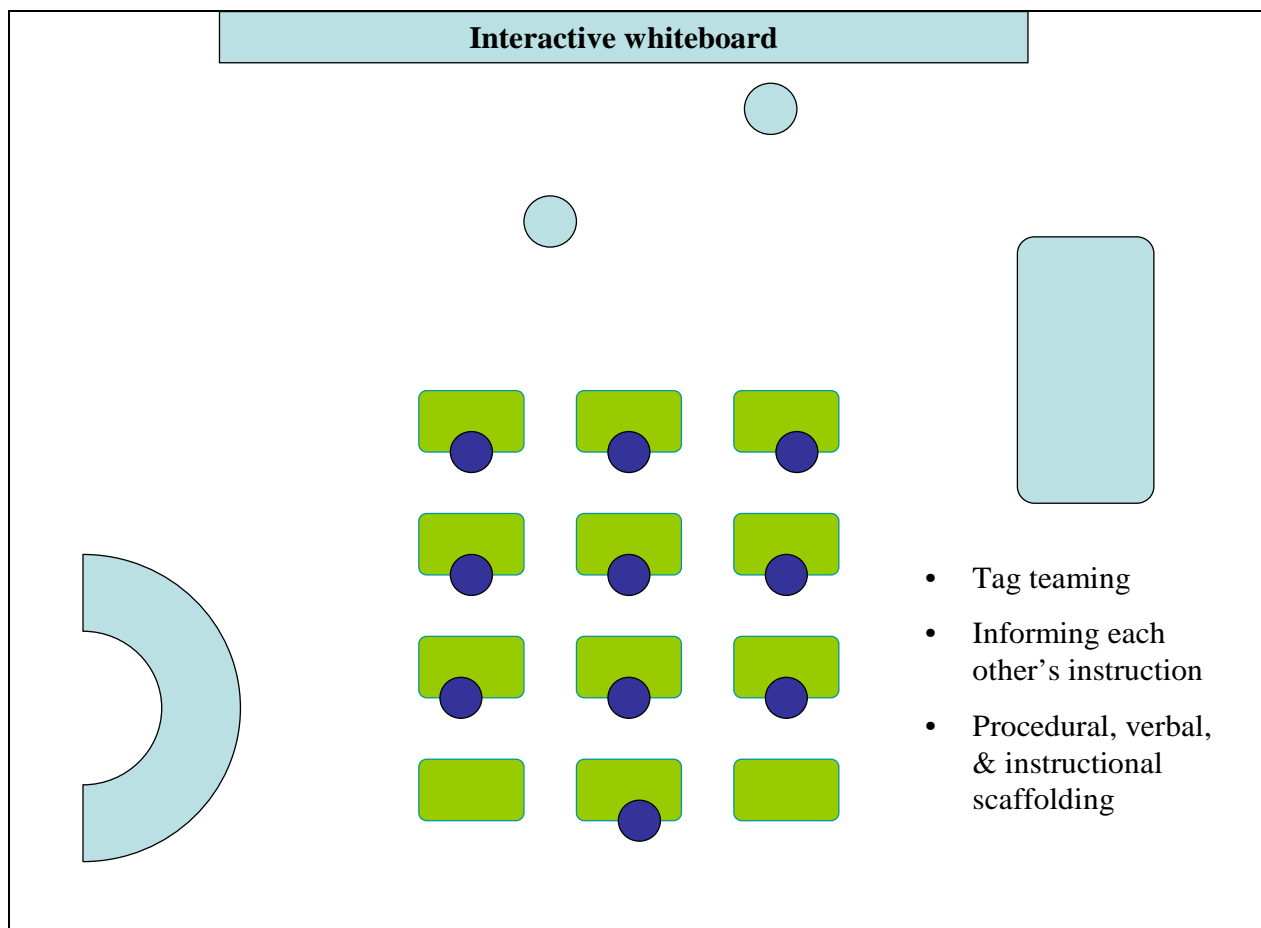


Figure 3.2. Representation of Leila's and Eva's team teaching

When I revisited this scene with Leila after class, she said she felt like there were several ELLs in the class that would have struggled with the ultimate task of incorporating sensory details into their writing without directly connecting the idea to their discussion of the five senses from the previous day. Additionally, while Leila confirmed my perception that “tag teaming” was largely unplanned and improvisational, she also offered a different perspective. She attributed her willingness to jump in more frequently as being directly related to having planned together with Eva. In her words, “having a better sense of where the lesson was going and what the final task would be” (in this case developing a descriptive writing piece using five sensory

details) was critical and helped Leila decide what types of instructional support and scaffolding the students would need.

While team teaching encouraged collaborative sequences/practices like tag teaming, it also provided opportunities for the teachers to deliver lessons and units that highlighted their individual areas of expertise. Below I discuss an extended two week poetry unit that demonstrates how, through team teaching, the teachers drew on their unique talents and also validated students' linguistic and cultural resources in the process.

The project involved a combination of instructional approaches throughout the unit. Leila and Eva took turns leading mini-lessons to cover the more formal elements associated with poetic form (haiku, free verse, sonnets, etc.) and poetry units (writing acrostics, reading a variety of poetry, and developing a poetry portfolio). They also shared examples of their own poetry, collaboratively wrote a poem with the whole class, and led an outdoor nature walk to collect artifacts to use in writing haikus. In addition, both teachers also expressed interest in making the project more creative somehow. Leila, who had experience as a photojournalist, suggested incorporating photos into the project. Further discussion quickly led to the idea of connecting the project to students' families in some way and thus, the Multicultural Family PhotoPoetry Project was born.

One of the assessment products of the unit involved individual student contributions to the class' multicultural, multilingual "ABC" book. Students were each assigned a letter from the alphabet and were required to talk with their families to come up with a couple of words for their letter that were important to them and their families in some way (e.g., *Amigos* for "A"). Students were then given time in class to choose one word and develop a poem for that word. Students were told they could write in English, their native language, or to write bilingually;

however, emphasis was placed on remembering and paying attention to the conversations they had had with family members. While students worked with Eva developing and revising their poems, Leila, who had a background as a photojournalist, would work with individual students to craft photographs that represented and corresponded to their poems. One highlight of the project occurred towards the end as the class was filling in some of the letters that still needed a poem. The perennial issue of ABC books, the letter X, was immediately solved when Eli volunteered to compose the poem for X. Eli wrote about Xi Zon Bing, the Taiwanese card game that his family plays, especially around Chinese New Year. This was a significant event, as Eli was the only Asian student in the classroom and seldom had the opportunity to see his language and culture represented. The authenticity of this poetry project that incorporated and validated students' home cultures was further manifested at the annual Community Poetry Picnic when the students shared a digital version of their ABC book (Figure 3.3) with families and community members.

A

Amigos
By Reynaldo

Se reian together,
Play juegos on the PS3,
Talk at lonche,
Encourage los sueños,
Play "Spin the Botella" and
Make up silly questions
Cambiar food,
Contar our stories,
Pretend to street race.
Imagine corriendo de los toros.
Talk Español and English
together,
Juntos.



Began potty training
And
Learned to use
Manners.

Started school,
Faced cruel bullies,
Rough classes,
Scary grades.

Went through injuries
Caused by
Loco personas,
Got hurtful stitches.

Anxiety is hard
To overcome,
But it does not
Stop me.

Divorces are tricky to get over.
Multi-cultures
Make it hard
For me to fit in.

A mi me vivir la vida
Con mi familia.
Pero un día vamos estar Juntos
Como nuestra mama ya papa.



Figure 4. Digital versions of students' Multicultural Family PhotoPoems

This project was successful on many accounts. From a coteaching perspective, the co-planning allowed the teachers to effectively trade off between leading mini-lessons and supporting each other's instruction. Additionally, by incorporating their specific talents the teachers were able to extend the unit in creative ways. The idea for the ABC book emerged largely because Eva wanted to do more than the all-too-common poetry portfolio that is little more than a student decorated manila folder filled with samples of student work. Similarly, Leila's photography expertise moved the students' ABC poems from two-dimensional texts to multimodal works of art that were brought to life with color and images of the students themselves. Both teachers mentioned that knowing they had the support of the other was a key factor in wanting to take some risks with this project and try something different.

Discussion

These two modes of coteaching provided for different needs within the classroom. Given the limited planning time Leila and Eva had together, parallel teaching allowed them to broadly teach the same topic without having to coordinate their instruction in detail. In many respects this approach was "easier" on the teachers in that it did not require them to find much time outside of the regular school day for planning. This was a key factor as Leila was also coteaching with two other grade-level teachers and running two pull-out groups during the day, which made for precious little planning time. Further, in Leila's case the parallel structure allowed space for her to draw on and integrate her ESOL knowledge into the classroom without having to negotiate or validate her choices with Eva. Instructional strategies like spending time building background knowledge and providing extended opportunities for students to practice oral language are typically found in ESOL pull-out settings but may get short shrift in grade-level classrooms

(Platt, Harper, & Mendoza, 2003). Talking about the challenges of trying to bring ESOL instruction into coteaching settings Leila shared this comment:

It's hard having to be the one that comes *in* to everyone else's room. Even when it's a great situation where you know the teacher wants you in there, you still feel sometimes like you have to justify your teaching and the choices you're making... You often hear 'ESOL strategies are good for all students,' but I wouldn't say that they're regularly used [in grade-level classrooms]. With Eva, you know we've got two hours and I think that makes a big difference. We try to do as much as we can together, but we've also got our own reading groups too.

Team teaching on the other hand required significantly more planning on the teachers' parts. Despite this fact, in follow-up interviews after the study, both teachers indicated that it was their preferred approach to coteaching. By definition, the team teaching was collaborative, and both teachers recognized it as a form of on-going professional learning. For Leila team teaching was like "performing in the presence of a colleague," and for her this was a major motivator for her to be prepared and to develop "well thought-out and prepared lessons." She added

I feel like I learn a lot from my coteachers, like I am learning twice or three times or four times as much as a normal teacher would because I work with so many teachers and so many different situations and I try to implement what I learn from them in my own teaching. And then not only to learn myself, but obviously having the opportunity to teach other teachers is very powerful. And I do, I think that they are probably learning more just from me being in their classroom.

Eva also regarded team teaching as her preferred approach, saying

I think we would both say we prefer teaching the whole group—we ALL get more out of it, but it takes so much more time; we just weren't able to do it as much. With the poetry project we did a lot of mini-lessons, and our roles were more interchangeable. We both worked on language development, on conferencing with students, and the poetry concepts also. Our teaching was more fluid. And too, you know you learn a lot about yourself and your teaching when you're coteaching at the same time together with someone.

Mediating Factors and Implications

By all accounts, Leila and Eva enjoyed coteaching together. In interviews and in their final written reflections both teachers indicated they would like to continue coteaching with one another in the future and they felt that coteaching was the best approach for working with the ELLs in their classroom. Despite this positive conclusion however, both teachers expressed some frustration and disappointment that they attributed to elements beyond their immediate control. In closing I feel it is critical to discuss how these factors impacted Eva and Leila's work together, as examining these mediating factors may provide insight into how to best support and sustain coteaching models for ELLs. In addition to the teachers' comments from interviews, CIG meetings, and written reflections, I also draw on my own analysis of documents from the wider context of this study.

Regarding the school, district, and state positions on coteaching, both Leila and Eva felt that there was an obvious contradiction between the glossy institutional rhetoric surrounding coteaching and the reality that they lived out as coteachers. School and state documents promoted coteaching as the preferred approach for working with ELLs; however, few tangible resources were provided to help coteachers fully realize the model. For example, formal

improvement plans at both the district and the school level emphasized “increasing instructional time by limiting interruptions, expanding the ESOL push-in model, and supporting collaboration between classroom teachers and ESOL teachers” (WES-SIP, p. 14). However, when I asked the teachers about training and professional development, neither Eva nor Leila indicated that they had received any professional development on coteaching, nor were they granted any common planning time to facilitate their collaborative work. So much for supporting collaboration between classroom and ESOL teachers.

To examine the state’s perspective, during our CIG meeting in March we discussed the following text from the Georgia High School Graduation Requirements document (2008):

In the Push-in model, the ESOL teacher and the content teacher are co-equals in the classroom, but each has a distinct role. The ESOL teacher is responsible for language support, while the content teacher is responsible for delivery of academic content. Research indicates that strong teaching partnerships occur when teachers know each other’s curriculum, share responsibilities, plan together, share strategies, and share teaching equally. When students break into groups, the ESOL teacher should work with ELLs, while the content teacher focuses on mainstream students. The ESOL Push-in delivery model allows the teachers to collaborate in order to facilitate meaningful language instruction within the content classroom and to appropriately plan differentiated instruction and tasks to meet the various proficiency levels of the ELLs. The GaDOE encourages school districts to explore this model. (p. 6)

The teachers were frustrated by this text for several reasons. First, Eva pointed out how the state seemed to be overemphasizing the distinct and separate roles each teacher should play instead of highlighting the collaborative possibilities of coteaching. She commented, “I agree that we each

have our own strengths and background areas, but they make it seem like we're supposed to be doing completely separate jobs or something." Leila added,

I just don't like how they say the ESOL teacher is doing 'language support' and the regular teacher is 'delivering academic content.' It makes it seem like I'm not a central part of the teaching; my role sounds so much less important...or academic.

Leila's comments here align with findings from Arkoudis (2003, 2006), Creese (2005, 2006), and McClure and Cahnmann-Taylor (2010) that document how ESOL teachers are often relegated to periphery and support positions in cotaught classrooms.

Much of what Leila and Eva experienced throughout the year is congruent with current literature on coteaching. As in many studies of coteaching in special education contexts, lack of institutional support in terms of time, resources, and professional development were key factors impacting Leila and Eva' ability to implement coteaching to the degree they would have liked. Beyond these logistical elements though, the teachers described needing time to develop their coteaching beyond just planning lessons, more from a relational perspective. In final interviews and written reflections, I asked the teachers to discuss the role of the CIG meetings in meeting this need.

Eva

I've never been able to really have this type of conversation with Leila [outside of the CIG meetings] where we are not using all our time to just plan this or that for tomorrow. But some way to really talk about things together would really help me.

Leila

I would say the biggest benefit [of the CIG meetings] is that we were able to kind of step away from the actual teaching and kind of look at it, you know, from outside of what we

were doing and actually offer each other positive feedback. Because I really don't know what my other coteachers thought about having me in their classroom all year but I know what Eva thought because we shared it in this group and I was always pretty certain that she was happy to have me in there! You know, sometimes you're not really sure... and to me that was huge. So I felt like we were able to take more risks that way with each other because we were more comfortable.

Regardless of the format or arrangement employed (i.e., parallel, team, etc.), coteaching is a collaborative instructional practice that, at the core, is about human relations. It involves two teachers navigating the process of sharing instructional space, resources, decision making, and practices and how that process translates into teaching and learning experiences with diverse students. As indicated in the teachers' comments about the role of the CIG, coteachers need an explicit framework or process to facilitate critical reflection on their practice. The CIG meetings provided that framework for Eva and Leila. School districts considering coteaching and other collaborative practices for working with ELLs need recognize coteaching from a relational perspective as well as an instructional one. I close with a final comment from Leila:

Coteaching can be such a mixed bag, you know? On one hand it can be helpful because teaching can be a really lonely profession where everyone is in their little insular room and no one knows what's going on next door. It's great to have that other adult in the room to observe what you are observing and to reflect on what you are seeing. You can really talk about it and debrief and learn a lot about teaching from your coteachers this way. And so I feel like that part of it is just really great for teachers. Without support though, I mean trying to work with too many teachers and not having time or space to do that kind of debriefing together.

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CHAPTER 4

PUSHING BACK AGAINST PUSH-IN: ESOL TEACHER RESISTANCE AND THE COMPLEXITIES OF COTEACHING⁴

As English language learners (ELLs) continue to represent the fastest growing student population in U.S. public schools (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2006), many districts are moving toward more inclusive instructional programs that place ELLs in “mainstream settings as early and as fully as possible” (Platt, Harper, & Mendoza, 2003, p. 105). For many schools, this means a move away from pull-out approaches whereby ELLs receive English language development instruction in a setting removed from the mainstream classroom in favor of push-in, or coteaching, models whereby English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) teachers work alongside their grade-level counterparts in the classroom. Despite the lack of empirical research on coteaching in ESOL, there is significant evidence to suggest a recent trend toward inclusive practices in English as a second language (ESOL) education (Pardini, 2006; Platt et al., 2003; Zehr, 2006). Recent symposia (such as the American Educational Research Association’s) and pre-convention institutes (such as TESOL’s) at professional education conferences serve as indicators of the current momentum surrounding coteaching and collaboration in ESOL educational circles. Popular practitioner texts have also

⁴ McClure, G. and Cahnmann-Taylor, M. 2010. *TESOL Journal*.1(1): 101-129.
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contributed, with *Teaching Tolerance*, *everythingESOL.net*, and even TESOL's *Essential Teacher* all publishing pieces in recent years.

To date, however, most research on coteaching in ESOL settings has occurred in international contexts (Arkoudis, 2003, 2006; Creese, 2005, 2006; Davison, 2006; Gardner, 2006), with very little carried out in the United States (York-Barr, Ghere, & Sommerness, 2007). Much of what has been done presents the power-neutral instructional and economic benefits of bringing language and content teachers together while ignoring the complex historical imbalances between ESOL and grade-level content knowledge and instructional expertise, authority, and power (Arkoudis, 2003). Without addressing the historical marginalization of ESOL students, their teachers, and ESOL instructional goals, coteaching runs the risk of being relegated to another best practices mandate (e.g., Reading First, No Child Left Behind) that is enthusiastically implemented with good intentions but fails to provide any substantive or lasting educational improvements (Harper, de Jong, & Platt, 2008; Menken, 2008).

Borrowing from the special education literature, coteaching can be defined as two or more educators sharing instructional responsibility for students assigned to the same classroom (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008). The actual implementation of coteaching as an instructional practice may vary depending on local contexts, but researchers have identified a range of models frequently used in the classroom (for a full discussion of these models, see Friend & Cook, 2007). Despite the lack of research on coteaching in ESOL settings, the approach seems to be predicated on the premise of fostering language and content development for ELLs in the most inclusive and efficient manner possible (Creese, 2005; Davison, 2006). Our goal has been to

document coteaching between ESOL and grade-level teachers⁵ as it takes place in the southeastern United States, a region that has quickly embraced this instructional model (Scott, Johnson, Lacker, & Wlazlinski, 2008) for a variety of reasons. Among the most significant include a recent and dramatic increase in the numbers of ESOL students (Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002); limited human and material resources to address this population's needs; increasing federal accountability pressures; and a historical wariness to maintain models that seem to overtly imply racial, linguistic, and other forms of segregation (McKay & Freedman, 1990; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Ovando & Collier, 1998; Platt et al., 2003). Also important is that, in an era when dwindling school budgets are under scrutiny, coteaching appears as a cost-saving opportunity by eliminating the need for additional classroom or teaching spaces required by pull-out approaches. We have analyzed findings from two regional studies, one that took place in the context of a series of focus groups with new bilingual teachers in the area (a majority of whom were ESOL teachers) and an ethnographic approach to understanding the lived classroom reality of one pair of ESOL and grade-level teachers. Through our collaborative inquiry, we hope to illuminate the complexities of coteaching relationships and discuss their implications for the TESOL field.

How do coteachers experience the qualities of the push-in model? Do some ESOL teachers in the United States embrace the push-in model while others push back? We begin with a case example from Carmen,⁶ a bilingual ESOL teacher born in Argentina who highlights a struggle for language rights—both the students' and her own—within her coteaching context.

⁵ Much of the literature on coteaching uses the terms *mainstream*, *regular classroom*, and *grade-level* to identify the teachers with whom ESOL coteachers are working. In this article we use the term *grade-level teacher* in an attempt to move away from terms that position ESOL teachers as peripheral or irregular in comparison to their colleagues.

⁶ All names of people and places in this article are pseudonyms.

From Pull-Out to Push-In ESOL: A Case Example

Carmen has been a pull-out ESOL teacher in an elementary school for 5 years in a rural area of a southeastern U.S. state that has seen exponential growth in its immigrant Latino population. When she was first hired, pull-out instruction allowed her to work directly with ELLs in her own classroom for one period a day, providing sheltered content instruction with a focus on the forms and functions of English (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). In addition to her knowledge of second language acquisition and pedagogy, in such an environment Carmen's bilingual abilities were an asset that helped her explain difficult concepts in the students' native language, Spanish, and nurture trusting relationships with students and their families.

Due to emphases on accountability and standardized testing since passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, Carmen, like many ESOL teachers around the country, has recently been mandated by her district to gradually replace the number of pull-out classes she instructs with the push-in model, requiring her to coteach in the same classroom with her grade-level colleagues. In these settings, ESOL teachers focus on scaffolding language and vocabulary instruction to increase ELLs' access to the content curriculum. Ideally, coteaching is aimed at intermediate- to advanced-level ESOL students, maintaining pull-out ESOL instruction for newcomers; however, when the number of ESOL teachers is limited (as is often the case), coteaching often includes ESOL students at all levels of proficiency and becomes the only instructional model for working with ELLs. Both for Carmen and for the more "ideal pair" discussed later, local contexts did not allow for newcomers to receive additional instruction beyond the coteaching model. The following is a transcript of a dramatic performance Carmen co-created with other ESOL teachers in a weekend focus group as a way of sharing some of the

challenges and complexities of coteaching as well as one reason she and ESOL colleagues are pushing back against the push-in mandate. She plays herself in a classroom with “Ms. Edna,” a grade-level teacher who does not believe Carmen should be using Spanish to assist Spanish-speaking students’ academic and language development. These performances encourage participants’ to heighten and dramatize their lived classroom experiences so that the group can engage dialogically in possibilities for change.

Ms. Edna: Good morning, class. How are you all today? Today we’re going to be learning about the planets. OK? How many of you know what the planets are?

(Student raises hand)

Carmen: Yes, Viviana?

Liliana: *No entiendo.* [I don’t understand.]

Ms. Edna: Excuse me, excuse me! NO SPANISH, please. We’re in America. OK? Therefore you cannot speak Spanish.

Carmen: She just came here from Mexico, you know, she’s new

Ms. Edna: It doesn’t matter. *(Claps hands for emphasis)* We DON’T speak Spanish in the United States of America. It’s not our OFFICIAL language.

Carmen: She’s just been here for 60 days

Ms. Edna: It doesn’t matter, ma’am. We are learning science here; we’re not in ESOL or in Spanish class. OK, let me continue.

Carmen: *(To Viviana)* Viviana, Viviana, *planetas*. That’s what it is.

Ms. Edna: *(Spoken with extreme sarcasm and condescension)* OK. So how many of you know what the PLAN—whatever that is?

Students: *¿Qué dice?* [What's she saying?]

Ms. Edna: *(Sternly to Carmen)* Excuse me? I thought you wanted to step out.

Carmen: We're supposed to be coteaching, remember?

Ms. Edna: But you said you had to go speak to somebody.

Carmen: Not right now. I'm going to the principal because this is getting out of hand.

Carmen has participated in the Teachers for English Language Learners (TELL) program, a federally funded support network designed to recruit and retain bilingual teachers in the southeastern United States, who are in short supply in K–12 schools throughout the area. The TELL program has used performance-based workshops as a form of professional support, rehearsing participants' greatest professional challenges and attempting to perform alternative courses of action (Cahnmann-Taylor, Wooten, Souto-Manning, & Dice, 2009). The goal for these workshops has been to enhance bilingual teachers' sense of effectiveness and agency, thus promoting their retention in the field and their potential as advocates for immigrant students (Cahnmann, Rymes, & Souto-Manning, 2005). TELL teachers have reported a variety of professional challenges, but the most recurring struggles concern relationships between teachers in coteaching environments (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010; Souto-Manning, Dice, Cahnmann-Taylor, & Wooten, 2008).

In the case presented in the previous transcript, a grade-level colleague, Ms. Edna, disavows some of the greatest assets many ESOL teachers bring to the instructional table: the ability to connect with students' home language(s) and culture(s) and the ability to support their

emerging bilingualism. Although school districts have pitched partnerships between ESOL and grade-level teachers as more inclusive than segregative pull-out models, the lived experience of these partnerships can actually reinforce the marginalization of ELLs and their ESOL teachers. The previous transcript presents a dramatization of Carmen's lived experiences as a coteacher and illuminates just one such case in which, despite heterogeneous grouping and a coteaching partnership, ELLs and their teachers can be excluded from the curriculum.

Scholarship on ESOL Coteaching

Although there has been significant research on coteaching in special education contexts (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008), there exists very little empirical work on coteaching among teachers of ELLs in U.S. contexts. In one of the few examples of this research, York-Barr et al. (2007) conducted a 3-year case study of coteaching in an urban elementary school in the United States. They examined teacher perceptions of coteaching as well as the model's impact on ELL student achievement on standardized assessments in reading and math. Their findings showed increased positive teacher attitudes toward coteaching each year, as well as "considerable positive academic gains in both reading and math" for ELLs (York-Barr et al., 2007, p. 323). The authors identified collaborative planning and reflection among teachers as key factors, both of which were made possible by significant and sustained administrative support in the form of additional staffing and other resources.

With the exception of York-Barr and colleagues' (2007) case study, most of the work on coteaching has been conceptual and anecdotal. For example, in a review of one elementary school's shift from pull-out to coteaching, Coltrane (2002) unequivocally suggests, "When teachers collaborate and combine their talents, everyone benefits" (p. 6). Although we agree that

collaboration has the potential to yield positive results, statements such as this obfuscate the complexities involved and ignore the fact that coteaching is often a contentious and exhausting enterprise. In fact, Coltrane's opening paragraphs depict the frantic morning routine of an ESOL coteacher tracking down colleagues in order to plan "over a dozen different lessons and activities—all of which will be implemented that same morning" (p. 6). In discussing the challenges associated with coteaching, Coltrane focuses solely on functional and logistical issues such as scheduling and lack of planning time for coteachers.

Scheduling and time are serious issues that schools must grapple with, but critical questions of power, status, and conflicting pedagogies that come into play between coteaching partners may be even more important and are seldom addressed. In presenting coteaching guidelines to support ESOL and grade-level partnerships, Hoffman and Dahlman (2007) acknowledge that collaboration is not quite so simple and urge teachers to remain flexible and responsive to the dynamics of individual personalities, school culture, and student needs. In addition to the logistical concerns previously mentioned, Hoffman and Dahlman identify other challenges such as unrealistic workloads, inadequate resources, and insufficient time for goal setting and dialogue between teachers. This recognition begins to touch on ideological concerns, including the role of school culture and relationship building among coteachers. These factors are critical if educators are to more fully understand the complexities of coteaching in ESOL settings.

Recently, scholars in international contexts have begun to investigate coteaching for ELLs from a more critical standpoint. Using ethnography of communication, Creese (2005, 2006) examined specific discourse patterns of coteachers in British secondary schools. Based on her fieldwork and interviews with teachers in the schools, Creese concludes that the grade-level

teachers' discourse of transmission of grade-level content was valued over the ESOL teachers' discourse of facilitation and support. Subject teachers and ESOL teachers alike positioned ESOL knowledge and roles as peripheral and secondary to subject area concerns. However, Creese suggests that ESOL and subject area teachers are under different social and institutional pressures and as a result cannot achieve all instructional aims equally.

From a professional development context, Davison (2006) analyzed the discourse and positioning of coteachers in an international English-language elementary school in Taiwan. She argues that research on coteaching and collaboration between ESOL and grade-level teachers has narrowly focused on methods and has largely neglected the processes of coplanning and coteaching and finding ways to support such processes. Davison indicates that these partnerships are often characterized by “an imbalance of authority, responsibility, and opportunities for input” (p. 456). To facilitate the theorizing and evaluation of coteaching, Davison developed a 5-stage model of collaboration that progresses from pseudocompliance to creative co-construction (Table 4.1). Davison concludes by calling for “action-oriented research with built-in opportunities for critical reflection” (p. 472) to provide coteachers with the necessary time and tools for examining their partnerships.

Table 4.1

Levels of Collaboration between ESOL and Grade-Level Teachers

| Level | Distinguishing Characteristics |
|--|---|
| Pseudocompliance or passive resistance | <p>Implicit (or explicit) rejection of collaboration; preference for status quo after a short trial period</p> <p>Little or no real investment of time or understanding</p> <p>No positive outcomes recognized</p> <p>Expectation that “this too shall pass”</p> |
| Compliance | <p>Positive attitude and expressions of good intent</p> <p>Efforts made to implement roles and responsibilities, but model seen as externally imposed</p> <p>Frustration and stress due to conflicting demands</p> <p>Expectation of practical and teacher-specific external professional development and dependence on external rewards</p> |
| Accommodation | <p>Positive attitude and willingness to experiment</p> <p>Efforts made to accommodate coteacher’s perceived needs; conflicts seen as unnecessary or avoidable if coteaching is implemented correctly</p> <p>Achievements seen mainly in terms of strategies and techniques</p> <p>Expectation of practical and teacher-specific external professional development</p> |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Convergence | <p>Highly positive attitude, embracing opportunities to learn from each other</p> <p>Efforts made to engage with coteacher’s ideas and initiate dialogue and experimentation</p> <p>Some adopting of other’s ideas and strategies, and increasing satisfaction with rewards of collaboration</p> <p>Increasingly seeking opportunities for peer interaction; growing preference for action research and peer-led professional development</p> |
| Creative co-construction | <p>Highly positive attitudes; coteaching seen as preferred approach for working with English language learners</p> <p>Teachers’ roles are more interchangeable, yet still distinct</p> <p>Responsibilities and roles are constantly negotiated</p> <p>Teachers engage in action research and critical reflection on their coteaching</p> |

Note: Adapted from “Collaboration Between ESOL and Content Teachers: How Do We Know When We are Doing it Right?” by C. Davison, 2006, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 9, p. 467. Copyright 2006 by C. Davison. Reprinted with permission.

Arkoudis (2003) investigated the planning practices of an ESOL teacher and a grade-level teacher in an Australian secondary school. Her findings also implicate power as integral in understanding coteaching relationships. In contrast to grade-level teachers, ESOL teachers were seen as owning no specific knowledge or content and, as a result, were often positioned as less

important than grade-level teachers in the school community. She summarizes the problematic nature of coteaching with particular emphasis on curriculum and knowledge:

Defining the role of the ESOL teacher and the ESOL curriculum in this context has been difficult particularly in secondary schools. . . . Each grade-level has clearly defined knowledge and content. ESOL, unlike other subjects, has attempted to arch over all curriculum areas and assist mainstream teachers in catering for the needs of their ESOL and LOTE (language other than English) background students. (p. 165)

ESOL coteachers must enter, literally and philosophically, specific discourse communities in which pedagogy and subject knowledge are often viewed differently. Whereas grade-level teachers are connected to legitimate, socially sanctioned knowledge of the content area curriculum, ESOL teachers are frequently seen as delivering generic support and facilitation for the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic minorities they serve. In this sense, ESOL work is often seen within schools as strategy driven and generic (Arkoudis, 2003), with no subject-specific knowledge of its own (Creese, 2005). This positioning has a significant impact on the potential of coteaching relationships. If ESOL is only positioned within or peripheral to the mainstream curriculum, what does this say about the status and agency of ESOL teachers and their ability to effect meaningful and lasting change within such contexts?

Questioning the Good Intentions of Inclusion

These studies of ESOL and grade-level coteaching partnerships highlight previously neglected issues of power, knowledge, and epistemology and suggest a need for sustained, critical reflection (Davison, 2006) and dialogue between coteachers. Coteaching mandates gloss over real differences in practice and epistemology, often leaving coteachers to make their way through these challenges on their own. Further, these mandates are often cloaked in the rhetoric

of inclusion that presents coteaching as inherently leading to positive outcomes because students are not pulled out or segregated from the “regular” classroom environment.

Although we do not question the potential benefits of inclusion, we suggest a critical analysis to temper the marketing of coteaching as unproblematic and inherently good. For example, what are the actual experiences of inclusion for ELLs and their ESOL teachers, and how are they positioned in such settings? Are there space and support for teachers and students to examine how social perceptions of relevant issues, such as immigration and bilingualism, impact classroom relationships? Carmen and the ESOL students who experienced regular bouts of linguisticism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1986) and other forms of prejudice in Ms. Edna’s classroom would certainly challenge the notion that inclusion was indeed a welcoming environment. Without a critical examination of the community itself, and the broader cultural influences that shape curriculum and decisions for the community, might “inclusion” simply imply new forms of exclusion, merely moving the chairs around into different arrangements, as opposed to challenging and remaking the structure itself?

The current study contributes to an emerging line of critical inquiry into coteaching with ELLs, suggesting answers to questions posed by Arkoudis (2003) and others regarding “how we can best bring together teachers from different discourse communities and get them into sustained and productive dialogue” (p. 172). Two different coteaching experiences are explored here.

Methods

Both authors are interested in TESOL and bilingual education and have been actively involved in research and teaching in these fields. Cahnmann-Taylor and colleagues (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010; Cahnmann-Taylor et al., 2009) carried out a longitudinal study between

2003 and 2009 concerning the experiences of pre- and in-service bilingual, mostly Spanish-English, teachers in the southeastern United States. Inspired by the work of Paulo Freire (1970) and Augusto Boal (1979, 1992) and the merger between Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed, Cahnmann-Taylor shifted the structure of the focus group format, utilizing theater games and dramatic play as methods of research and for professional development. Researchers recorded these performance-based focus group sessions to identify the qualities of bilingual teachers' experiences (most of whom were assigned to ESOL, Spanish as a foreign language classrooms, or both) and best practices to support their long-term success as language and cultural brokers.

Performance-based focus groups have been discussed extensively elsewhere (e.g., Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010; Cahnmann-Taylor et al., 2009), and space constraints do not allow us to go into depth regarding their format and structure here. What is important for readers to know is that performance-based focus groups involve the use of Boalian theater games and dramatic play exercises designed to elicit participants' experiences of struggle, promoting dialogue about power and agency and creating networks of support. Findings indicate that coteaching experiences, such as those presented in Carmen's case, are some of the most emotionally and professionally challenging in participants' professional lives.

Whereas Cahnmann-Taylor's (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010) understanding of the challenges of coteaching, particularly in the TESOL context, emerged from a series of performance-based focus groups that took place after school hours, McClure's (2008) work documents the lived experience of one pair of coteachers in the day-to-day practices of school life. From January to May 2007, McClure conducted 19 classroom observations that focused on the coteachers' shared instructional time and the transitions before and after the

coteaching. In addition to classroom observations, McClure observed planning sessions between the coteachers and interviewed both teachers at the beginning and end of the study.

Joined together, analysis of our two studies illuminates the complex and multifaceted nature of the coteaching experience—as told by bilingual ESOL teachers in a homogenous afterschool setting and as observed during the school day in a coteaching pair’s classroom environment. We present data elicited from ESOL coteachers’ performances of their lived experiences, observations of coteachers’ practices, and interviews with coteachers in order to offer a complex picture of why some teachers are pushing back against the push-in model, shedding light on the nuances of compliance with coteaching policies.

The Coteaching Edict

Carmen’s performance case presented earlier illuminates one of several aspects of pseudocompliance (Davison, 2006). As a bilingual ESOL instructor, Carmen is assigned to coteach in a situation where one of her two language resources is silenced in the name of English immersion. She presents her coteacher as hostile to the native language resources in the classroom and as having a clear preference for the status quo of “English only” and cultural assimilation. Later in the scene, Carmen pushes back against a coteaching mandate that perpetuates language restrictivism and monolingual norms by taking her concerns to the principal. Carmen recreated the following scene to showcase her dismay in the face of English hegemony and the principal’s decision to side with the grade-level teacher and the status quo.

Carmen: *(to principal before Ms. Edna enters)* We’re supposed to be coteaching. I have the same authority she has as a teacher. She treats the kids very badly. She treats ME very badly, I guess because I’m Hispanic. So can we do something about this?

(Ms. Edna enters and she and the principal talk socially for a minute or two, laughing together as two close friends would)

Ms. Edna: They talk about me, she and the students. I don't even know what they're saying. I don't think that's polite.

Carmen: That's not right; we are not talking about you. *(To the principal)* You know she's telling them off all the time, not to speak in their own language. That's the only language they know.

Ms. Edna: We ARE in the United States.

Principal: Right, we are in the United States.

Carmen: I would like you to go to school in Spain or somewhere and see if you can speak the language in one month or two.

Principal: But, maybe that's the way to learn, to SUFFER.

The following performance highlights the powerlessness many ESOL teachers feel regarding coteaching mandates. The opening lines are performed by Leila, who, acting as the voice of a district administrator, delivers the edict "from above" while standing on a chair. Raising the action from floor level was intended to convey the teachers' perception that such policy mandates often emerge from an invisible and thus unapproachable authority with power over their lived experience. Leila's district mandate is followed by a scene between an elementary school principal and Misha, the school's ESOL teacher. In this scene, the principal is handing down Misha's schedule in what is presented as an overwhelming litany of tasks and responsibilities. Discussion and analysis of the performance follows the transcript.

Voice of District Mandate: *(Standing up on a chair to present the coteaching edict)*

Starting in the 2007–2008 school year, the school district will increase our ESOL teachers in collaboration classrooms by twofold. All teachers will need to teach in the homeroom as many classes as they can.

Principal: Misha, ESOL teacher, come in here, it's time to design your schedule. You're going to be teaching starting from 7:15 until 2:15. *(As directions are handed down, Misha responds as a marionette, whose strings are being pulled and manipulated from above)* You're gonna have two segments of first graders, two segments of second graders, one segment of third graders, then you're gonna see your fourth graders, and then you're gonna have your fifth graders from 1:00 to 2:15. Besides, once a month, during January you're going to ride the bus. You're gonna ride the bus during dismissal, you're going to take those kids, you're going to ride the bus and meet the bus driver. Your planning time is going to be from 2:15 to 2:45. Also, you need to be available to translate and to take care of parents when they come to school and they have questions.

Observing teachers: *(In agreement)* This is so true!

Principal Remember, you're supposed to cooperate with the teachers, coteaching with them.

Misha: Yes, Ma'am. *(Misha is still hanging around.)*

Observing teacher: You are dismissed!

This performance illustrates several issues the teachers identified as critical to understanding their coteaching experiences. The first regards teachers' self-perceptions of powerlessness. Rather than being active participants in designing and selecting the pedagogical approaches they will carry out, the teachers instead are recipients of a mandate for coteaching; they are the puppets that will implement decisions made by those in positions of power. The edict handed down by Leila conveys a sense of finality and authority, with little opportunity for teachers to resist or even respond. This aligns with Hargreaves's (1994) notion of "contrived collegiality," whereby teachers are assigned into collaboration either against their will or without being consulted (p. 195). From this perspective, collaboration is not only compulsory but also highly predictable and controlled. According to Hargreaves, such mandated collaboration lacks creativity and enthusiasm at best, and at worst inspires unproductive relationships mired in hostility, resentment, and tension. Such approaches fail to capitalize on opportunities for critical partnerships presented by coteaching.

When the group decided to portray Misha as a marionette, whose strings (i.e., body and mind) were controlled by institutional and administrative directives, they conveyed a deep sense of powerlessness regarding policies that affect instruction. In this way, the teachers began, in a Freirian sense, to name their world—identifying and articulating the inequitable power relations that constrained their efforts and exposed the ESOL push-in mandate as a disciplinary practice that controls the mind and the body (Foucault, 1979). As the principal handed down the schedule, Misha responded in a lifeless fashion, jerked this way and that from multiple coteaching responsibilities to extra duties such as riding the bus, working with parents, and translating. This aligns with discussions of the many roles that ESOL teachers play in their schools, often to the point of burnout (Olsen, 1997). Although the performance used humor and

dramatic license to present the scenario, the scene resonated with teachers in the audience as a realistic experience. As the facilitator questioned the group to gauge how realistic this scenario was, many participants resoundingly affirmed that it was quite real and one they had encountered themselves. In a follow-up interview, Leila expanded on this issue, expressing her concerns regarding state and district expectations for coteaching:

At the district level, they're trying to get ESOL teachers to do coteaching more and more. Last year they were saying they wanted you to do as much [coteaching] as you can, and when it came to this year they said we want you to do *at least* one more. So if someone was doing five "collabs" already, they had to do six. The idea of coteaching with six different teachers is just absolutely overwhelming, and it almost makes me want to puke! All of this in the context of no training or support for *how* to do it.

This approach assumes that coteaching partnerships are unproblematic and that ESOL and grade-level teachers are ready-made to collaborate with one another. This neglects suggestions from the literature that these partnerships take time and require voluntary teacher commitment and reflection (Davison, 2006) that can either be ignored or nurtured through professional development.

The "Ideal Pair" and the Need for Dialogue

In addition to the performance-based focus groups with bilingual ESOL teachers, this study also examines a fifth-grade coteaching partnership between an ESOL teacher, Donna, and her grade-level partner, Monica. As White, middle-class, monolingual speakers of U.S. English, this pair's relationship differed significantly from the relationship of the bilingual coteachers who were paired with monolingual English-speaking colleagues. In addition to sharing the same ethnic, linguistic, and gender identities, Donna and Monica had voluntarily agreed to coteach with one

another and both considered themselves to be progressive educators willing to try new approaches in their teaching. Like many schools in the southeastern United States, Lynch Elementary, where the pair worked, has experienced more than a 400% increase in the number of ELLs over the past 10 years. In Donna and Monica's fifth-grade classroom, 7 of the 22 students are ELLs. Although conflicts based on race, language, and power were not as central to these two teachers' professional identities as they were for many of the bilingual coteachers, the partnership struggled with other issues that resulted largely from a lack of critical reflection and dialogue.

At midyear, Monica described their coteaching partnership as "successful, but just going through the motions." Her tone did not suggest a negative characterization, more a matter-of-fact statement that conveyed her sense of general satisfaction with their efforts but also her recognition that they were missing out on many opportunities afforded by their collaboration. For example, while the pair's preference was for team instruction, whereby they would share instructional responsibility, "playing off of each other's teaching," in reality their practice was quite different. Based on research observations and field notes, a typical lesson followed one of two formats: one teacher would lead instruction while the other circulated through the room attending to questions and making sure students were on task, or they would engage in parallel teaching, each working independently with a heterogeneous group of students. The teachers rarely interacted with one another to draw on the specific language development expertise Donna brought to the classroom. For example, while Monica led discussions during their reading of a historical novel, Donna primarily attended to behavioral and management issues, making sure students were paying attention and following along in the text. There were only a few occasions

when Donna focused on strategies for scaffolding language learning, such as preteaching vocabulary and rephrasing question stems to facilitate student comprehension (Gibbons, 2002).

Near the end of the school year, both teachers independently identified their coteaching relationship, according to Davison's (2006) model, as falling under accommodation, a phase characterized by a positive attitude toward coteaching and a willingness to experiment with the model. Although both teachers generally exhibited positive attitudes toward coteaching, we identify their partnership as more closely aligning with compliance, for several reasons. Both teachers identified the rationale for coteaching as being mandated, or "because the district said so," as Monica bluntly stated. As a result, they never articulated their own understanding of the potential of coteaching and simply plowed ahead with good intentions. Additionally, there was little evidence of efforts to experiment and develop their craft as coteachers; their coteaching rarely ventured from the two instructional formats discussed previously. Finally, both experienced stress and frustration, as expressed by concerns regarding a lack of candid communication, professional identity, and whether coteaching was the best approach for educating ELLs at the school. After a particularly frustrating class during which all seven of the ELLs in the class failed the weekly vocabulary test, Donna related these concerns:

I just feel like I'm not giving them as much as they need. Sometimes I feel like I'm failing them because I can't give them the direct attention and focus on language that I was able to do in pull-out. I love being a part of their content learning in class, but sometimes I question what we're doing here. It can't be as simple as pull-out is bad and coteaching is good. Coteaching is great in many ways, but I need to recover some of what was lost in this push to coteach. . . . I miss the close relationships I built with my students in the small pull-out settings.

These were consistent concerns for Donna throughout the study. She recognized that coteaching created opportunities to directly support ELLs' content learning, but she questioned the mandate and resisted identifying pull-out as being bad. She also felt that at times her efforts to support ELLs' language development were diluted, indicating that one of the potential dangers of push-in appears to be ESOL instruction being subverted for a more incidental and indirect system of support. This, coupled with the fact that she spent most of her day entering multiple teachers' classrooms to provide ESOL instruction and support, contributed to Donna's concerns of losing a sense of her professional identity as an ESOL teacher.

Regarding their efforts at communicating and reflecting on how their coteaching work was going, both teachers acknowledged a lack of common planning time as a major obstacle. However, Monica added that from her perspective, lack of time was only one element of their struggle. She also felt like the pair lacked the support to engage in candid dialogue with one another, even regarding minor frustrations that seemed to hold their relationship back. In an interview near the end of the school year, she discussed this concern in relation to a 3-week period during the spring when no coteaching took place at all, because Donna was required to administer the state-mandated English language proficiency assessment to all of the ELLs she served. Responding to how this impacted their efforts, Monica commented,

I feel like we've been OK at communicating, but really we're just [talking] about surface-level stuff. There were definitely some frustrating things that I never communicated directly to her . . . like the ACCESS [proficiency assessment] testing stuff. It seems like we really need a more structured opportunity to check in with each other and talk about what we're doing . . . in a way that helps us move forward, beyond just who's going to teach what. We just haven't had that. As far as the ACCESS testing, whenever we were

making lessons I just didn't count on her for about 2 or 3 weeks because I knew she would be tied up with that. And if she came in, that was great. But the inconsistency was certainly frustrating.

From her perspective, Donna also felt as if the pair never addressed some of the underlying issues regarding their coteaching goals. She attributed this to the fact that their coteaching partnership, although voluntary, actually began the first day of the school year with no collaborative training or time to map out mutual goals and expectations. In a follow-up interview she reflected:

I think one of the big issues with that [critical reflection] is that we just had to launch into things at the beginning of the year. I mean, we took some time to talk about how things would work, but you know how crazy the beginning of the year is. . . . And while we [ESOL teachers] had some professional development before school started, she [Monica] wasn't a part of it. I think that was a major problem all along. . . . Why classroom teachers wouldn't be a part of the training is beyond me!

The ESOL Teacher as Temporary Substitute or Classroom Assistant

The performance-based focus groups highlighted additional tensions experienced by ESOL coteachers, including moments when “co” actually became “substitute,” “teaching” meant “assisting,” or both. In this first performance, Ana, the bilingual teacher, entered “Ms. Trina’s” fourth-grade classroom during the science period. As Ana arrived, the following scene unfolded:

Ana: Hi, Ms. Trina.

Ms. Trina: Hi, how can I help you today?

Ana: I'm here to do our coteaching class!

Ms. Trina: Perfect! Perfect! You know what, I have the textbooks and materials over there. You need to cover the solar system. You know I'm behind in my work, so I'll just be here checking my e-mails. If you need something, let me know, please.

Ana: (*Looking frustrated but getting straight to the work*) OK. Kids, we're doing the solar system. (*Shifts to Spanish*) *El sistema solar, el sistema solar.* (*Shifts back to English*) The solar system.

This performance came to a close with the observing ESOL teachers nodding in agreement. We underline the shifts in person from first to second—where Ms. Trina's language use further separates *I* and *you* as Ana tries to reinforce the *we* part of collaboration. This scene, in which Ana is handed the instructional reins as her grade-level colleague takes a break to catch up on her work, reflects a common experience of being treated as a convenient substitute rather than as a collaborator and professional peer. In a follow-up interview, Leila, one of the TELL teachers, explained that for her, this approach to coteaching perpetuates the notion that ESOL teachers are solely responsible for “catching up” ELLs on classroom material.

The following transcript reveals a somewhat opposite concern. Rather than being asked to take over classroom responsibilities entirely, here ESOL teachers portray themselves as often being treated like glorified teaching assistants, asked to do errands assigned by the grade-level teacher rather than be treated as a professional peer. Although Dina, performing as the grade-level teacher, starts off using the first person plural *we* (e.g., “We’re doing X,” “We’re gonna cover Y”), the underlying tone is one of someone clearly in command simply informing the ESOL teacher about her low-skill, low-status assigned duties, which include photocopying materials and working with a small group in the corner.

ESOL teacher: *(To her cooperating grade-level teacher upon arrival)* Hi, Ms. Dina!

Ms. Dina: *(Launches into orders)* OK, here's what we're doing. We're gonna cover, our lesson's gonna be about seals today. I've written up all the vocabulary. If you will take this and make copies for the entire class, and when you come back after making copies, Yvette, Allen, and John and you just go over to that corner over there to review vocabulary, and then you come back to me.

ESOL teachers observing this performance shouted, “That’s so true!” and “Especially if it’s your first year.” One ESOL teacher added, “I have tenure, and I’ve *still* got these problems. I’ve been teaching 10 years!” Thus, some ESOL teachers perceive their relatively low status as a permanent part of their identity as professionals in the school.

Discussion

Revisiting Davison’s (2006) 5-stage model, we find that all participating ESOL teachers in our combined analysis fit varying aspects of the lowest two stages—pseudocompliance and compliance—with none reaching experimentation, interaction, and critical reflection as laid out in the later stages of accommodation, convergence, or co-construction. Our data yield a powerful, albeit somewhat dismal, picture of coteaching, in which ESOL practitioners largely felt inhibited from doing their best to assist ELLs with language and content development and had low perceptions of themselves as legitimate, important professionals at their school sites.

Teachers either performed and/or were observed in situations where they were restricted from using their greatest assets, including their native language fluency and their abilities to focus on the complexities of second language acquisition. They were asked to take on super teacher duties—going above and beyond the everyday challenges of teaching, roving from room

to room, teacher to teacher, with little to no administrative support for time or resources to develop multiple periods of collaborative practice. It is no surprise, then, that some ESOL teachers found themselves in coteaching situations in which they were treated as either a teacher's substitute or a teacher's assistant, rather than as a full-fledged collaborative peer. Even in the best of our participants' experiences, we observed Donna and Monica's working solution to largely center on working independently, side by side, reducing student-teacher ratios but never deeply experimenting with ways to address students' complicated language and content needs in a collaborative, creative, or critical manner.

Data from these different contexts confirm that coteaching is a complicated, multidimensional endeavor. For Carmen, Misha, and other bilingual coteachers participating in the professional development workshops, power relations figured prominently in their performances of coteaching experiences. Further, these power relations were mediated by language, ethnicity, and perceptions of their professional identity as ESOL teachers. For Donna and Monica, for whom the power between them was of little concern, challenges centered around the need for officially supported dialogue and reflection. They both expressed the desire to communicate more directly and frequently with one another, but found themselves at a loss for time or a supportive framework to guide their efforts. Although all participants experienced different challenges in their partnerships, they all resisted the notion that coteaching is a simple and neutral endeavor and confirmed the need for sustained dialogue and support as they worked to collaboratively develop their coteaching.

The data presented here foreground the problematic way coteaching is often pursued and adopted by state and district administrators as a disciplinary and pedagogical practice, with little regard for coteachers' situated experiences or the relationships required therein. With the

handing down of an all-too-often dizzying schedule (multiple coteaching assignments, bus duty, translation requests, etc.), all participating coteachers expressed their concerns that inclusion for inclusion's sake seemed to be winning out over moderation and resources for thoughtful planning. Teachers commented that although there are considerable differences in how these mandates are actually carried out at the individual school level, there exists an overall pressure for everyone to increase his or her coteaching efforts. This can be interpreted as an institutional attempt to reach Davison's (2006) final stage of coteaching, which normalizes collaboration as the preferred model. Unfortunately, the implementation experienced by most participating coteachers in our studies only occurred at a policy level as a mandate. It lacked a clear framework with a real commitment to material and intellectual resources, as well as the necessary time and space to support teachers' dialogue and critical reflection.

Implications for Practice

Davison (2006) suggests that for coteachers to reach dynamic levels of collaboration, they need to engage in "action research and critical reflection" (p. 472) with one another. Based on our experiences with coteachers in this study, we agree with Davison and recommend performance-based professional development as one creative approach for facilitating dialogue between coteachers. Conflict, tension, and personalities are all essential aspects of theater and important factors that influence the process and outcomes of any collaborative effort.

Participating in the performance-based workshops, ESOL coteachers in this study were able to articulate and physically perform some of their greatest challenges, creating networks of support for problematic situations in their coteaching partnerships. They created an environment in which they practiced deep listening and encouraged risk-taking among the group, as evidenced by the sharing of painful scenarios the teachers experienced in their real teaching lives. This is

also evidenced by the shared laughter during and after performances. Although we are still writing and investigating the connection between performance group work, parody, and actual change, we have documented how such strategies have “yielded important solidarity-building through the open expression of the otherwise dangerous, taboo, and unspeakable” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010, p. 129).

It is critical to note here that our work with the TELL coteachers was done within the safe space of a like community, that is, the grade-level partners with whom they were collaborating were not present. We recognize the key role that this initial step played in creating facilitative conditions for dialogue and collective development. Within safe spaces, participants spoke the unspeakable, giving language and experience to the taboos of racism, linguisticism, and other forms of prejudice they encountered. We acknowledge that this work may not have been possible or may have been substantially altered if their coteaching counterparts had been present from the beginning⁷.

We see the role of a safe space as pivotal for all participants. For example, grade-level teachers who find themselves coteaching with ESOL teachers for the first time may need space to think through and make sense of the challenges of sharing teaching space, instructional responsibilities, planning time, and other logistical issues that arise when a second teacher works in the same classroom. The same applies for ESOL teachers who, for example, may find themselves working in environments that do not embrace heritage languages or share goals for

⁷ As Boal (1979, 1992) designed Theatre of the Oppressed activities, he encouraged them to take place in relatively homogeneous groups in which members could sympathize with one another’s stories rather than simply empathize with a different person’s experience. Although we believe that working in homogenous groups, such as we did with the bilingual teachers, can have clear advantages (creating a safe space to explore shared issues, promoting sympathy, and galvanizing a peer support network), we wonder about opportunities that may only be presented when this work is done with those who have different roles, statuses, or interests. We welcome opportunities to work at the other end of Davison’s (2006) continuum, experimenting with our methodologies and exploring ways that coteachers can co-construct powerful dialogues in the same shared space.

full bilingualism (as was the case with Carmen). The key is to acknowledge that in order to realize the full and unknown potential of coteaching, this work must evolve beyond the confines of safe spaces and discipline-specific communities. Failing to do so stalls coteachers' efforts at the individual psychological level and lacks the action Boal (1992) advocated as necessary for changing structures that allow oppressive environs to persist. We submit that, in the end, this collective action must be the goal. Altering relations can only happen when coteaching partners engage one another directly to work through their individual challenges as well as to reveal and address the systemic conditions that uphold the status quo.

In light of the continued emphasis on collaboration and coteaching, we propose that teacher education programs have a significant role to play in preparing all preservice teachers—ESOL and “regular” classroom teachers alike—to collaborate with other adults in their schools. In many programs, particularly special education and to some extent ESOL teacher education, there exist deliberate attempts to incorporate collaboration into the curriculum, encouraging preservice teachers to reach out to parents and community members as well as their grade-level teacher counterparts. The problem here is that these efforts are almost always done within the confines of segregated certification areas. Even as preservice teachers begin to develop a conceptual understanding of collaboration, they seldom have the opportunity to experience it across disciplines. In short, the partners that are expected to collaborate in the future actually never get together during this critical time of exploring and thinking through what it means to collaborate with other teachers. We envision colleges of education that bring these different preservice teacher communities together, providing opportunities for dialogue.

Finally, as school districts continue to pursue coteaching of ELLs, teachers and administrators need to pay close attention to the rhetoric of good intentions that surround

coteaching (e.g., the inclusion versus segregation binary, collaboration as inherently good, increased exposure to authentic English language use). Examining those good intentions alongside coteachers' actual lived experiences may facilitate accessing the real provisions necessary for realizing partnerships that nurture personal and professional development as well as create responsive learning environments for students. Additionally, collaborative approaches whereby coteachers engage in working across disciplinary, linguistic, and cultural differences to better understand their colleague's perspectives may serve as a model for the students in their diverse classrooms.

We acknowledge the need to develop a conceptual understanding and explore the unique implications of collaboration in safe spaces, but we reiterate that it is not enough for teachers to simply examine and reflect in isolation. Coteachers must engage in dialogue together for the explicit purpose of taking direct action to change their teaching partnership for the better. Based on our work, we offer performance-based focus groups as one approach for articulating the challenging aspects of coteaching partnerships, fostering dialogue and relationship building. By being given additional opportunities to articulate and work through the challenges of coteaching—both separately and together—ESOL teachers and their grade-level colleagues can push best practices forward.

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CHAPTER 5

THE ECOLOGY OF COTEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS⁸

There is little doubt that classrooms in US public schools are becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse. Recent demographic trends indicate that English Language Learners (ELLs) represent the fastest growing segment of the public school student population. The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) (2007) reported that between 1996-2006 the enrollment of ELLs in US public schools increased by more than 65%, compared with just over 9% for the total student population during the same period. What is less clear, however, is how to go about supporting the simultaneous language and content needs of such students. Despite decades of research on integrating language and content instruction (Mohan, 1986; Crandall, 1998; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Davison & Williams, 2001; Snow, 2005; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008) and recent conservative reform efforts (e.g. NCLB) that have brought increased attention to the instructional needs of ELLs, little has changed in terms of actual educational outcomes for these students. English language learners consistently lag behind native-English speaking peers on standardized assessments (Fry, 2007), and Latino students, who represent the majority of ELLs, have a dropout rate of 27% compared with 7.3% of their White counterparts (Kaufman, Alt, & Chapman, 2004).

⁸ To be submitted to *Educational Researcher*.

As school districts struggle to find ways to improve educational experiences for ELLs, many are moving towards more inclusive practices (Verplaetse & Miglicci, 2007; Platt, Harper, & Mendoza, 2003). Traditional pull-out models that segregate ELLs for English language development are being discarded for coteaching and push-in approaches that combine the expertise of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher and the grade-level teacher into a single coteaching setting (Dove & Honigsfield, 2010). These partnerships appear to present logical solutions to the dual-challenge of facilitating language and content development for ELLs, and they are frequently marketed by school districts and state education offices with rhetoric that narrowly highlights their inclusive and collaborative nature (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010). The underlying assumptions behind policy and program decisions that mandate coteaching appear obvious at first glance: bringing the ESOL teacher into the “mainstream” classroom provides the much needed second language acquisition and pedagogy knowledge (TESOL, 2010) into the grade-level classroom, eliminating the need to pull-out ELLs, thereby decreasing the amount of core curricula missed. A decidedly functionalist and instrumentalist notion pervades; facilitating language and content development requires little more than language and content specialists working together. However what emerges from the literature and the experiences of actual coteachers yields a more complex picture. For example, coteachers seldom have sufficient planning time together and language specific tasks and knowledge are often subsumed by content concerns of the mainstream curriculum that are driven by state and local accountability systems (Creese, 2005; Harper & de Jong, 2009). Further, coteaching partners may need significant time to work through their own challenges that arise as a result of ideological differences regarding race, immigration, or pedagogy.

As such, coteaching ELLs is both a pedagogical and a political process that, at its core, involves the construction and nurturing of a complex relationship—a teaching partnership that is influenced by interconnected systems of policy and knowledge, as well as by individual differences between the teachers themselves. Therefore, the role of broader sociopolitical and cultural contexts must be considered; institutional and societal perspectives on bi/multilingualism, immigration, and diversity for example, significantly impact coteaching relationships and the language and content learning opportunities for ELLs in cotaught classrooms. Given this understanding and the prevailing achievement gap between ELLs and native English speakers, in this article I locate coteaching ELLs within a critical framework that conceptualizes educating linguistically and culturally diverse students as a political act motivated by concerns for equity and justice (Bartolomé & Trueba, 2000; Darder, 1992; Nieto & Bode, 2008). Further, I argue that current conceptualizations present coteaching ELLs as either a neutral and unproblematic practice (Coltrane, 2002; Pardini, 2006) or one that is bound by inequitable power relations between ESOL and collaborating teachers (Arkoudis, 2003, 2006; Creese, 2005, 2006). In their own ways, these perspectives oversimplify coteaching, and, as a result, fail to recognize the complex range of possibilities afforded by coteaching.

To address these limitations, I suggest the need for an ecological perspective at both the broader policy and administrative levels, as well as in the practice of coteaching at the classroom level. In the sections that follow I briefly review recent literature on coteaching ELLs and discuss influential works in language education that take an ecological perspective that have informed my thinking. Finally, I use data from recent coteaching studies (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010; McClure, in press) to illustrate the limiting nature of instrumental perspectives and the potential power of an ecological model of coteaching.

Coteaching Defined, and Interrogated

While coteaching ELLs is relatively new in US public schools, inclusive practices of mainstreaming ELLs into the “regular” classroom have been on the rise since the late 1980’s (Davison, 2001; Verplaetse & Migliachi, 2007). Recent literature suggests that as ELLs are increasingly mainstreamed into the regular classroom, ESOL teacher knowledge and expertise are devalued and marginalized (Davison, 2001; Harper & de Jong, 2009). Harper and de Jong describe this as the “diffusion” and “supplanting” of specialized language pedagogy and knowledge by more general “best practices” aimed at educating *all* students. As a result, ELLs have been increasingly physically included but have had limited opportunities for interaction and access to language and content development in mainstream classrooms (Harklau, 1994; Harper & Platt, 1998). Coteaching is a practice that seeks to address this by not only including the ELLs in the mainstream, but the ESOL teacher as well.

Borrowing from the special education literature, coteaching can be defined as two or more educators sharing instructional responsibility for students assigned to the same classroom (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008). While the actual implementation of coteaching as an instructional practice may vary depending on local contexts, researchers have identified a range of models frequently used in the classroom. These include everything from coteachers sharing full instructional responsibilities as “team teachers” to models where one teacher leads instruction and the other “roams” to provide support to individual students (see Friend & Cook, 2007 for a full discussion of these models). In ESOL settings coteaching seems to be predicated on the premise of fostering language and content development for ELLs in the most inclusive and efficient manner possible. Under the current climate of accountability, pulling students out of the classroom for focused English instruction is often frowned upon by mainstream teachers

because it disrupts ELLs’ exposure to core content instruction (Migliacci & Verplaetse, 2007, McClure, 2008). Bringing the ESOL teacher into the regular classroom, then, is the logical next step. Combining the language acquisition knowledge and pedagogy of the ESOL teacher with the content knowledge of the mainstream teacher appears to address this concern (Figure 1).

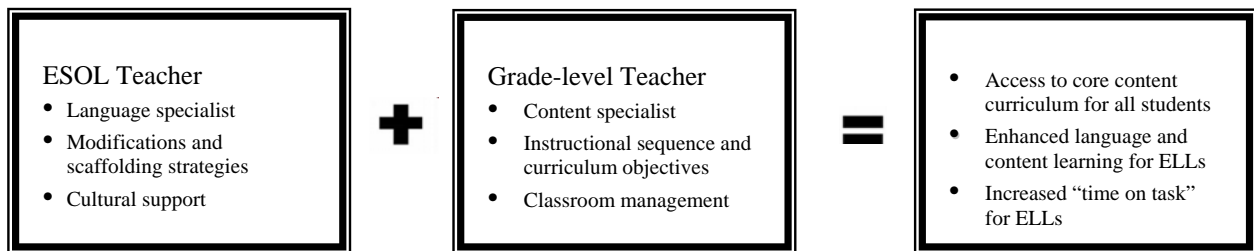


Figure 1. Instrumental model of coteaching

While this instrumental model of coteaching recognizes the unique contributions of both the ESOL and grade-level teacher, it fails to acknowledge how the sociopolitical, historical and cultural context can affect the potential outcomes of collaboration. The historical marginalization of ESOL teachers and knowledge is just one such example that alludes to the limitations of an instrumental perspective. ESOL teachers can claim substantial areas of expertise such as knowledge about the English language, first and second language development, relevant language teaching methodologies (Hammond, 1999), as well as assessment practices and the role of culture in teaching (TESOL, 2010) to name but a few. Despite this fact, many states position ESOL teaching certification only as a peripheral “add-on” endorsement, not as a full-fledged stand-alone area of licensure. As a result, this institutional positioning of the ESOL profession as peripheral contributes to social and educational contexts where ESOL teachers are often seen as specialists and tutors instead of fully credentialed teaching professionals (Olsen, 1997; George, 2009). Such concerns rest outside of formulaic approaches like the model presented above. Left unaddressed (by policy makers and administrators pushing coteaching), these issues place limitations on coteachers’ abilities to enact the types of partnerships that are often marketed as

collaborative practices where coteachers are co-equals in the classroom who share instructional responsibilities and teaching equally (GADOE, 2008, p. 6). Pushing beyond instrumental notions to consider how social and institutional positioning affects teaching partnerships helps us begin to conceptualize coteaching as a more complex and dynamic practice.

While there is very little research on coteaching ELLs in US contexts, what has been written often presents a power-neutral and unproblematic endeavor. Coteaching as such is conceptualized as a methodology or best practice that emerges from a functional/instrumental perspective. In a discussion of one school's transition from a pull-out to coteaching for example, Coltrane (2002) observed, "When teachers collaborate and combine their talents, everyone benefits" (p. 6). While it is difficult to argue the potential benefits that collaboration presents, Coltrane's comment here, much like the representation of coteaching in Figure 1, oversimplifies coteaching and fails to acknowledge that it is often a contentious practice. Similarly, Pardini (2006) reported on the success of coteaching efforts in St. Paul public schools in Minnesota. Despite having one of the fastest growing ELL enrollments among urban centers in the US, the school district's implementation of coteaching is "by all accounts working to narrow the achievement gap" (p. 21) between ELLs and native-English speaking students in reading and math. Indeed, according to Pardini, the data demonstrate a consistent narrowing trend since the district implemented coteaching. However, it is problematic that Pardini offers no discussion or description of coteaching in the district or any of the challenges of coteaching. Without addressing the messy and problematic elements involved in collaborating across disciplines, such pieces present coteaching as a quick fix to the enduring challenge of providing language and content instruction for ELLs. Consequently, an increasing number of schools and school districts

continue to pursue coteaching with little attention given to challenges associated with coteaching or the time and support necessary to build strong coteaching relationships.

It is critical to point out that instrumental notions of coteaching recognize two constituent and complementary elements for a successful coteaching model: language knowledge and content knowledge. From Coltrane's and Pardini's accounts we are led to believe that as long as these two elements are in place then coteaching should lead to content and language development for ELLs. However, like all teaching endeavors, coteaching partnerships do not operate in a cultural vacuum; it seems that if we hope to replicate the successes Pardini describes, it is critical that we understand the ecology of successful coteaching models. How do they come to be and evolve, and on what factors do they depend for their success? How are they supported and nurtured within classrooms, schools, and school districts? Perhaps more importantly, how do the constituent elements of each of these ecologies respond when they come into prolonged contact with one another within the same classroom? How does coteaching between ESOL and grade-level teachers change understandings of who "the" teacher is, and thereby shift conceptions of how teaching and learning unfold? Conceptualizing coteaching from an ecological perspective provides insight into these questions and offers a view that recognizes both the complexity and possibility of coteaching ELLs.

Coteaching within Specific Sociopolitical, Historical, and Cultural Contexts

Before turning to a discussion of what an ecological model of coteaching might look like, it is important to recognize that coteaching partnerships are embedded within specific sociopolitical, historical, and cultural contexts, and that these contexts have real and lasting implications for coteaching ELLs. A number of scholars in international contexts (Arkoudis, 2003, 2006; Creese, 2005, 2006; Davison, 2006) and decidedly fewer in US contexts (George,

2009; McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010) have documented that coteaching ELLs is a complicated social endeavor often marked by prejudice, hierarchy, and inequitable power relations.

Most recently, McClure and Cahnmann-Taylor (2010) documented how dominant monolingual perspectives in the US South can result in bilingual ESOL coteachers' experiencing oppressive teaching conditions marked by linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1986) and other forms of prejudice. In her study with four first-year middle school ESOL teachers, George (2009) found that the ESOL teachers in her study struggled to gain legitimacy as professionals among the grade-level teachers with whom they were collaborating. While some of this tension can be attributed to challenges common among all first year teachers, George asserted that the teachers' "frustration with collaboration [was] stemming from a variety of structural issues such as a lack of training, no designated co-planning time, and a general misuse of their time and expertise" (p. 43). Similarly, in her work with one pair of secondary coteachers in Australia, Arkoudis (2003) documented that the science teacher enjoyed greater epistemological authority compared to the ESOL teacher because traditional content-area disciplines like science held a more powerful and "legitimate" position than ESOL, which was seen as peripheral to content. ESOL teachers' work was conceptualized as a form of support and facilitation as opposed to legitimate socially sanctioned knowledge like science. Using discourse analysis, Creese (2005, 2006) found that grade-level teachers' discourse of transmission of grade-level content was valued over the ESOL teachers' discourse of facilitation and support. Similar to findings from McClure and Cahnmann-Taylor (2010), Creese's work (2003) has also shown how the coteaching relationship becomes more complicated when the ESOL teacher herself is a member of the language minority community. These bilingual coteachers, she argues, constantly mediate and negotiate their

positions on language, race, and ethnicity, revealing a complex reality that involves both colluding and resisting institutional discourses.

The studies above approach coteaching ELLs from a variety of research and ideological perspectives; however all demonstrate that coteaching ELLs is indeed a complex process affected by issues of power and hierarchy. Davison's (2006) work with coteachers in Hong Kong complements these studies and explicitly addresses the interdependent nature of language and content teaching and learning. To facilitate the theorizing and evaluation of coteaching, Davison developed a 5-stage model of collaboration. The model progresses from *pseudocompliance*, basically a rejection of collaboration and preference for the status quo, to *creative co-construction* which is characterized by critical reflection and normalizes collaboration as the preferred approach. While findings from Davison's study also indicated that coteaching partnerships were often characterized by "an imbalance of authority, responsibility, and opportunities for input" between the teachers (p. 456), Davison begins to offer a more fluid and holistic perspective from which to consider coteaching ELLs. The highest level of collaboration in Davison's model is characterized by interchangeability between coteachers' roles and a sustained practice of critical reflection. Instead of articulating ELLs' language and content needs as a binary to be relieved by two distinct teacher roles, Davison highlights their interrelated and compatible nature, suggesting a pedagogy of content-based ESOL instruction combined with ESOL-conscious content teaching (p. 456). I take Davison's work here as a starting point from which to develop an ecological perspective on coteaching.

Ecological Perspectives on Language Teaching and Learning

From a natural sciences perspective ecology is the study of large entities (ecosystems) at the natural level of integration (Odum, 1950). As such ecology is useful in describing

phenomena in their context as well as a way to understand both the context and the interactions that come together to create that context. Given the dynamic realities of coteaching ELLs created by historical and current sociopolitical contexts surrounding language, immigration, and the academic achievement of ELLs, an ecological perspective that interrogates relational aspects of systems in contact seems helpful. How do the larger entities, in this case language and content, react and change as a result of sustained contact with one another? As one of society's most pervasive cultural and social institutions, schools then can be understood as the natural site of integration of the diverse ecologies represented by language and content teachers and pedagogies. Ecological perspectives on language and language teaching and learning are not new, and it is not my intent to cover the vast literature on ecology of language in this article. Indeed there is a broad range of empirical and conceptual work that takes an ecological perspective on language and language teaching and learning (see Kramsch & Stefensen, 2008, for a thorough review of historical and future directions of ecological perspectives in language and language education). Here I intend to briefly review a few key works that help illuminate some common features of an ecological perspective in language education and then, using data from recent studies, illustrate how such a perspective, in conjunction with attention to sociopolitical and historical contexts, can facilitate coteaching models that attend to the interrelated and interdependent nature of language and content.

Hornberger's influential work on the continua of biliteracy (2003) is grounded in an ecological framework. She presents the continua of biliteracy as an ecological model, situating research, teaching, and language planning in a multilingual global context, highlighting the multilayered ways languages come into contact with and overlap one another (2003, p. 323). Haugen (1972) described language ecology as "the study of interactions between any given

language and its environment” (as cited in Hornberger, 2003, p. 320), the environment entailing physical, psychological, and sociological elements. Hornberger draws on this understanding of language ecology to conceptualize languages as living and changing in an ecological system along with other languages and interacting with their sociopolitical and cultural environments. From this ecological perspective, Hornberger developed three ideological themes (language evolution, language environment, and language endangerment, p. 323) to inform language policy in multilingual contexts.

Other scholars have suggested an ecological model for language teaching and learning. From the perspective of content-based instruction, Garner and Borg (2005) assert that an ecological perspective on English language teaching recognizes the multifaceted interaction between the language classroom and the particular political, economic, social, cultural, historical, educational, and institutional context in which it is situated. While they refrain from suggesting a universally accepted definition for “an ecological perspective,” they do propose the following common elements: an ecological perspective is holistic, dynamic and interactive, and situated (p. 121). These elements help to locate coteaching as occurring within specific contexts, and the emphasis on seeing language teaching and learning from a holistic and dynamic perspective accounts for the multilayered interaction across relationships (e.g., between teacher(s) and students, teacher and teacher, and all participants and context, etc.).

Writing from a sociocultural lens (Vygotsky, 1978), Hawkins (2004) extended this ecological perspective specifically to the language classroom. She provides a thorough description of an ecological view on second language classroom teaching and learning, stating that

classrooms are complex ecosystems, where all of the participants, the practices, the beliefs, the forms of language ... the social, historical and institutional context(s), the identity and positioning work, the politics and power relations ... and resources, the activity and task designs, and the influences of the multiple local and global communities within which they are situated come together in fluid, dynamic, and ever-changing constellations of interactions, each one impacting the other. This is not a static process, but one that shifts with each new move/interaction, and as new organisms enter the environment, as ecological systems do. (p. 21)

Coteaching from Instrumental Perspectives

An ecological perspective of coteaching provides a hopeful response in particular to studies that present coteaching as a logical and foolproof method for meeting the language and content needs of ELLs. Technical and instrumental notions previously discussed keep language and content concerns neatly compartmentalized and assume they will be addressed singularly by language and content teachers. Conversely, ecological perspectives recognize the interrelated and overlapping nature of this process in classrooms. In this section I make the argument that an ecological perspective is most needed at the institutional and administrative level where policy and program design decisions occur, as these decisions have direct impact on how schools and teachers enact coteaching in local classrooms. To illustrate this connection, I draw on data from recent studies of coteaching in northeast Georgia, a region that has experienced tremendous growth in its ELL population in recent years. One study documented bilingual ESOL coteachers' use of performance-based focus groups as a way to re-live and re-rethink responses to what the teachers perceived as a mandate to coteach (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010). The other is a descriptive case study of the coteaching experiences of an ESOL teacher and her mainstream

colleague in a fourth grade classroom (McClure, in press). Data from these studies were collected as part of a larger, ongoing investigation into the practice of coteaching in the Southeast. Both studies examined ethnographic data collected at the classroom level as well as data from the broader context in which the coteaching was situated.

Instrumental Framing and Policy

Attention to how coteaching is conceptualized at broader levels of policy and program design is increasingly important, particularly as collaborative practices continue to gain purchase among current education reform initiatives (e.g., see Baca, 2009, for a discussion of the role of collaboration in Response to Intervention for ELLs). When coteaching is conceptualized at the institutional and policy level from an instrumental perspective it conveys the notion that coteachers are “ready made” to collaborate (Arkoudis, 2006). One of the ways in which institutional framing impacts coteaching can be seen in the policy language used to define and promote it. As an example, of the six approved instructional models for serving ELLs in the state of Georgia, coteaching is singled out with an extended description that defines it as being research-based and characterized by instructional parity between the coteachers. In addition, the description concludes with the following endorsement: “The GADOE encourages school districts to explore this model” (p. 6). While this endorsement of coteaching may seem harmless, interviews with teachers and a district administrator suggest that this framing encouraged a more aggressive, if unofficial, policy of “pushing collaboration to the max” as one teacher put it. One ESOL Coordinator explained in an interview how the coteaching had evolved in the district:

We started the process [of moving to coteaching] probably around 2005, and then over the next year or two we asked teachers to start scheduling push-in as much as they can. The state did tell us that we needed to put it in place and that every year we should do

more. So that's what we've done, and they [the state] started the monitoring process, asking us to report and collect that information to show that we were increasing our use of coteaching. (INT, 2009/01/30)

Teachers in the district expressed similar views that demonstrate how coteaching seemed to be understood as a straightforward process requiring little time and coordination between ESOL and grade-level teachers. Leila, one of two ESOL teachers in an elementary school described her initial experience with coteaching in the district:

At the beginning of the school year we were encouraged by our district to coteach as much as we could. And I had never done it before so we didn't want to completely fill my schedule up coteaching since I had no idea how to do it. But the other ESOL teacher at my school had worked with four kindergarten teachers the year before. So she had to do it with them again and to increase her segments, [be]cause that was the thing, they wanted us to increase our segments from the past year. So she ended up doing a 1st grade too. I felt pretty lucky, because the pressures were coming from the district level that we had to do it, and my administration [at the school] allowed me some flexibility that first year. (INT, 2008/06/04)

Another ESOL teacher who was coteaching in a second, third, and two fifth grade classrooms everyday commented on how the district failed to provide any substantive professional development:

You know, they kind of rolled it out like this is the next best thing you know, and then they just kind of let it fall. Maybe that first year [2006] it was like they actually spent some time on it. Now, there's no attention paid to it, no training offered. It's like, okay you know how to do it now so off you go, and do more each year! (INT, 2009/02/12)

State and district mandates to annually increase the practice of coteaching without providing additional ESOL teachers and/or sufficient time and material resources exemplify the instrumental and unproblematic framing of coteaching. To expect ESOL coteachers to collaborate across grade levels and content areas with four or five different teachers every day without providing any substantive support neglects the reality that coteaching, like any pedagogical practice, takes time to develop, evolve and refine. In addition to the obvious challenges this places on coteachers' ability to plan and carry out effective lessons together, it can also negatively impact teachers' attitudes and morale regarding teaching in general. Leila, the same teacher who received a bit of reprieve from the coteaching mandate in her first year as a full-time teacher was ultimately forced to increase her number of coteaching segments the following year. The deep sense of frustration less than a year later is clear in her quote below:

There's only so many different teachers, grade levels, and subject areas you can work with in one day before you become absolutely frazzled and exhausted. And regarding creativity and partnership, that just doesn't happen when you're pushed to collab[orate] with more and more teachers. So, if you're tired, which I always am now, or sick, which I tend to be because I'm tired and stressed out from trying to make this whole thing [coteaching] work, then, you know, it's like there is no time to be creative, which makes me really sad because I *need* to be creative in my teaching—the kids need it. I think that my last teaching day would be a day where I just couldn't be creative. (INT, 2009/01/26)

These excerpts demonstrate how the instrumental framing of coteaching negatively impacts opportunities for innovative and inspired teaching via collaboration. It is also clear through these examples, how such perspectives fail to consider the emotional and physical toll exacted when teachers are pushed to collaborate in excess. Next, I discuss how instrumental

perspectives impact coteachers' planning practices, as well as how they are instantiated and reproduced in planning and, consequently, in instruction.

Coplaning

Considering the collaborative nature of coteaching, common planning time between coteachers is critical to its success (Friend & Cook, 2007; York-Barr, Ghere, & Sommerness, 2006). As a result of emphases to implement coteaching as much as possible with finite resources, ESOL coteachers often have very little time to plan with their coteaching partners. This leads to coteachers employing a range of ad hoc approaches to make the best of a difficult teaching schedule and stay informed regarding curricular scope and sequence.

Planning on the fly. Planning-on-the-fly refers to those short conversations between coteachers that occur in the hallways, during teaching transitions, and sometimes right in the middle of a lesson. These moments address everything from worrying about absent students, discussing communications to parents, and planning what to do next and/or tomorrow. Eva and Leila, coteachers in McClure's (in press) case study from a fourth-grade classroom, frequently engaged in planning on-the-fly. Below is an example that occurred during a mini-lesson on descriptive writing:

(Both teachers front and center at the whiteboard)

Eva (to Leila, after introducing the assignment to the class): Do you have anything you want to add?

Leila (to Eva): No. I got your email about the lesson, but didn't really have time to get around to—

Eva (cutting off Leila): —So what next?

As students recognized the brief moment of disorganization and began to get “off task,” Eva cut this exchange short and took the lead in the lesson. On one hand, spontaneous planning and decision-making and the need for flexibility is representative of the performative nature of all teaching and the reality that classrooms are dynamic places. However, when this planning on-the-fly constitutes the majority of coteachers’ planning practices, it is indicative of a larger systemic issue regarding the types and levels of support coteachers need to attend to the language and content learning needs of their students in effective and integrated ways. The lack of in-depth opportunities for Leila and Eva to co-plan together often led to planning practices that reproduced the instrumental and compartmentalized perspective of coteaching in critical ways. Short on-the-fly exchanges enabled the teachers to shift and make adjustments “in the moment” or as needed on a daily basis but inhibited their ability to fully develop well-articulated team-taught lessons, which was their stated goal. Instead, their coteaching practice was regularly characterized by parallel teaching that allowed them to teach to separate groups of students, a practice that required significantly less coordination and planning (see McClure, in press, for a full description of the pair’s coteaching approaches).

Planning compartmentalized roles. Another example of how instrumental perspectives can impact coteachers’ planning and instructional work is evident in the types of tasks coteachers attend to in their planning sessions. Data from Leila and Eva’s classroom demonstrate that due to the lack of common planning time during the school day, the coteachers frequently used all of their weekly planning time together to simply map out who will do what and when in very broad terms. The focus was almost exclusively on such functional aspects of their teaching, and they were frequently addressed separately and individually (i.e. the ESOL teacher would consult the

pacing guide and the calendar while the classroom teacher looked up the state standards). Leila, the ESOL teacher commented on the content of their planning sessions saying

We're never really able to have reflective and thoughtful conversations. It's always like, okay, we have to plan for this for tomorrow, and you can take this lesson and develop it and I will take the next day, and it's like we also need somehow to really talk about things together. That would really help me.

Eva added similar concerns:

When we do meet, we usually do plan for the next week and say, you know, this would be a strong suit for you teach; why don't you take this day, or I had an idea for this day, so I'll teach this. Planning time is a huge, huge obstacle for getting to the point that we both want to be at. And, not, just not being able to sit down and figure out who does what, but what we can do together and what would work best as a teaching team.

When they did have time to go beyond mapping out who would prepare and teach what when, they frequently used this extra time to comply with the school's directive to upload their lesson plans onto the school's central server. The teachers described this as a mindless, time-consuming task that no one in the administration ever looked at. They described receiving a "form letter" response via email stating "Your lessons have been checked," every week when they uploaded the lessons. Not only did this frustrate them, it resulted in the teachers using what precious planning time they did have together to address what they perceived to be "disconnected busy tasks" as opposed to collaborating together to develop meaningful activities and strategies that attended to language and content concerns in their lessons. Yet, by complying with this directive and using their planning time to upload these forms on a weekly basis, the

teachers themselves contributed to the appearance that they had sufficient time to plan their lessons together.

Toward and Ecological Perspective of Coteaching

The data presented above illustrate how instrumental framing of coteaching at the administrative and policy level directly impacts coteachers' efforts to provide effective language and content instruction for ELLs. While the implications of such framing for teachers and learners are very real, it is important to recognize that these structures are not fixed; they can be transformed as teachers and districts choose to respond in different and creative ways. While I argue for the need for more ecological perspectives at the policy and administrative level, I do not hold my breath either. I posit that there is tremendous opportunity in the space between state and district policy setting and in how schools, programs and teachers transact with the ways those policies are framed. Here I describe two examples that illustrate how coteachers rejected instrumental notions of coteaching and espoused more ecological perspectives instead. Further, I submit that had they been in an environment that supported their practice with resources and respected their time, these moments would have occurred more regularly in Eva's and Leila's coteaching.

In a focus group session near the end of the school year, I asked the teachers to read and respond to the state's description of coteaching in the Georgia Department of Education ESOL Resource Guide (2008). While I have addressed this issue previously (McClure, in press), further discussion is warranted as this excerpt brings into sharp relief the tensions between coteachers who see their work as integrated and connected to the entire ecology of the classroom and policies that reinforce disconnected notions of language and content learning and teaching. The teachers overwhelmingly responded to the following two lines in the description:

The ESOL teacher is responsible for language support, while the content teacher is responsible for delivery of academic content. When students break into groups, the ESOL teacher should work with ELLs, while the content teacher focuses on mainstream students. (pp. 17-18)

While the teachers agreed that they had distinct knowledge and experiences that allowed them to contribute to students' learning in different ways, they rejected the notion that, even in group work, ESOL and grade-level teachers should work exclusively with ELLs and non-ELLs respectively. They argued that this type of compartmentalization would completely undermine their efforts to present themselves as co-equals in the classroom and to build a cohesive learning community. Eva's comments suggest that the state's policy placed priority on funding concerns over what she considered essential for building a strong coteaching partnership:

I don't think it would work as well, but I understand why they do it; it's the funding issue. But if you group the ESOL kids who are typically around the same level with each other they are not getting the benefit of working with the other learners who have better English. I also think it helps the kids view Leila as a full teacher if she is working with all the kids...There also might be some issues with 'oh, are you dumb, why do you need another teacher?' (INT, 2009/05/13)

Leila added the following comments that illustrate how she sees their work as being integrated:

There wouldn't be as much coteaching that way. It would be more like me coming up with different activities that are primarily geared for language development, or just for ELLs. But we are doing language development mixed in with our content work and reading and writing. (INT, 2009/05/26)

Despite the overwhelming presence of instrumental perspectives in how the state and district conceptualized coteaching, both Leila and Eva identified a more holistic ecological approach as their goal. Regarding instruction, when asked individually to recall one of the most successful coteaching lessons from the year, both teachers identified the multicultural photopoetry unit. This was an extended unit that used photography, incorporated students' home languages and cultures into their poetry, and also made strong connections with parents and the broader community (see McClure, in press, for an extended description). Not surprisingly, this unit occurred after that state's high-stakes testing program was completed in late spring. Both the planning and the instruction during this unit represented a more integrated and ecological perspective. In an interview at the end of the year Eva shared the following about their instruction during the poetry unit:

With the poetry project we did a lot of mini lessons, and our roles were more interchangeable. We both worked on language development, on editing, and the poetry concepts also. Then we kind of switched and I helped do more of the revising and the writing and then Leila was helping with the photography because that it is her forte. Maybe that's not really ESOL, but it [photography] helped the kids come up with ideas that they wanted for their poetry; they were doing sketches of how they wanted it to look and doing the actual pictures... I think each of us was where we needed to be, but we'd also alternate roles very easily throughout the unit. I guess we both attended to ESOL concerns and the writing content, and it was extremely beneficial. (INT, 2009/05/13)

In planning the poetry unit, the teachers spent many hours after school collaborating most all aspects of the unit together. There was the requisite attention to uploading lesson plans to the school's server, but these were addressed almost as an afterthought. As the teachers discussed

ways to enhance the traditional poetry project, they attended to the work collaboratively and discussed their planning decisions in terms of promoting language and content. As a result, attention to concerns regarding language were addressed proactively in many cases, as opposed to on the spot in the classroom.

One of the activities they discussed for the unit involved taking a class nature walk to identify one object around which the class would compose a collaborative poem. As the warm-up to this lesson, Eva suggested using the clip art feature of the interactive whiteboard to display a vibrant colorful image of a butterfly and ask students to offer descriptive sentences about the image. Leila countered that instead of jumping right into whole class discussion, maybe they should give partners two minutes to talk and write down each other's suggestions. In her words, "this would give everyone at least a chance to come up with one or two responses." She then added, "That would definitely help Miguel and Yessica be able to participate," referring to two ELLs in the class that often struggled with oral participation.

Another example of this collaborative and integrated planning occurred as they were designing mini-lessons for teaching literary elements. Working on laptops at a table in Eva's classroom, the teachers were creating lessons independently. Eva came up with the idea to use comic books as examples for teaching onomatopoeia, while Leila compiled a list of several children's books and tongue twisters for teaching alliteration. This was their usual approach to planning—divide and conquer, but here they came back together and discussed their thinking with each other. After making her pitch to Leila, Eva asked, "Is there anything you think we need to add to this here?" Similarly, in response to Leila's selection of some Dr. Seuss books, Eva suggested, "I think we need to reconsider some of these, mainly because of all the nonsense words. I'm not sure that's such a good idea."

Indeed these exchanges represent seemingly small and insignificant decisions in the context of the traditional one-teacher classroom. However, in the context of trying to coordinate pedagogy between two teachers with limited time for deep reflection on their individual and collaborative practice, these examples of checking-in and negotiating instructional decisions represent critical movement towards a more integrated and ecological understanding of coteaching.

A Word of Caution, and Hope

Hawkins (2004) described classrooms as dynamic ecological zones that are messy and constantly evolving, never static. This is fundamentally important when considering coteaching classrooms, as each teacher brings to the coteaching enterprise their own ecologies, the elements of their personal cultural identities as well as their professional knowledge and experiential backgrounds. When combined in the same physical space over time, these independent ecologies do not remain stagnant and bordered; no, they intermingle and influence one another, creating an entirely new cultural and pedagogical context, a new ecology. It is important to not pretend that taking an ecological perspective will inherently lead to positive or beneficial coteaching outcomes. Just as in the natural world, classroom ecologies are complex systems affected by many layers and zones that work to hold their ground in the face of change. A quick look to the literature (e.g., McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010; Creese, 2005; Arkoudis, 2003) reminds us that coteaching across linguistic, racial, and professional differences often leads to less than fruitful outcomes in terms of collaboration, partnership, and creativity in coteaching. These new spaces can result in strained professional relationships marked by racism, linguisticism, and other forms of prejudice (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010), as well as normalizing ESOL as peripheral (Arkoudis, 2003; Creese, 2005). A critical element here is that instrumental

perspectives take an unproblematic stance towards coteaching between ESOL and grade-level teachers, and assume that these teachers are “ready-made” to collaborate. When the process breaks down and conflict emerges, teachers and districts are unprepared to deal with the situation in ways that move the partnership, and teaching and learning, forward. This is no surprise, as the model does not expect coteaching to be problematic.

An ecological perspective on the other hand, operates from the assumption that all classroom ecologies are constantly in a state of flux. This state of change only becomes heightened with the introduction of an additional teacher into the physical and pedagogical space, and thus an ecological perspective *expects* shifting understandings, change, and even conflict. The key difference here is that by beginning from a perspective that acknowledges the potential for tension and conflict enables schools and districts to prepare for effective ways to work through and respond to moments of challenge and conflict. Conceptualizing coteaching from an ecological perspective requires recognizing that the two distinct ecologies of language and content are intimately connected, each dependent on the success of the other. It does little good for language and content instruction to carry on in parallel fashion, infinitely disconnected from one another.

In closing I turn to an example from the natural world to make the case for an ecological model of coteaching ELLs. Taking the perspective that language and content represent two diverse but interrelated ecologies coming into contact with one another, the ecology of an estuary provides a rather fitting model for reconceptualizing coteaching from an ecological perspective. Estuaries are unique ecological zones where freshwater streams or rivers merge with the ocean. There are no clearly marked boundaries within estuaries that define where one zone ends and the next begins; rather there exists an open connection with the sea through which the seawater

enters in response to the rhythm of the tides. From the moment the seawater enters the estuary, both the seawater and the estuary as an ecological system are changed. Simply put, an estuary is not simply a mixture of salt and fresh water; it is a dynamic multilayered system that shifts and changes in response to myriad interrelated factors.

Similarly coteaching cannot be considered from a simplistic instrumental perspective. Just as an estuary is not the simple result of mixing salt and fresh water, successfully coteaching ELLs does not result from bringing ESOL knowledge and expertise into the grade-level classroom. When these two elements come into contact with one another, as ESOL teachers enter grade-level classrooms, new and unique classroom ecologies are created, not simply a combination of the two constituent elements. An ecological model of coteaching recognizes the interrelated and interdependent relationships between language and content teaching and learning. Further, when combined with a critical and relational perspective, it can encourage coteachers to look beyond the local context to examine the influence of sociopolitical, cultural, and historical factors when working to define roles and boundaries within their partnership. Just as in an estuary, inherent in an ecological model of coteaching is a sense of fluidity that, like any healthy ecosystem, encourages movement across boundaries and recognizes the interrelated nature of the interacting agents. Prolonged isolation and homogeneity is rarely a healthy or productive approach in any context. Coupled with a critical awareness of the role of broader contexts, an ecological orientation to coteaching can bring heightened attention not only to the unique sets of knowledge, experience, and pedagogies coteachers bring, but also to how this physical and intellectual partnership creates a new space for learning, a new ecology. Finally, while this perspective is based on limited data from coteaching studies in the southeastern US, the experiences described herein may resonate with many teachers, both ESOL and grade-level

teachers. Certainly, the unique context in which coteaching occurs will influence the ways it is enacted and experienced by teachers and students. However, I submit that taking an ecological perspective positions coteachers for greater possibilities by validating their collaborative practice as complex, dynamic, and evolving.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, FUTURE DIRECTIONS, AND SO WHAT

This dissertation examined the practice of coteaching English language learners in K-12 public schools in the southeastern US. In closing, before revisiting the major themes of this work, I return to my own experience with coteaching ELLs in US public schools. I then discuss possibilities for future research as well as some of the implications of this work.

Back Where It All Began

From 2001 – 2006 I worked as Director of the ESL and Migrant Education Program in a suburban school district in western North Carolina with a dramatically increasing population of ELLs. During the last three years of my tenure, our ELL enrollment increased by more than 200% each year. As accountability sanctions from NCLB were being handed down from the state, and lists of schools were publicly identified as being in a state of “Improvement,” “Corrective Action,” or “Failing School,” our district jumped on the inclusive pedagogies bandwagon in an attempt to improve educational outcomes for ELLs who were consistently “failing to meet AYP benchmarks.” Our enthusiasm for coteaching was fueled in large part by this broader pressure exerted via the state’s accountability model, but also in part by the psychologically appealing elements central to coteaching, namely inclusion of students, collaboration between teachers, and reduced student-teacher ratios. My own experience was characterized by a mix of results, from very successful partnerships to a completely hostile

disaster that led to one ESOL teacher leaving her job. Unique local factors (e.g., teacher personalities, experience teaching, etc.) in these contexts played a key role in leading to those outcomes, but then again so did larger institutional issues as well (e.g. lack of professional development & support for common planning time, coteaching mandate, etc.).

In a similar fashion, the coteachers involved in this dissertation experienced a range of coteaching outcomes. Recall Leila and Eva's Multicultural Family PhotoPoetry unit, but also the struggle they acknowledged regarding planning time (chapter 3). Power was a significant factor for Carmen and Ms. Edna but played a relatively minor role for Monica and Donna (chapter 4). Despite these differences, common among all these experiences, mine included, was the need for a framework that more clearly conceptualized coteaching ELLs as a complex social process.

Coteaching as a Complicated Endeavor

District and State Policy Contexts

In agreement with much of the literature, this dissertation strengthens the claim that coteaching is a complicated endeavor. State and district mandates to annually increase the practice of coteaching without providing additional ESOL teachers exemplifies a neutral and unproblematic perspective of coteaching. To expect ESOL coteachers to collaborate across grade levels and content areas with four or five different teachers every day neglects the reality that coteaching, like any pedagogical practice, takes time to develop and evolve. When pushed to collaborate "to the max," the possibilities of coteaching begin to lose their luster. This was the case for both Leila (chapter 3) and Donna (chapter 4) who were both eager to coteach but also frustrated because they felt they were being spread too thin. Recall Leila's humorous but telling comment on this issue: "The idea of coteaching with six different teachers is just absolutely overwhelming, and it almost makes me want to puke!"

Documents at the state, district, and school level paint a vivid picture that frames coteaching as the preferred approach for working with ELLs. Just as the state’s graduation requirements handbook “encourages school districts to explore this model [coteaching]” (p. 6), district and school improvement documents directly claimed their intentions to increase coteaching and support collaboration between ESOL and grade-level teachers. Unfortunately, for Eva and Leila there was little actual support to match these intentions. In Donna and Monica’s case, professional development on coteaching was provided for ESOL teachers, but did not include grade-level teacher counterparts. While this represents a step up from no professional development, considering the inherently collaborative nature of coteaching, this seems to be a counterproductive approach to providing professional development on coteaching.

Social Contexts, Hierarchy, and Power

As demonstrated in chapter four, race, ethnicity, and native language can be powerful social markers that are indexed to marginalize and inhibit coteachers’ efforts. These issues often play out in ways that promote dominant monolingual perspectives with regard to immigrant students and teachers.

The embodied Boalian theatre (1979) performances by ESOL coteachers in chapter four vividly capture how issues of power, status, and hierarchy can play out in the lives of ESOL coteachers. Not only do the teachers re-present painful moments of prejudice and oppression carried out by individuals (e.g. experienced by Carmen at the hand/mouth Ms. Edna); they also remind us of how institutional structures often position ESOL teachers and students as peripheral and unimportant. The “marionette” scene where the “voice of the district mandate” announces the coteaching edict demonstrates the ESOL teachers’ sense of powerlessness, both in terms of their instructional decisions and even their schedules.

This is of critical concern, particularly in light of the fact that collaboration in general, and coteaching specifically, continues to be at the center of many educational reform initiatives. Even as I write this final chapter, articles and discussions about the central role of collaboration as a way to meet the language and content needs of ELLs abound. This is evidenced in the Response to Intervention (RTI) movement (Baca, 2009), as well as by an initial review of several winning states' (NC, GA, MN) Race to the Top applications. Lastly, Corwin Press is just months away from publishing the first professional text dedicated solely to the practice of coteaching ELLs (Honigsfield & Dove, in press). As NCLB style accountability still reigns and subgroup performance on AYP measures still play decisive roles in molding teaching and learning, many schools continue to look towards coteaching as a way to “limit interruptions” to classroom instruction. As a result, it is critical to recognize the complexities of coteaching and collaboration in order to develop responsive structures to nurture and facilitate these practices.

Future Directions

While coteaching and collaboration appeal to concerns for inclusion, there still exists no decisive evidence regarding their impact on student achievement either in special education or ESOL contexts (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; York-Barr, Ghere, & Sommerness, 2007). While this study examined complexities of coteaching and provided a description of the practice in elementary classrooms, future research on coteaching ELLs needs to examine what impacts, if any, coteaching has on ELL student language development and academic achievement. Given the increasing number of states adopting the WIDA (WIDA Consortium, 2004) standards and the accompanying ACCESS Language Proficiency Test, there exists a rich opportunity to examine this question on a large scale.

Also, considering that coteaching ELLs often involves partnerships between coteachers who do not share similar cultural, linguistic, or ideological backgrounds, additional research needs to consider ways to facilitate critical reflection, dialogue, and communication among coteachers. While the work presented in chapter four examined the use of Boalian Theatre for this purpose with bilingual ESOL teachers, I believe it is critical to extend this work beyond the “like groups” Boal suggested. In fact, I think a major oversight here is that perhaps we (those attempting to do this performative work with coteachers) have mistakenly labeled these ESOL and grade-level teachers as *not* belonging to “like groups.” In doing so, I believe we have only served to reify the rift between the two. As an example, Leila and Eva both recognized that school and district rhetoric served to sustain the coteaching banner even from within a context that provided them with little or no support along the way. In this way they discovered their shared membership as teachers in a system that pushed them towards coteaching intentions that it was unable or unwilling to support.

So What.

Perhaps the most important implication from this dissertation is the need for a framework that allows coteachers to engage in critical, explicit, and sustained dialogue around the issues encountered in the process of coteaching ELLs. Coteaching for coteaching’s sake, or as a measure solely to improve language proficiency or student test scores constitutes an instrumental notion of coteaching that can lead to fractured partnerships and ineffective teaching and learning. Given the continued changing demographic landscape of US public schools, this clearly is not enough. Instrumental approaches compartmentalize learning out and away from social, cultural, and political realities that have real and lasting impacts on communities, schools, teachers, and students. Considering possible frameworks for supporting coteaching for ELLs, I find the two

empirical studies discussed herein as offering a positive starting point. The performance-based focus groups allowed ESOL coteachers the opportunity to relive, rethink, and reconsider some of the more difficult situations they encountered in their coteaching lives. For Leila and Eva, the Coteaching Inquiry Group provided the necessary structure and opportunity for them to take time out to reflect on their coteaching. Both of these approaches present possible frameworks for supporting coteaching efforts. I would argue also, that these efforts were effective in these specific sociocultural, historical, and political contexts. It may be the case that neither of these, or perhaps a combination of these approaches (e.g., ongoing teacher inquiry groups making use of performance-based Boalian Theater) would yield even greater results in different contexts.

The practice of coteaching holds great promise as an instructional model for facilitating language and content development for ELLs, as well as promoting creative and nurturing professional partnerships for coteachers. ESOL and grade-level teachers have much to learn from one another. Further, as coteachers collaborate across gender, ethnic, racial, ideological, etc. differences, they provide a positive model for the students in their care. Finally, I see coteaching between ESOL and grade-level teachers as a way to combat the historical rift between ESOL and “everything else” in the school culture. As ESOL teachers work more in “mainstream” classrooms, there exists the opportunity to impact grade-level teachers’ perceptions about the work the ESOL teachers do and the knowledge and expertise that they have. This move “out of the ESL classroom/closet from under the stairs” and into the mainstream classroom may be a way of positively impacting whole-school culture regarding ESOL teachers, students, and knowledge.

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Appendix A
Field Note Template

DATE

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TEMPLATE

Teacher/s:

Location:

Lesson duration:

Focal Student(s):

Other collected data: Instruction Materials/ Video/ Audio/ Field Notes / Lesson plans

Subject:

Grade Level:

Students Present:

Phases in Lesson:

Overview of Visit:

Lesson Sequence:

Teacher talk/interaction:

My comments/thoughts/questions:

Follow-Up:

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

1. RQ-What issues (challenges and opportunities) do ESOL and grade-level coteachers identify in their efforts to provide meaningful language and content instruction to ELLs? (How do ESOL and grade-level teachers experience coteaching?)

Tell me about your teaching experience especially as it pertains to working with ELLs. (*trng for ELL education, endorsements, professional development, etc.*)

Describe your current **ESOL** teaching life this year.

What are the challenges and opportunities that stand out for you this year in your coteaching situation?

What is the goal in coteaching?

What do you think about coteaching as an instructional model for developing English proficiency and teaching academic content to ELLs?

How would you describe the roles in your coteaching setting? (*Who decides what to teach, when? Who does what? How are curricular decisions made? Pedagogical approaches? How do you handle planning? Assessment and grades...*)

What expertise do you bring to the coteaching pair? (*Do you feel like your expertise is equally valued within the classroom? The school? What would make this situation better?*).

How do you draw on each other's specific strengths in the classroom?

Tell me about your students this year. (*Specifically, how do you think ELLs are adjusting to coteaching as opposed to pull-out? How are the other Ss reacting to the coteaching, having a second T in the room?*)

2. RQ-In what ways do institutional forces (school and district) and/or policies impact coteachers' efforts?

Talk about the evolution of coteaching here in Clark County and in GA in general. Any PD this year? When/Why did it start?

And what about for you?

How would you describe the school culture here at CSES with regards to ELLs? How do you see your coteaching team as fit in to this vision? Where does it support/clash?

State monitoring? Working with ELLs only? Interpretation/Feedback from district on this? Your reactions here as a result?

3. RQ-How does participation in a collaborative inquiry group facilitate critical reflection and dialogue among coteachers? How do coteachers' discourses on coteaching shift throughout the study? What role does collaborative inquiry group play in this process?

What is the ideal program model for educating ELLs?

Describe the ideal coteaching situation.

What do you feel would take your coteaching to "the next level"? Do you see this study being able to facilitate that, and if so, in what ways?